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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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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

Rosemount Primary School and Nursery Unit
Derry

Inspected: March 2007

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Rosemount Primary Derry** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 12.03.07**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-0364** iv. **Nature of Inspection: FI/English, SEN & ICT**

B.

School Year	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Year 1 Intake	37	43	28	31	35
Enrolments					
Primary	249	266	247	240	232
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	52	52	52	52	52
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):

93.2%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
------------------------	-----------------	-----------------

- | | | | | |
|----|--|---|--------------|---|
| D. | i. Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 11 | 2 | 0 |
| | ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 25.8 | NI PTR: 20.5 | |
| | iii. Average Class Size: | 23.66 | | |
| | iv. Class Size (Range): | 16 to 29 | | |
| | v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | i. Clerical support: | 36 | |
| | | ii. Official Making A Good Start Support: | 25 | |
| | | iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 0 | |
| | vi. Number of children with statements of special educational needs: | 6 | | |
| | vii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | 52 | | |
| | viii. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | 31% | | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rosemount Primary School is a co-educational, maintained primary school in the Rosemount area of Derry. About half of the children come from the Rosemount and Creggan areas, and the remainder travel to school from other parts of the city and surrounding areas. The enrolment currently stands at 232. Around 31% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

1.2 The inspection focused on English, the provision for special educational needs (SEN), and on the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection.

1.3 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the completion of questionnaires by parents, as well as meetings with the Board of Governors (governors) and with a group of children from year 6. Approximately 51% of the parental questionnaires were returned and thirty-nine included a written comment. The responses indicated that the parents are very supportive of all aspects of the work of the school; in particular, they value the school's caring ethos and the support offered by the teachers. The small number of concerns raised by the parents were shared with the school Principal and governors. The governors commented very favourably on the commitment of the Principal and staff; they highlighted their active role in the management of the school and reported that they were kept well-informed and were consulted appropriately. The group of year 6 children who met with the inspectors indicated that they feel safe, take pride in their school and know whom to turn to in the event of a problem or concern.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 A happy, caring ethos permeates all aspects of the life of the school. The teaching and non-teaching staff display a strong commitment to the children's development and well-being; opportunities are sought regularly to promote the children's confidence and self-esteem. The children co-operate willingly and respectfully with their teachers and with one another; they are polite and very welcoming and courteous to visitors. Working relationships at all levels throughout the school are excellent. The school secretary, caretaker, cleaning staff and other ancillary staff contribute significantly to the life and work of the school.

2.2 All the staff have worked very effectively to create and maintain an attractive and stimulating learning environment in the school.

2.3 The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs for the children including judo, choir, drama, soccer and chess. All the clubs are well attended; a homework club operates after school every day.

2.4 The school has established good links with parents; they are well-informed about their children's progress and about school life generally; they receive a monthly newsletter, and have two formal meetings with teachers each year and one formal written report. The school has developed strong links with the other local schools including the post-primary schools to which the children transfer.

2.5 The provision for pastoral care is a significant strength of the school. The pastoral care co-ordinator, together with the staff, have worked together to review and update an extensive range of strategies and initiatives to promote the health, well-being and personal development of the children. The teachers encourage the children to become involved in making suggestions about aspects of school life. There is a strong ethos of mutual respect and children are clearly valued as individuals. The positive behaviour and reward system in the school contributes to the ethos and sense of order that pervades the whole school. The children are aware of, and accept, the standards of behaviour expected of them; their self-esteem is high and their behaviour is exemplary.

2.6 The school has procedures in place, which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant Department of Education Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are aware of the school's procedures, and they have had the opportunity to feed into a range of helpful policies which guide the work of the school. These policies and the effective pastoral care systems underpin the good relationships and support the good learning and teaching which take place both within and outside the classroom.

2.7 The school gives consistently good attention to promoting health and well-being. It has appropriate policies and programmes in place, such as a fruit shop at break time and water provision, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. Each year since 2001, the school has received the Smart Snacks award. There is evidence of commitment on the part of the school community to promoting healthy eating through newsletters, assemblies, a canteen open day for parents and a designated health promoting area within the school. There are opportunities for all children to participate in a wide range of physical activities both during and after school. The children demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of making healthy life choices.

2.8 The school has comprehensive whole-school guidance in place to inform learning and teaching. The teachers plan their work conscientiously, with a clear focus on identifying learning outcomes, building on previous learning and opportunities for review and consolidation at the end of the lesson. In a majority of lessons, the learning activities were matched to the needs of the children and the learning was effective. Generally, teachers evaluate their lessons and review and amend future plans appropriately.

2.9 Most of the teaching observed during the inspection ranged from good to excellent. In the best practice seen, learning outcomes were identified clearly and shared with children, the teachers used a suitable variety of teaching approaches, the lessons had an appropriate degree of pace and challenge, the children were highly motivated and the learning was consolidated at the end of each session. In the small number of lessons that were less effective, the work was over-directed by the teacher, and expectations were too low. A feature of much of the effective teaching is the quality of the teachers' questioning strategies that engage the children in their own learning, enrich their thinking and promote extended responses and the children's confidence and understanding. The classroom assistants interact effectively to promote and support the children's learning and development.

