



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*



*Providing Inspection Services for*  
**Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Focused Inspection**

**Newmills Primary School  
Dungannon**

**Inspected: February 2008**

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## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** Newmills Primary  
Dungannon
- iii. **Date of Inspection:** W/B 18.02.08
- ii. **School Reference Number:** 501-2719
- iv. **Nature of Inspection:** Focused

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	11	14	5	13	6
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	63	61	62	65	58
Reception	1	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0

The enrolment for the current year is the figure on the day of notification of inspection.  
For previous years it is the figure in the annual return to the Department of Education.

The calculations at C and D should be based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year  
(expressed as a percentage):

97.5%

<b>Primary &amp; Reception</b>	<b>Nursery Unit</b>	<b>Special Unit</b>
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- D. i. Number of Teachers  
(including the principal and part-time teachers):  
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)

3	0	0
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- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.3% NI PTR: 20.8

- iii. Average Class Size: 19

- iv. Class Size (Range): 14 to 23

- v. Ancillary Support:

Number of Hours **Per Week**:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 25 |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support:                   | 10 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 5  |

- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0%

- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 12%

- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 8.6%

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Newmills Primary School is located in the village of Newmills, three miles from Dungannon and six miles from Cookstown, in County Tyrone. Almost all of the children come from the village and the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has decreased slightly over the past five years to its current level of 58. Approximately 9% of the children are entitled to free school meals; seven children receive additional support for aspects of their learning.

1.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and teachers to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of children from years 6 and 7. Forty-two families were issued with questionnaires; approximately 52% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) of which 12 contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires highlighted the dedicated staff, the safe and secure school learning environment and the good opportunities provided for the children to participate in after-school activities. Two of the three permanent teachers completed the online questionnaire; their responses were very affirmative of the work of the school; no additional written comments were received. The governors commented favourably on the high standards attained by the children and the very effective leadership that had been provided by the Acting-principal during the Principal's absences. The children in years 6 and 7 reported that they feel safe, enjoy school and know what to do in the event of a concern. The issues raised by some of the parents through the questionnaires and the written comments were discussed with the governors.

1.3 The inspection focused on the quality of the work in mathematics, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in supporting numeracy and the effectiveness of the school's special educational needs provision. The inspection also evaluated the school's procedures in relation to pastoral care, including child protection.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK**

2.1 The teachers and support staff in the school have established a caring environment for the children; they know the children very well and encourage and support them in their work. The children are well-mannered and their behaviour is generally very good. They are welcoming to visitors and many of them talk articulately and with pride about their school.

2.2 The children's efforts are consistently valued and acknowledged. A wide range of strategies, including 'golden time' and certificates of achievement, help to promote the children's self-esteem and confidence. Examples of their art, written and topic work, and evidence of their achievements are displayed and celebrated in the corridors and the classrooms; the learning environment is bright and stimulating.

2.3 The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, drama, and music. Sports activities include netball, football, tag rugby and swimming; opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a cycling proficiency scheme. The children take part in competitions and tournaments and have opportunities to participate in

fund-raising activities for the school and for various charities. Close cross-community links have been established with a local maintained primary school. These experiences, which include a programme of school visits to places of educational interest, increase the children's awareness and understanding of the local and wider community.

2.3 The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant Department of Education Circulars, and has identified appropriately a few areas for improvement which it is currently implementing. Among the strengths are the very good relationships between the children and the teachers, the effective reward system which encourages and acknowledges positive behaviour and the valuable use of circle time to help the children to develop their interpersonal and social skills. The main area for improvement is the need to consult with staff, children and parents when revising key pastoral care policies.

2.5 The school gives very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are effective programmes in place, for example the encouragement of healthy breaks, and the liaison between external agencies and the school catering staff in order to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. An assessment of the nature and quality of arrangements for health and well-being practices within the school should be included in the school development plan (SDP) to comply with statutory regulations.

2.6 The teachers are hard-working and conscientious; a strong sense of team work was evident during the inspection. The quality of teaching observed was consistently good or better. In the best practice observed, the teachers used a variety of teaching strategies, including effective group and paired work and there was good pace and challenge to the activities. In addition, the sharing of the intended learning outcomes with the children provided a clear focus for the lessons and the children had opportunities to reflect on what they had learned at the end of the session. This was enhanced through skilful questioning by the teachers which helped to consolidate the children's understanding and encourage their oral responses.

2.7 All of the teachers have a composite class which places significant demands on them in terms of planning, monitoring and the evaluation of the work across the different year groups. The teachers' medium-term planning is comprehensive and identifies intended learning outcomes across most areas of the curriculum. In the best practice, the teachers evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and use the information to guide and inform future planning.

2.8 Generally, the children settle readily to their work. They undertake their tasks enthusiastically, take obvious pride in their efforts and show high levels of motivation and engagement in their learning. During paired or group activities they co-operate well, share resources and value one another's contributions.

