



*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

Seaview Primary School and Nursery Unit Belfast

Inspected: April 2009

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|--|------|---|
| A. | i. | School: Seaview Primary
Belfast | iii. | Date of Inspection: W/B 22.04.09 |
| | ii. | School Reference Number: 101-0266 | iv. | Nature of Inspection: Focused |

B.

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 1 Intake	33	37	30	26	40
Enrolments					
Primary	320	289	271	255	256
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	26	26	26	26	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): 94.2%

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

- | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|----|---|---|
| D. | i. | Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 13 | 1 | 0 |
|----|----|---|----|---|---|

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-------|--------------|
| ii. | PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 21.54 | NI PTR: 20.8 |
|-----|----------------------------|-------|--------------|

- iii. Average Class Size: 21.25

- iv. Class Size (Range): 15 to 26

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|------|---|
| v. | Ancillary Support: | | |
| | Number of Hours Per Week: | i. | Clerical support: 27.5 |
| | | ii. | Official Making A Good Start Support: 35 |
| | | iii. | Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 44 |

- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0.4%

- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 13%

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

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 29%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Seaview Primary School is situated off the Shore Road in north Belfast. The majority of the children who attend the school come from the immediate vicinity of the school, a few travel from further afield. The current enrolment of the school stands at 256; a further 26 children attend the nursery unit. Approximately 30% of the children are entitled to free school meals (FSM). The school has identified 13% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on the quality of the children's experiences in literacy and numeracy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting learning and teaching. The school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection, were also evaluated.

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

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching 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 children from year 6.

One hundred and forty questionnaires were issued to parents; approximately 30% of the parental questionnaires were returned to the Department of Education (DE). Eleven returns contained additional written comments. Most of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the sense of community in the school and the enthusiasm their children show for learning. In the nursery unit, 31% of the 26 questionnaires which were issued to the parents were returned to DE. Two of the returns included additional comments. The responses from parental questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the nursery provision, in particular the parents acknowledged the caring staff and the attractive facilities. An analysis of the questionnaires and the written comments and any issues raised by the parents were shared with the Principal and the governors.

Six teachers completed the confidential online questionnaire. The majority of responses were affirmative of the work of the school. Issues raised by some of the teachers regarding communication, resourcing and management of the school were communicated to the Principal and the governors.

The governors spoke very highly of the school, the staff and the Principal. In particular, they value the hard work and commitment of the teachers in support of the children's learning.

The group of children who met with members of the inspection team spoke enthusiastically about the support they receive from their teachers and their enjoyment of the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The children know what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. The strengths of the pastoral care in this school include the celebration of the children's achievements throughout the school, the supportive learning experiences evident in most of lessons observed and the well attended breakfast club, supported by the 'Extended Schools' initiative.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school and the nursery unit have satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by DE, but the following minor area needs to be addressed: the need to ensure that the arrangements for child protection are made known to all parents/guardians at least every two years.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting health and physical activity, including opportunities for healthy eating and participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There are effective policies and programmes in place, for example a well-attended breakfast club and the promotion of healthy breaks which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The majority of children are keen and interested learners; they engage readily in the activities and work steadily with perseverance. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, most of the children have an enthusiastic attitude to their work and are prepared to attempt more difficult and challenging learning activities. The majority of the children make appropriate progression in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of provision for English and literacy is good. By the end of key stage (KS) 1 the majority of children achieve or surpass the expected level of attainment in English. By the end of KS2, a minority of children attain the highest level of attainment in English; the school has identified the need to improve further the overall standards in English at KS2. As a result of their analysis of data, the school has reviewed the literacy programme to promote a greater range of learning and teaching strategies to engage the children actively in their learning and to challenge the children's thinking skills. The school needs to monitor and evaluate in a systematic manner the impact of these approaches in order to track the individual progress of the children to ensure the standards are raised further.

Under the direction of the literacy co-ordinators the school has placed a strong focus on the development of talking and listening skills across the key stages. As a result, the opportunities provided by the teachers for the development of talking and listening skills are very good. In the foundation stage (FS) the children have benefited from the impact of the Communication and Education Together programme (COMET); they talk with confidence in play and have developed good listening skills. Across the key stages the children work well

in pairs, groups and during whole class discussions; they ask questions and provide extended responses in a range of contexts. In addition, drama and dance are used effectively to promote the children's talking and listening skills.

