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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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**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

**Seagoe Primary School and Nursery Unit
Portadown**

Inspected: May 2008

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** Seagoe Primary
Portadown
ii. **School Reference Number:** 504-6137
- iii. **Date of Inspection:** W/B 12.05.08
iv. **Nature of Inspection:** Focused

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	35	31	30	38	40
Enrolments					
Primary	245	239	235	248	248
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	26	27	26	27	26
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%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
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- | | | | |
|--|----------|--------------|---|
| D. i. Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 12.4 | 0 | 0 |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 20.4 | NI PTR: 20.8 | |
| iii. Average Class Size: | 22.8 | | |
| iv. Class Size (Range): | 15 to 31 | | |
| v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week: | | | |
| i. Clerical support: | | 30 | |
| ii. Official Making A Good
Start Support: | | 25 | |
| iii. Additional hours of other
classroom assistant support: | | 7.5 | |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | 3% | |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | 10.6% | |
| viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | 0 | |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | 11.3% | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Seagoe Primary School is a Church of Ireland Maintained, co-educational school which is situated on the Seagoe Road in Portadown. The enrolment currently stands at 248; in addition, 26 children are enrolled in the nursery unit. Most of the children come from the surrounding area and a small number come from local rural areas. At the time of the inspection, approximately 11% of the children were entitled to free school meals. A report on the provision in the nursery unit is included as an appendix of the report.

1.2 The inspection focused on the quality of the children's experiences in mathematics, the effectiveness of the school's special educational needs (SEN) provision, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting learning and teaching in mathematics and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection.

1.3 As part of the inspection process, meetings were held with the Board of Governors (governors) and with a small group of the children in year 6. The parents' views on aspects of the life and work of the school were also sought by means of a questionnaire. One hundred and twenty four questionnaires were issued to parents in the primary school; approximately 60% of these were returned to the Department of Education (DE). Twenty-eight returns contained additional written comments. The majority of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents and the governors highlighted the positive ethos evident throughout the school and considered the teachers to be hard-working and caring of the children. In addition, they commended the dedication and commitment of the Principal. The small number of concerns that were raised by the parents are addressed in the body of the report and have been discussed with the governors and the Principal. The children indicated that they feel happy and safe in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 A strong sense of community pervades the life and work of the school. Working relationships at all levels are very good. The children learn in a supportive and caring environment; they co-operate willingly and respectfully with their teachers and with one other; they are friendly, courteous and keen to talk about their work. Their behaviour is excellent. The non-teaching staff make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school.

2.2 The teachers have created a bright and stimulating environment for the children. Imaginative wall displays and interest areas are of a high quality; in a number of instances the displays are of an interactive nature, encouraging the children to think and apply their learning across the curriculum. The outdoor areas have been developed very effectively to provide a stimulating, safe and enjoyable facility for the children's playtime. The standards of caretaking are excellent.

2.3 The arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school are very good. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school.

2.4 The strengths of the provision include:

- the friendly and courteous children who are engaged and willing to learn;
- the range and quality of strategies to celebrate the achievements of the children;
- the good development of an understanding of rights and responsibilities in order to promote pastoral responsibility amongst the children; and
- the very effective leadership of the designated and deputy designated teachers for the pastoral care provision.

2.5 The school gives very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are programmes in place, for example water provision, buffet break and the promotion of healthy breaks, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2.6 The school has developed strong links with its parents. They are encouraged to become involved in many aspects of school life through, for example, their contribution to the Parent Teachers' Association and their assistance with the library and school trips. The parents display considerable interest in the work of the school and they are supportive of their children's learning. They are kept informed of school events and information through the school newsletter and website. An annual curriculum meeting, two formal meetings with teachers and an annual written report provide the parents with useful information on their children's progress.

2.7 The children's personal and social development is enhanced through a wide variety of extra-curricular activities which include music, dance and a range of sports. The school has worked with a local primary school to develop a well-planned cross community programme which provides opportunities for all of the children to engage in activities which promote mutual respect and understanding very effectively. The school has worked hard to maintain and develop strong links with the local community including the church, sporting organisations and businesses.