2.9 Mathematics is co-ordinated effectively across the school. Much of the school scheme of work has been revised recently and sets out a detailed programme for mathematics for the majority of classes; a feature of the guidance is the clear identification of opportunities to develop the Processes attainment target within the overall content of number, measures, shape and space and handling data. In addition, opportunities where ICT can be used to

support the children's learning in mathematics are clearly identified. The children in all classes engage in regular short sessions of mental mathematics. In the sessions observed, they demonstrated good mental flexibility and employed a range of strategies to reach their solutions; most children are able to talk competently about their learning.

2.10 The children's mathematical skills and understanding are developed systematically across the school. In the early years' class, they experience a range of appropriate teaching approaches including activity-based learning, practical and oral work, and simple recording activities. Much of this work is linked well to the children's everyday experiences; in a session observed, for example, as part of a shopping theme, the children sorted coins, made up shopping lists and demonstrated a good understanding of making amounts of money and giving change. The children's learning was enhanced further through good questioning by the teacher and the classroom assistant. By the end of key stage 1, most of the children have a good understanding of number and simple number operations, measurements within a variety of units, and a sound knowledge of common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. The children's understanding is developed progressively and, by year 7, they have a broad mathematical knowledge; they understand place value and calculate accurately, know the properties of a variety of shapes, estimate and measure with accuracy, and present and interpret data in varied and appropriate forms. In addition, the children's mathematical thinking is promoted effectively; for example, during the inspection the years 4 and 5 class discussed a range of problem-solving strategies while they carried out a mathematical investigation. The children attain good standards in their mathematics; most achieve standards that are well in line with, or better than, their ability.

2.11 Information and communication technology resources are used regularly and appropriately to promote the children's mathematical learning. Aspects of number, shape and measurement are consolidated regularly with appropriate programmes, and programmable devices such as Beebot and Roamer, and simple Logo programmes help develop the children's understanding of direction, scale and control. Data-handling packages are used effectively to assist the children to collect, analyse and present data in a variety of forms; appropriately, the data used is related to the children's experiences and interests. In the years 6 and 7 class, the children measured their heights and presented the data in a number of different ways. The three classrooms have interactive whiteboards; these are used well to support the children's learning and the teachers continue to enhance their confidence and competence in their use. The teachers acknowledge the guidance received from members of the Southern Education and Library Board Curriculum Advisory and Support Service to support their work in mathematics.

2.12 The school has effective structures in place for the early identification of children who are experiencing difficulty with aspects of their learning. At the time of the inspection, approximately 12% of the children were receiving additional help with their work; support is provided within class by the class teacher. Individual education plans have been drawn up and are reviewed each term. While the targets identified within the plans are generally appropriate, some are too general and provide insufficient detail on the learning to be achieved. As well as addressing individual learning needs, the school is developing strategies to support the very small number of children who exhibit behavioural difficulties. In addition, the school has begun to draw up individual programmes to address the needs of the most able children.

2.13 Detailed information is maintained on the children's learning; individual folders contain samples of work, copies of annual reports and test score data. The school has established an effective process for monitoring the children's progress; screening tests are used in year 3 to assess learning in the early years, and standardised tests are used to track subsequent year-on-year progress. While the information is used well to track the children's progress, it should be developed further to set targets for individual improvement. Parents are kept informed of the children's progress through a detailed annual report and by meetings with the class teacher during the year.

### **3. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

3.1 The Principal, who has been in post for 21 years, was absent at the time of the inspection. During this period of absence, and other absences of the Principal, including a three-year career break, the Acting-principal has provided very effective leadership; she has demonstrated a high level of commitment to the school, to the other members of staff and to the children.

3.2 The recently-formulated three-year SDP sets out areas for overall school development. The SDP should be revised to meet fully the requirements of the statutory regulations; in particular it should focus more sharply on aspects of provision which directly relate to teaching and learning and the standards the children attain. The revised plan should take greater account of the views of the key stake holders including parents and governors and indicate more clearly the school's programme for improvement over the next three years.

3.3 The accommodation is maintained well and the standard of caretaking is good. The classroom assistant, kitchen staff, school secretary and support staff make a valuable contribution to the work of the school.

3.4 Health and safety issues are identified in the Appendix.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the children's motivation and engagement in their learning;
- the hard-working and conscientious teachers;
- the good or better quality of the teaching observed;
- the overall good standards the children attain in their mathematics;
- the effective use of ICT to support the children's learning; and
- the very effective leadership provided by the Acting-principal.

4.2 Areas for improvement:

- the need to review the SDP in order to comply fully with The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005; and
- to consult fully with the staff, children and parents when revising key pastoral care policies.

4.3 In the areas inspected, the school has strengths in many aspects of its educational provision. The inspection has identified a few areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all the learners.

4.4 The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.



## **APPENDIX**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY ACCOMODATION ISSUES**

- There is no secured access to the playground and the temporary mobile accommodation within the school grounds.

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