The school has recently introduced a new reading scheme and there is a wide range of interesting fiction and non-fiction reading material available for the children, appropriately matched to topics they are studying. Effective use is made of the class and school libraries to promote an enjoyment of reading amongst the children. Across the key stages the children read with increasing accuracy, fluency and expression. Reading partnerships are used to provide support for those children who need to improve their reading and there is a consistent approach to linguistic phonics across the school. Through the school's analysis of the relevant data, the literacy co-ordinators have targeted the need to improve the children's ability to interpret non-fiction texts at KS2; the inspection endorses this as a priority.

The teachers have created a literacy-rich environment for the children and written work is celebrated across the school. In the more effective practice in the FS, the children are given opportunities to develop their writing in play-based learning and in response to talking and listening activities or shared reading. By the end of KS1 the children are developing independence in writing and write in different forms including poems, letters, reports, stories and instructions. This work is built upon effectively in KS2 as the children write for a wider range of purposes and audiences with increasing accuracy and proficiency. There are very effective links made with World Around Us as a context for meaningful opportunities for the children's writing. During the inspection there were good examples of the use of marking for improvement to help to raise the standard of children's work and the school needs to ensure this good practice is implemented consistently across the school.

There is effective use of ICT to support the children's learning in English through the timetabled ICT suite and the use of interactive whiteboards in all the classes. In addition, the school's involvement in a digital story telling project provided a media-rich context for the effective development of the children's literacy skills.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

There are many strengths to the mathematics provision. Under the direction of the numeracy co-ordinator, an agreed policy has been developed which enables the teachers to plan for, and develop, effective progression of the children's numeracy skills and mathematics strategies.

The teachers are providing appropriately challenging activities matched to the children's abilities. Weekly class problems provide good opportunities for the children to develop their mathematical thinking. Importantly, the children are encouraged to share their reasoning and solutions in pairs and small groups, allowing the other children to learn from the strategies being used. Many of the learning opportunities make effective use of a range of practical equipment, for example, table top games, Cuisenaire rods and programmable devices. During the inspection, the children worked well in groups, sharing their ideas and reasoning to develop further their mathematical thinking.

The teachers build effectively on what the children can already do, linking the activities to the intended learning and extending the opportunities for the children to explain their mathematical reasoning. It will be important that in their planning the teachers continue to focus specifically on how they will promote further improvements in the children's mathematical learning.

ICT is used effectively to consolidate the children's learning in mathematics. The teachers are exploring further their use of the interactive whiteboard to enhance the learning and teaching in mathematics to improve further the standards the children achieve.

By the end of KS2, a majority of the children achieve or surpass the expected level of attainment in mathematics, and a significant minority achieve the highest level of attainment. This profile is in line with other schools with similar FSM entitlement. During the inspection, the highest attaining children demonstrated their knowledge of important ideas and concepts, for example, estimation, shape and space and multiplication facts.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers prepare detailed half-term and six weekly planning documents that focus appropriately on what the children will be able to do, know, understand and apply at the end of the sequence of activities. This good work is developing appropriate success criteria to measure the children's progress. The school recognises the need to develop further an agreed strategy for using the various forms of assessment to adjust the planning to help the children set specific and measurable targets for improvement.

3.2 TEACHING

Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was very good or better. The effective practice included the well paced and structured lessons, the relevant and creative use of up-to-date topics to motivate and engage the children, the effective links with other subjects, the promotion of independent learning among the children and the effective integration of ICT to support learning in both literacy and numeracy. The school has made very good progress in embracing the underlying principles of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and the teachers employ a wide range of teaching strategies to build upon the children's interests and develop their skills.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The senior management team and subject co-ordinators analyse a range of assessment outcomes, including standardised test scores and end of key stage results. Increasingly the teachers are analysing this performance data to monitor individual progress and to help the children set targets for improvement. The school recognises the need to implement this work more consistently and that the outcomes are used effectively to inform future planning, learning and teaching.

The teachers mark the children's work regularly. They provide supportive comments and clear indications of what the children need to do to improve their work. Importantly, the children are developing their skills in assessing their own work and that of their peers.

The parents have informal opportunities to discuss their child's progress throughout the year and in the parent/teacher consultations which take place in January each year. In addition, a written evaluation of each child's progress is sent home at the end of the school year. There is a need to identify more clearly how the parents can support their child's progress against the agreed targets for improvement.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Approximately 13% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning or behaviour. The school is committed to an inclusive approach and these children are educated with their peers in mainstream classes.

