

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Roe Valley Integrated Primary
School, Limavady

Report of an Inspection
in May 2010

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, the Inspectorate relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Roe Valley Integrated Primary School, Limavady** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 10/05/2010**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 206-6665** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Year 1 Intake	20	26	25	25	18
Enrolments					
Primary	45	73	102	125	142
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium 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): 94.3% **NI Avg Att: 94.9%**
- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 7 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 20.3 NI PTR: 20.4
- iii. Average Class Size: 23
- iv. Class Size (Range): 19 to 26
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week:**
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| i. Clerical support: | 56 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 40 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 140 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 5.6%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 34%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 34.5%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Roe Valley Integrated Primary School is situated on the western edge of Limavady. The school opened in September 2004 with an intake of 22 children from year 1 to year 4. The current enrolment is 142 with almost all the children coming from Limavady. At the time of the inspection, 35% of the children were entitled to free school meals. In addition, 37% were identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and the school's arrangements for pastoral care including child protection were evaluated.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teachers and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of the children from year 6.

Of the 109 questionnaires issued to the parents, 39 (36%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch in the Department of Education (DE), including 14 which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the happy, well-settled and confident children, the caring and supportive teachers and the strong community spirit within the school. The small number of concerns that were raised by the parents have been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

Five teachers completed the online questionnaire with one providing an additional written comment. In addition, one member of the support staff completed the questionnaire and also provided an additional written comment. Almost all of the responses from the staff were highly supportive of the work of the school.

The governors spoke very positively about the welcoming atmosphere within the school, the commitment of the staff in providing a range of extra-curricular activities for the children and the evolving links with the local community.

The children in year 6 spoke enthusiastically about the helpful and supportive teachers, their enjoyment of playground games, the work of the School Council and the peer mediation programme. They also indicated that they feel happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries about their safety.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. The strengths include the caring and nurturing ethos which underpins the life and work of the school and the strong commitment to meeting the needs of individual children. There are very good working relationships at all levels within the school and all staff contribute significantly to the children's well-being and learning experiences.

The children are very well behaved and respectful to one another and their teachers. They have good opportunities to participate in discussions and decisions on aspects of school life that directly affect them through the School Council. They are rewarded for positive behaviour and evidence of their efforts and achievements are displayed and celebrated throughout the school. There are well-planned opportunities to promote the children's well-being and to address relevant issues through the curriculum. They participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including cookery, drama, the language club and a variety of sports. Their learning experiences and social development are enhanced through visits to places of interest.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. The arrangements reflect the guidance issued by DE.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The staff encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles through the promotion of healthy breaks, the provision of drinking water and other initiatives associated with the achievement of the Health Promoting Schools Gold Award.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

All parents are members of the Parents' Council and have opportunities to meet with the Principal at regular meetings or more informally, as part of the school's open-door policy. Their opinions are valued and they are encouraged to discuss the work of the school and influence its development. There is good communication with the parents about school events and curriculum topics through, for example, regular newsletters, parents' meetings, homework diaries and open evenings. School fundraising events are well supported and the school hosts a weekly parents and toddlers group.

The school has developed a range of very good initiatives including curriculum workshops and literacy and numeracy programmes to encourage and support the parents' involvement in their children's learning. The inspection team endorses the school's continued commitment to developing methods to involve all parents in school life. Links have also been developed with other primary and post-primary schools in order to support staff development and there are useful links with local pre-school centres, churches, community groups and external agencies.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children have positive attitudes to learning; they are confident and generally responsive and eager to participate in class discussions. They co-operate very well with each other in paired and group work activities. They are actively engaged in the learning process and,

when given appropriate opportunities, they talk about what they have learnt, explain their thinking and apply their learning in other contexts. In the foundation stage (FS) they are well settled into the classroom routines and demonstrate good listening and organisational skills.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The overall quality of the provision in English and literacy is good.

There is a whole-school literacy policy to guide the work of the teachers. In collaboration with all staff, the co-ordinator has conducted thorough audits of provision and achievement and has a clear understanding of the quality of provision and the standards achieved by the children.

There is an effective whole-school commitment to developing the children's oracy and this has been a feature of staff in-service training (INSET) sessions in the last year. The children listen attentively to their teachers and to one another. Teachers are focusing on the use of effective questioning techniques and this is built into their monthly planning. Teachers promote a very positive tone for lessons which encourages the children's contributions during whole-class, paired and group discussions through a well-planned programme of activities.