2.10 The children in the early years classes have regular sessions of play-based learning. The day-to-day activities are linked, generally, to short-term or weekly themes; in year 1, for example, most of the current learning was based on the topic of 'Monsters'. In the sessions observed, the children were engaged in a wide variety of appropriate activities which helped to develop important aspects of their learning. The children work well together and most are

able to sustain extended spells of productive play. They share equipment readily, discuss their learning and collaborate on shared tasks. The teachers and classroom assistants interact well with the children and, through skilful questioning and prompting, enhance the children's language development and general understanding. While the teachers' short-term planning helps to guide the play sessions, it is appropriate that the teachers have identified the need to review the existing school scheme of work for play-based learning to ensure that the intended learning is identified more clearly and that there is clear progression in the children's learning.

2.11 Literacy is an ongoing area of development within the school. Under the effective leadership of the literacy co-ordinator, a detailed action plan is being implemented and evaluated. Areas under focus include the introduction of a new phonics programme, the greater involvement of parents in supporting their children's reading, and the refurbishment and re-stocking of the school library. There is a positive, whole-school approach to this work and there is extensive evidence within the classes of the effective integration of reading, writing and talking and listening in the children's overall learning experiences.

2.12 Reading is taught systematically across the school. In the early years classes, the children are introduced to stories and rhymes and, through shared reading sessions and play-based learning activities, they become increasingly familiar with a range of books and other texts. The children's reading skills are developed progressively; they build up a phonic awareness and add increasingly to their sight vocabulary. This work is done in the context of interesting stories and familiar situations and is reinforced well through appropriate written tasks and oral work. The children's understanding of what they read is promoted effectively through group and class discussions and by skilful questioning by the teachers; much of this work is based on well-chosen class novels. As they progress through the school, the children's reading demonstrates increased fluency and expression. In the lessons observed, the children generally enjoyed their reading and demonstrated good understanding of the texts they were reading. Work in other curriculum areas is supported through the good use of non-fiction texts and by accessing information from the Internet. By the end of year 7, the children are generally achieving standards in reading that are well in line with their ability.

2.13 In all of the classes, the children are encouraged to listen attentively and to respect the opinions and contributions of others. The teachers promote this through activities such as Circle Time, play-based learning and shared and group reading sessions. In the main, the children listen well and respond appropriately to the opportunities to develop their oral skills. The children show a clear sense of enjoyment in their work, and this helps to promote their overall confidence. This is boosted further by the very positive working relationships that exist in all of the classes. As a consequence, the children are keen to talk and engage readily in discussions about their learning and their interests. Much of the oral work, particularly in key stage (KS) 2 is based on class novels. During the inspection the older children gave detailed descriptions about the setting and characters within their novel and made mature and insightful observations in support of their learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to promote the children's oral skills. The children in KS2, for example, are proficient in the use of presentation software such as PowerPoint; they are able to draw-up and present information on a range of class topics and personal interests.

2.14 The children's reading and talking and listening skills contribute to the development of their personal writing. In the early years classes the children are introduced to informal mark-making and then to formal letter formation and word building. These skills are developed further and by the end of KS1 most of the children are able to write a series of short sentences accurately and neatly. Much of this work is based on the children's own experiences and is supported appropriately by good use of dictionaries, word-banks and thesauri. As they progress through KS2, the children write for an increasing range of purposes, including story and letter writing, poems, book reviews and descriptive passages. Generally this work is well-structured, fluent and presented neatly. The children have regular opportunities to use ICT to develop their writing; most have good word-processing skills and are adept at importing graphics and digital camera images to enhance their work. There are some good examples of the children applying their writing skills to other areas of the curriculum. While much of this work, in almost all classes, is in the children's own words, too great an emphasis is placed on copying down of notes in subjects such as science, history and geography. The children, especially the more able, would benefit from more frequent opportunities to write independently, and to develop further the skill of condensing or simplifying texts and information. Overall, the children attain good standards in their literacy work. The ongoing whole-school developments in literacy are appropriate and have the potential to enhance further the children's enjoyment, confidence and skills.

2.15 The school has identified 89 children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The acting special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and the teaching staff have worked together to prepare useful education plans that indicate a programme of support, together with a range of teaching strategies to address the children's needs. Each child is provided with effective and sensitive support by their class teachers and by very helpful support from classroom assistants. The children respond positively to the learning activities that are differentiated to provide an appropriate degree of challenge and support. The teachers and the children benefit from access to valuable teaching resources; progress and development are monitored and evaluated regularly, in consultation with the parents and external support agencies. The children who require additional help are identified at an early stage through teacher observation and through the use of diagnostic and standardised tests. They generally receive very effective support; there are, however, a number of children, particularly in KS1, who would benefit from specialist support to address their specific difficulties and ensure that they establish a sound basis for their future learning.

2.16 The school has agreed a very positive policy on staff development in which staff are encouraged to engage in continuous professional development to meet their own needs and the need of the school. All teachers have benefited from a range of external and school-based development opportunities. Teachers are required to evaluate all training in terms of how it helped promote the aims of the school and met the needs of staff. There are agreed procedures to ensure that knowledge and expertise gained during courses is disseminated among the staff; these procedures need to be implemented consistently to maximise the benefit of such training for learning and teaching across the whole school.