2.8 The quality of the teaching observed in most of the lessons was sound or better. In approximately half of the lessons, it was very good or excellent. The most effective lessons were characterised by a clear focus on learning; the lessons were well structured; the teachers built effectively on the children's previous knowledge and used skilful questioning to stimulate the children's thinking and to extend their understanding; the intended learning was placed within meaningful contexts and linked to learning in other areas of the curriculum. In a very few, less effective lessons, there was a lack of focus on specific learning, the lessons lacked pace and the learning activities were insufficiently matched to the varied needs and abilities of the children.

2.9 There are many positive features of the school's development work in mathematics. In recent years, for example, the staff have worked collaboratively to review aspects of the whole-school planning, to disseminate and promote resources in mathematical processes and to audit the children's progress in the core competences of mental mathematics. These developments have been led effectively by the numeracy co-ordinator.

2.10 The current School Development Plan (SDP) objectives relating to numeracy are appropriate and the associated action plan is suitably detailed. One important objective of the action plan has been the numeracy co-ordinator's participation in the Southern Education and Library Board's 'Catch-Up in Number' programme and the subsequent dissemination to staff of the intervention strategies that will support those young children who require additional help with their mathematics. During the inspection, an effective session was observed in which a child's competence and confidence in counting were promoted well.

2.11 In most lessons, the quality of the mathematical thinking of the children was developed through well-planned activities which include problem solving and investigations. In these lessons, the experiences of the children were strengthened by the effective questioning by the teacher and, on occasions, the appropriate use of 'thinking time' before the children could offer responses. Often, the children were given opportunities to work in pairs and small groups and, when appropriate, to use practical equipment. The children responded well to these opportunities and, on occasions, developed their mathematical thinking through discussion and reasoning with one another.

2.12 In almost all cases, the teachers prepare thoroughly for their lessons, identifying appropriate learning intentions and success criteria. In a few lessons, the planned sequence of activities did not provide the necessary coherence and challenge through which the children could develop a secure understanding of the mathematical concept.

2.13 The numeracy co-ordinator monitors the teachers' medium term planning, and their associated reviews regularly to ensure there is the necessary progression in the children's mathematical development. The school needs to develop further the procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the mathematics provision in order that the teachers receive feedback on the quality of the children's experiences in their class, on the quality of their marking of the children's work, and on the standards that their children achieve in mathematics.

2.14 Resources for ICT are used appropriately to promote the children's learning within mathematics. During the inspection, the teachers accessed specialised websites and, through the use of digital projectors, demonstrated concepts and engaged the children in interesting and relevant questions that consolidated and built on their understanding. At foundation stage (FS), programmable devices were used very effectively to challenge the children to solve problems by reasoning through a sequence of instructions. At the end of key stage (KS) 2, the children complete the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment ICT accreditation, a part of which involves the demonstration of competence with spreadsheets through planning and costing a party.

2.15 By the end of KS 2, most of the children have a secure knowledge of mathematical concepts and achieve good standards.

2.16 The teachers mark the children's written work regularly. In the majority of cases, the marking is of a supportive nature that praises the children's efforts. In a few classes, the teachers are beginning to implement assessment for learning strategies and to advise children on how they can improve their work. This area has been appropriately identified for development within the current SDP.

2.17 The school uses a variety of standardised and non-standardised testing to assess the children's levels of achievement. The school performance information gained is currently used to identify the range of ability within each class and to track children's progress year on year. There is a need for further development of the use of the school performance information in order to fully exploit its potential to inform future planning.

2.18 The school gives SEN provision a high priority and allocates a substantial resource to improving the children's learning. The school has effective procedures for the early identification of children requiring additional help with their learning. Currently there are 25 children on the Special Needs Register who receive support in either English or mathematics.

2.19 The special educational needs co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the SEN provision which is firmly focused on the needs of the children, with a strong commitment to inclusion and equality. She provides good leadership and manages the support programme and staff effectively. A useful action plan for the development of the SEN provision is in place. It will be important for the School Management Team (SMT) to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this plan.