The Principal has the responsibility for the management of the learning support provision and works effectively with the learning support co-ordinator who provides valuable support and special educational advice for the teachers.

The teachers write succinct individual education plans (IEPs) which set out realistic targets, with relevant strategies and suggested resources, to address each child's needs. Learning support files containing IEPs and additional educational advice are maintained and used well by the teachers to support the children's needs. A wide variety of external agencies, including the Harberton outreach service, the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) peripatetic service and the hearing impairment service, provide additional teaching through regular withdrawal sessions and advice for the children referred to their service. A part-time teacher provides support teaching in numeracy for children in year 4; this is valued by the school staff. Classroom assistants and volunteers, trained by the school, participate in a reading partnership programme with some of the children.

The teachers have received appropriate training for linguistic phonics, autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia and diversity and use their skills well to ensure that the children with special educational needs make steady progress in their work. The children experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy achieve good standards commensurate with their ability and make good progress as demonstrated by school data and the children's work. The classroom assistants support the children well and work co-operatively with the teachers to promote the children's self-esteem and to ensure a good standard of behaviour.

Children who have English as an additional language (EAL) are sensitively supported by members of staff and the other children. The Principal and learning support co-ordinator have set up a range of appropriate support strategies including intervention plans, advice for parents and teaching sessions for the children in need of additional support. Some of the children make very good progress in English and other curriculum subjects.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal who has been in post for eight years, is hard working, conscientious and fully committed to the life and work of the school; she knows the school and the children well. In that time she has introduced and overseen a wide range of appropriate school improvement initiatives including improvements in the pastoral care provision for the children. In leading

and managing the school, she is very ably supported by the senior management team comprising of the two senior teachers, both of whom support the Principal well in her work and contribute significantly to the overall effectiveness of the school.

The school's process for school improvement is linked to a well conceived school development plan (SDP). The SDP sets out an appropriate range of priorities for improvement with supporting action plans and targets for improvement including aspects of literacy and mathematics. Effective policies are in place to guide and support the work of the teachers and inform the parents. The SDP meets the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of most of the teaching observed during the inspection;
- the exemplary behaviour of the children;
- the effective links made with a wide range of external agencies that support the children's learning;
- the integrated approach to promoting the development of the children's literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and the good standards they achieve;
- the effectiveness of the management structure in leading change and promoting improvement; and
- the inclusive nature of the work in support of those children with special educational needs.

5.2 The area for improvement is the need to:

- develop further the arrangements for self-evaluation, including the monitoring and evaluation of the children's progress against the targets for improvement agreed in the school development plan and in the associated action plans.

5.3 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this 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 organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

The main strengths within the educational and pastoral provision of the nursery unit are as follows.

- There is a happy, relaxed atmosphere in the nursery unit; the children are very well settled and their behaviour is generally very good.
- The playroom is bright, spacious and well organised; some samples of the children's artwork and models have been attractively displayed.
- The daily timetable is carefully organised to provide extended periods of free play within the playroom and in the outdoor area; there were many examples of concentrated and purposeful play by the children.
- There are satisfactory learning opportunities in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum; the promotion of the children's oral language, personal and social skills are particular strengths of the provision.
- The quality of the staff's interaction with the children is good. They build effectively on the children's interests, extend their language through purposeful discussion and promote co-operative play.
- The staff are hardworking, enthusiastic and developing well as a team.

The inspection identified the following areas for development.

- The staff need to use the information gained from observations to inform the planning, in order to support the needs of individual children and to provide an overview of their individual progress across the pre-school curriculum.
- The school management team, in collaboration with the nursery teacher, need to develop the process for self evaluation in order to evaluate the quality of provision strategically within the nursery unit and to identify appropriate areas for future development.

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this nursery unit is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in teaching and learning and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON SEAVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, BELFAST

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 special educational needs	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	1	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	0
With English as an additional language	2	0

* On 1 July

** 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.	8%
Average attendance for the previous year.	92.9%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4 hours 40 minutes	-	-

3. Details of Staff

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

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	
Percentage returned	
Number of written comments	

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Access to the school site needs to be kept under review.
- The end of the handrail at the entrance to the school needs to be modified to prevent it being a hazard to the smaller children.

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