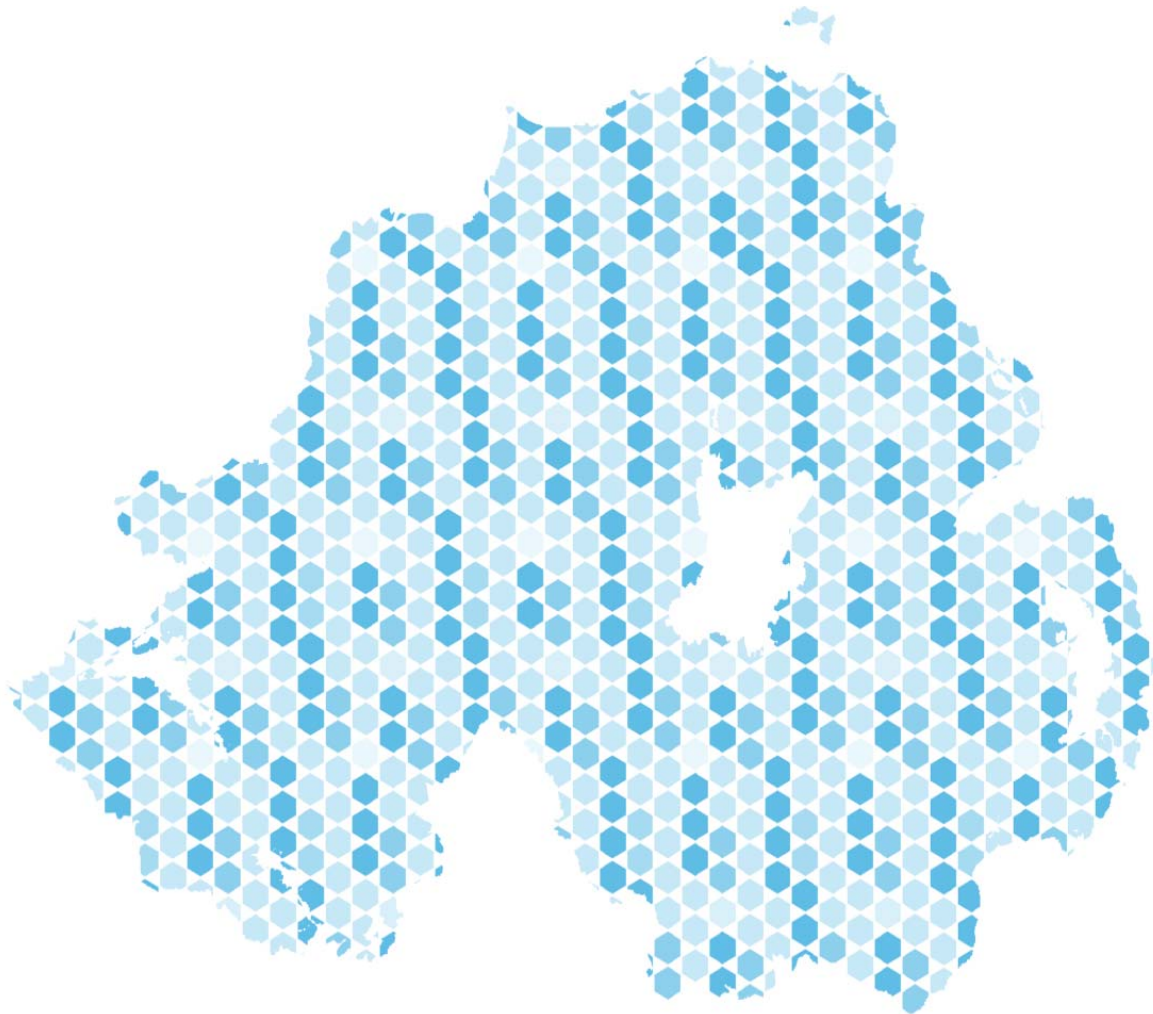


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Anne's Primary School,
Corkey, Ballymena

Report of an Inspection
in May 2010

eti

*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



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

CONTENTS

Section		Page
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	2
3.	THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	4
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	5
5.	CONCLUSION	6
	APPENDIX	

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, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Anne's Primary School is situated in the village of Corkey, 12 miles north of Ballymena. Most of the children come from within a four mile radius of the school, and a minority come from the Loughguile and Magherahoney areas. The enrolment has decreased slightly over the past five years and currently stands at 72. Approximately 21% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified just under 10% of the children as needing 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 and the teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of children from years 6 and 7.

Fifty-two questionnaires were issued to the parents; approximately 68% were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 15 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires were highly affirmative, indicating very strong support for the work and life of the school. The parents commented positively on the overall quality of education provided by the school, the friendly and approachable staff, the effective communication between the parents and the teachers, and that their children are happy and enjoy school.

All four of the teachers and five of the support staff completed the confidential online questionnaires. Their responses were mostly highly supportive of the work of the school, commenting on the collegial working relationships between the staff.

The governors expressed very strong appreciation for the quality of the new accommodation and work of the school; in particular they praised the Principal for her diligent commitment and leadership and the professionalism of all the staff, who work well together as a team.