2.17 The staff have worked well together to identify areas for the future development of the school and brought these together in a helpful strategic school development plan (SDP) and appropriate action plans. It will be important that priorities are identified and reviewed to ensure that the work is sharply focused, monitored and evaluated at classroom, key stage and whole-school levels.

2.18 The school has made a good start to monitoring and evaluating its provision. There is, however, a need to develop more explicitly and systematically the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation as an integral element of the work of the teachers. Co-ordinators need to agree and implement clear strategies for raising further the standards achieved by the children, and disseminate the considerable very good and excellent practice that exists throughout the school.

2.19 The Principal is fully committed to the life and work of the school; his concern and care for the children and the staff are evident. He is hard-working and has a clear vision for the development of the school and the curriculum. He enjoys the support of the Vice-principal, the staff, the governors and the wider school community. The Principal has overseen, facilitated and supported a number of important school initiatives and whole-school developments, including the provision of a good range of learning and teaching resources. It would be opportune to review the current management structure to ensure that it meets the current and future needs of the school and of the curriculum.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the happy, caring ethos permeating all aspects of the life of the school;
- the courteous, well-behaved children;
- the high quality of the provision for pastoral care;
- the commitment of staff to the children's development and well-being;
- the well-maintained, attractive and stimulating learning environment;
- the excellent working relationships at all levels;
- the commitment of the hard-working teachers;
- the quality of teaching which was always satisfactory, often good and on occasions very good or excellent;
- the good standards achieved by the children in literacy;
- the effective identification of the needs of children who require additional support with aspects of their learning and the effective support they receive;
- the effective contribution of the classroom assistants in supporting and promoting the children's learning and development;
- the effective leadership of the Principal and his commitment to the education and well-being of the children; and
- the support of parents, governors and wider community for the work of the school.

3.2 The areas for improvement include the need for the school:

- to review its management structure to ensure that it meets the current and future needs of the school and of the curriculum; and
- to review the extent of the overall arrangements for supporting children with special educational needs, to consider how specialist support might be provided to address their specific difficulties more effectively and ensure that they have a sound basis for their future learning.

3.3 In the areas inspected, the school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified some areas for improvement which the school has the capacity to address.

3.4 No follow-up inspection is required. The school's progress on the areas for improvement will be monitored by the District Inspector.

4. THE NURSERY UNIT

4.1 The nursery is situated in the grounds of Rosemount Primary School. There have been several changes in the teaching staff during the last few years. The nursery co-ordinator and the assistant teacher both took up their new roles in September 2006.

4.2 The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and any issues raised have been shared with the staff. The parents' responses indicated their very high level of satisfaction with the provision. A number included written comments praising the work of the staff.

4.3 The nursery has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection that comply with Department of Education Circulars and guidance. The inspection evidence indicates that these policies and procedures are implemented effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.

4.4 The nursery demonstrates a commitment to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. Regular opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a range of appropriate physical activities.

4.5 **The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.**

- There is a warm, caring atmosphere which promotes the children's confidence and self-esteem.
- The staff work hard to create an attractive learning environment with some distinct areas for play.
- There are good relationships between the children and the staff and the children are generally well-behaved.
- The range of activities provided for the children both indoors and outdoors facilitates satisfactory opportunities to learn in most areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- There is good promotion of the children's oral language through discussion, singing and the use of rhymes.
- The children's social skills and independence are being developed effectively.
- The daily timetable provides a good balance between extended periods of free play and more adult-led group sessions.
- The staff are hard-working and committed to the children's welfare. They foster an interest in books, early marking and talking and listening.
- There are good links with the adjoining primary school.

- The staff are developing useful links with the local Sure Start which is accommodated in the same building.

4.6 The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention.

- The staff need to review the planning to ensure that it guides the staff more effectively in their day-to-day work with the children and ensures progression and challenge within the activities.
- The staff need to enhance the overall quality of their interaction with the children in order to exploit more fully the learning potential within all of the play activities and in particular promote thinking skills, problem-solving and early mathematical language and concepts.

4.7 The teaching staff are in the early stages of developing their team within the nursery. They regularly evaluate aspects of the programme and demonstrate a willingness to learn and develop the work further. The staff report a lack of opportunities for specific nursery training and support. The nursery unit development plan identifies some relevant areas for development. These should be amended in line with the inspection findings.

4.8 The nursery has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few important areas for improvement which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all the children.

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

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ROSEMOUNT PRIMARY SCHOOL
NURSERY UNIT, DERRY**

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	26
Attending part-time		
Under 3 years of age*		
With statement of SEN**		
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	1	
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	3	
With English as an additional language		

* On 1 July.

** Special Educational Needs.

*** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	5%
Average attendance for the previous year.	89%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours		

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	
Nursery Assistants		
Qualified Nursery Assistants	2	

Number of: ****	
Students	1
Trainees	

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	32%
Number of written comments	6

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