The school has invested in reading resources for all year groups and provides a literacy-rich environment for the children with well-stocked library areas in classrooms. In the FS and key stage (KS) 1, the children are introduced to an appropriate range of reading strategies which enable them to deal with unfamiliar texts and they learn to read with increasing fluency and expression. The school has introduced a phonics scheme to promote a consistent approach to the development of the children's word-attack skills. Strategies such as shared, guided, modelled and independent reading are employed appropriately to extend the children's experiences and improve their reading ability. The reading standards of the children in KS2 are good and generally in line with their abilities. Appropriately, the literacy co-ordinator has identified the need to raise the standards in reading achieved by the small number of children in year 7. The school has invested heavily in developing the capacity of the classroom assistants to take a more active role in raising standards in literacy through the Reading Partnerships programme. The co-ordinator reports that this is having a positive impact on children who had been underachieving and that standards in reading are improving.

The school has been promoting successfully the development of the children's oral work and applying this in a range of written activities. By year 7, examples of the children's personal writing include poetry, letter writing, book reviews, descriptions, stories, diary entries and reports. In KS2, teachers use ICT programmes such as presentational software and a digital video editing package to develop the children's digital literacy. In a small number of classes, there is evidence of unnecessary whole-class transcription in the children's books which highlights a lack of appropriate differentiation on occasions, as well as some missed opportunities to extend the children's independent writing across the curriculum. The standards in writing across KS2 are good and for the small number of children at the end of KS2 they are satisfactory and generally in line with their abilities.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of provision in mathematics and numeracy is good

A detailed whole-school policy is in place to guide the work of teachers in mathematics and numeracy and an action plan identifies specific, appropriate targets and actions to enhance the provision of children's mathematical experiences and raise the standards they attain.

Much work has been done towards producing an agreed line of development for mathematics throughout the school. All areas of the mathematics curriculum are adequately covered and there is a strong focus on systematically embedding mental mathematics, problem solving and investigative type work in all years. A range of commercial resources, including interactive programmes have been obtained recently to support and extend the mathematics curriculum.

Mental mathematics is a feature of all mathematics lessons and the children enjoy these activities. In the best practice these are well paced and appropriately challenging. ICT is used effectively, with teachers making good use of interactive whiteboards, websites, programmable devices and computer programs to motivate children and support learning and teaching in mathematics.

In the FS the children enjoy mathematics activities and challenges and there is appropriate emphasis on oral and practical activities and the development of early mathematical vocabulary. The children show a good understanding of number through a range of appropriate counting, sorting and ordering activities.

As the children progress through the school, there are well-planned opportunities for practical and investigative-type work and, in the most effective lessons observed, the children had opportunities to explain their mathematical reasoning, were able to formulate word problems and could select activities at an appropriate level of challenge for them. In the small number of less effective lessons observed, there was limited consolidation of the children's mathematical understanding and missed opportunities to challenge sufficiently some of the children, especially the more able and develop their learning further.

By the end of KS2 the majority of the children demonstrate sound mental strategies, calculate accurately, demonstrate flexibility in their mathematical thinking and present and interpret data in a variety of forms. They have good opportunities to explore the value of maths across the curriculum and apply their mathematical understanding in real contexts, for example, through the mathematics activity day and their involvement in organising the school fair and fair trade shop. The standards achieved by the pupils in mathematics are satisfactory.

The recently appointed numeracy co-ordinator has made a very good start in leading and supporting the development of mathematics throughout the school. The provision is closely monitored through book reviews, audits of teachers planning and lesson observations.

The school uses a range of assessment methods including standardised tests to obtain information on the children's mathematical progress. The school has recognised the need to raise attainment for a significant minority of the pupils who are underachieving. A good start has been made in using of the outcomes of the assessments to identify groups of children who require additional support for mathematics and to set specific targets for improvement. There is a need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this support in raising the standards and to consider other forms of support.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers are working very hard in developing their planning and they plan very thoroughly for the children's learning experiences throughout the school. Whole-school plans for literacy and numeracy guide the teachers medium- and short-term planning and ensure continuity and progression. The short-term planning clearly identifies the intended learning outcomes for the children as well as activities and resources. The teachers

annotate and evaluate their plans to reflect the quality and extent of the children's learning; they need to use these evaluations to plan for more appropriate differentiation in order to meet the needs of all children. There is good topic planning to promote connected learning throughout the school and good progress is being made to involve the children in the planning of this work.