2.20 The range of support provided for the children with special educational needs includes support from their class teachers, in-class support by experienced classroom assistants and by withdrawal for Reading Recovery. In addition, the teachers from the FS are redeployed in the afternoon to provide specific withdrawal support. In the withdrawal sessions, the children's individual needs are met effectively through well-planned teaching that is strongly focused on improving learning. In the lessons observed, a range of active learning approaches was deployed effectively to consolidate the children's understanding and to improve their thinking skills. Class teachers are aware of the children's needs and often provide activities which are well matched to their stages of development.

2.21 Helpful diagnostic tests are used to ascertain the children's progress. The school should make more use of this information to set challenging targets which are understood by the children. A measure of the success of the SEN provision is the significant number of children who have been removed from the Special Needs Register following the support provided.

2.22 The provision for children with special educational needs is a significant strength of the school.

2.23 The school is effectively led and well managed by the enthusiastic and hard-working Principal who is committed to the education and welfare of the children. He is ably supported by his Vice-principal, teaching and non-teaching staff. The teachers are generally deployed in ways to make the most effective use of their expertise and interests. The SDP is compliant with the DE School Development Plan Regulations/Schedule 2005/19. It identifies appropriate priorities for action; for each priority there is a useful action plan which is reviewed by the relevant co-ordinator at the end of each half term. The SMT has identified the need to develop further the monitoring procedures within the school in order to evaluate strategically the quality of the learning and teaching. The Principal and teachers have a reflective approach to all aspects of school provision and have begun the process of self-evaluation; it will be important to develop this process further in order to measure achievements and to identify priorities for future development.

2.24 The teachers benefit from a range of school-based and external in-service training (INSET) matched to the needs of the school. Teachers who attend external training disseminate to their colleagues any information or materials acquired. The benefits of much of the INSET involvement are evident in most of the learning and teaching.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the caring and supportive ethos, the very good working relationships between the teachers and children and the bright, stimulating environment which is significantly enhanced by the creative use of the outdoor space and resources to engage the children constructively during playtime;
- the strong sense of community as evidenced through the support from the parents and links with the wider community including the local industries;
- the quality of the children's engagement, responses and ability to think for themselves;
- the quality of the mathematics provision and the standards achieved by the children;
- the quality of provision for the children who need additional support with aspects of their learning; and
- the effectiveness of the Principal, ably supported by the Vice-principal.

3.2 In the areas inspected, the school has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents and local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

4. THE NURSERY UNIT

4.1 The nursery unit is accommodated in purpose built premises within the primary school building. The majority of children come from the surrounding area. The nursery unit teacher was appointed in March 2008.

4.2 The parents and staff were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery unit through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection. The responses returned indicate a high level of satisfaction with the provision.

4.3 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the nursery unit is excellent. The nursery unit has an excellent ethos and comprehensive policies and procedures for child protection that comply fully with the Department of Education Circulars and guidance. The inspection evidence indicated that these policies and procedures are implemented effectively by all the staff who show a very high level of concern for the children's welfare.

4.4 The nursery programme gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

- the caring and welcoming ethos which helps promote the children's self-esteem, confidence, independence and excellent behaviour;
- the bright and stimulating learning environment is well resourced to provide a range of appropriate indoor play activities, areas of interest and additional outdoor opportunities for energetic and creative play;
- the daily timetable is well organised to provide a good balance of periods of extended play and enjoyable group activities, with smooth transitions which are used to promote children's learning;
- the good start made to the review of planning and assessment;
- the hard work and commitment of the nursery unit teacher and staff, effectively supported by the Principal and Board of Governors; and
- the effective links established with parents, the local community and external agencies: the nursery unit is a valued part of the community.

4.6 The inspection identified the following area for improvement:

- there is a need to develop further the staff interaction with the children to fully exploit the learning potential of the planned activities across the pre-school programme.

4.7 In the areas inspected the nursery unit has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few areas for improvement in important areas which need addressed to meet effectively the needs of the all the learners.

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON SEAGOE PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	0
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	4	0
With English as an additional language	0	0

* 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.	11.5%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93.5%

2. Duration of Sessions

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

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	1	0
Nursery Assistants	1	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	0	0

Number of: ****	
Students	1
Trainees	3

**** Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	65%
Number of written comments	8

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