3.2 TEACHING

Most the teaching observed was good or very good; in a small minority of lessons it was satisfactory. The teachers are dedicated and conscientious and all the lessons were well prepared and resourced. In the best practice there was a clear focus on learning. Learning intentions were purposefully used throughout the lesson to focus the children's attention and consolidate their learning, there was a good emphasis on the development of the children's oral skills through effective teacher questioning and interactive white boards were used as an integral part of the lesson to enhance their learning. Classroom assistants were managed well and deployed effectively to support individual children and groups.

The less effective practice in a small minority of the lessons observed was characterised by a lack of pace and insufficient challenge and differentiation to meet fully the wide range of needs and abilities of all the children.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers mark the children's work regularly and the comments are mostly personalised and positive. In the best practice the teachers identify through their feedback, short-term targets and suggestions to help the children improve on the quality of their work. This good practice should be further developed and applied more consistently across the school in order to help raise the standards of the children's work.

The teachers' assessment of children's progress is appropriately supplemented by the use of a range of standardised tests to monitor the progress of the children, inform target setting and identify those who are underachieving. A good start has been made in the analysis of these outcomes and the school has appropriately identified the need to refine their use of data in order to track the children's progress and plan more effectively for the support for those who have particular learning needs. There are appropriate procedures and records for keeping the parents well informed about their children's progress, for example, written reports, homework diaries, formal parent-teacher conferences and an open-door policy for informal consultations.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) is good.

The school gives a high priority to its provision for those children who require support with aspects of their learning. The arrangements for identifying and recording individual needs are well documented and the policy provides clear guidance to teachers and assistants. Children requiring additional support are identified at an early stage through teacher observation and formal staff discussion, and the use of standardised and diagnostic tests. This is supported well by the careful deployment of classroom assistants who make an important contribution to the children's learning, and close monitoring of individual children's progress. The targets in individual education plans are specific, reviewed regularly and provide a useful guide to classroom practice. Parents are kept well informed at all stages. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has a clear vision for the development of the school's SEN provision which is firmly focused on the needs of the children, with a strong commitment to inclusion and equality. While the majority of the children make good

progress in their learning, building on their previous levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy, and demonstrate an improved capacity to work independently, a small number need further intensive support with their learning.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal provides very good leadership and management. She has been in post since the school opened and is deeply committed to the life and work of the school. She provides strategic direction for the work of the school, promoting a clear vision and setting high standards for the quality of pastoral and educational provision. She has supported and empowered the whole staff to carry out their roles effectively and the recently appointed co-ordinators provide very good curriculum leadership within their areas of responsibility. Effective working relationships have been built up with parents, other schools and the local community to further the work of the school.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Policies and action plans are in place for literacy, numeracy and ICT which support effectively a culture of school improvement. The targets are clear, focused and appropriate, and there is a coherent staff development programme which is linked closely to the priorities of the school. The school has identified areas for development which are consistent with the inspection findings. The school development plan (SDP) is compliant with DE regulations.

Good progress has been made at this early stage in developing the role of the co-ordinators. They have good opportunities for professional development from the Principal, Curriculum Advisory and Support Service and from experienced colleagues in other schools. They have developed effective systems for monitoring and evaluating within their curricular areas and a good beginning has been made in embedding structures to promote continuing improvement. They have provided well-received INSET training sessions for their colleagues.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

The school operates in temporary accommodation, which although not ideal is well used by the teachers. They have provided a safe, stimulating learning environment. There are limited opportunities for outdoor play; this is not conducive to developing a range of rich learning opportunities and experiences.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are well informed about the strategic planning and policy development for the school and support the Principal and the staff well in the implementation of the SDP.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the behaviour of the children and their motivation and positive attitudes to learning;
- the caring and supportive ethos and very good working relationships at all levels;

- the quality of the teaching observed, most of which was good or very good;
- the hard work and enthusiasm of the teachers and support staff and their commitment to the vision of the school and the well-being of all the children;
- the effective links made with the parents and other agencies; and
- the quality of the strategic leadership provided by the Principal supported by the senior teacher and co-ordinators.

An area for improvement is:

- to continue to monitor and evaluate the provision in order to bring about further improvements in the standards of literacy and numeracy achieved by all the children.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress in the area for improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The flue of the boiler at the back of the year 3 temporary classroom is exposed and presents a health and safety hazard.

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