In discussions held with the year 6 and 7 children, they talked enthusiastically about the welcome given to new children, the extensive range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits provided for them and the exciting opportunities in science and mathematics lessons to learn out-of-doors. They also indicated that they feel happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries about their safety.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors these and the very few other matters emerging from the parents', teachers' and support staff questionnaires.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. Among the strengths are: the contribution made by the staff to promote and maintain a well-organised and supportive environment for learning; the extensive range of extended school activities; the quality of the professional relationships throughout the school; the effective ways of communicating with parents and governors; and the exemplary behaviour of the children.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the healthy fruit tuck shop and the appropriate links with external agencies which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has outstanding links with the parents and within the local and wider community. Communication with parents is maintained through the weekly newsletter. The children's learning experiences are enhanced through a cross-community partnership with the local primary schools through the Primary Integrating Enriching Education project, visitors to the school and close links with the community and industry. The children, supported well by their teachers, have achieved outstanding success in a recent prestigious national science and technology competition. The school supports regularly local and worldwide charities, facilitates community cardiac arrest support, and promotes the community use of the large assembly hall for a wide range of sporting, recreational, and parent support group activities.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children achieve very good standards. They respect and care for each other and are able to work independently and collaboratively in groups and pairs. The children are enthusiastic, highly motivated and engage fully in their learning. They demonstrate progression in their acquisition and development of personal and social skills, and apply effectively their thinking skills to the tasks they are set.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance has been consistently well above the average for Northern Ireland (NI). Compared with similar schools in the same free school meals category, the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics have also been well above average¹.

¹ the key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The children have very good talking and listening skills. In the foundation stage (FS) and KS1, activities such as 'show and tell', shared reading and songs and rhymes, enhance and promote the children's oral skills and help to develop their confidence. They are keen to talk about their work, listen enthusiastically and co-operate fully during well-managed group work sessions. The children display competence in, and enjoy using, ICT when recording 'talking postcards' and 'talking books' based on favourite characters and events from fiction.

The children achieve very good standards in reading. By the end of KS1, most of the children read with increasing skill and fluency. In KS2, the children are developing their reading skills through shared and guided reading and by reading independently from a selection of books from the newly resourced, well-stocked school library. The classroom assistants provide additional and effective one-to-one support for those children who require help with their reading and as a result, by the end of KS2, most of the children read with fluency and understanding.

The standards achieved by the children in writing are good. The school has prioritised appropriately the development of writing across the curriculum and has a systematic plan in place to raise further the writing standards for the most able children by the end of year 7. In KS1, basic conventions such as simple sentence structure and letter writing are developed effectively through shared writing activities, writing frames and work-sheets. The children are able to write for a variety of purposes and audiences in KS2, and the use of role play and real-life contexts makes this work more meaningful to them. There is a strong focus on the children planning, drafting, assessing and editing in order to improve the quality of their work. Information and communication technology, including the use of the interactive whiteboard, is used successfully to stimulate interest and to support writing; in years 6 and 7, the children are using the internet well for appropriate research purposes.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of the provision in mathematics and numeracy is very good.

In the FS, mathematics is promoted through a range of activities including appropriate play-based learning activities. The children have an understanding of early mathematical concepts appropriate to their age and ability. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support the children's learning of mathematics, and they have opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to meaningful contexts across the curriculum.

At KS1, the children use practical resources effectively to establish mathematical concepts and are able to demonstrate an appropriate understanding of number, measures, and shape and space. Mental mathematics is linked, when appropriate, to the main lesson activity. In discussions with the year 4 children, the more able demonstrated a good understanding of basic number, measures and shape and space.

Across the FS and KS1, the children use mathematical language accurately and standards of numeracy presentation are very good.

At KS2, the children enjoy their mathematics, and engage well in a range of active learning activities. In discussions with the year 7 children, the most able have a good understanding of place value, number facts, measures, and shape and space. Overall, the children are flexible in their mathematical thinking and are able to use an appropriate range of strategies.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers prepare very well for lessons. The medium-term planning provides a clear overview to ensure continuity and progression in the children's learning. Connected learning is being developed appropriately through thematic planning. Teachers' evaluations are used effectively to inform future planning, learning, curriculum development and whole-school self-evaluation.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from very good to satisfactory; almost all was good or better, and most was very good. The teachers hold appropriately high expectations of the children's learning and lessons were well paced. Very good use is made of the outdoor environment to support learning. In the best practice observed:

- the children's own experiences were built upon effectively;
- the learning intentions were clear and the success criteria were negotiated skilfully with the children;
- the teachers' focused questions supported well the development of the children's self-esteem and confidence, and promoted thinking and extended responses; and
- the teaching and learning strategies used were appropriately wide-ranging, and included the good use of practical resources and ICT.

During these lessons, the children were highly motivated, engaged actively in tasks, enjoyed their learning and made good progress.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

There are appropriate procedures in place for keeping parents well informed about their children's learning including formal parent-teacher consultations and written reports.

The teachers mark the children's work regularly and supportively. In the best practice, the children receive helpful feedback on how their learning can be improved. This needs to be developed more consistently throughout the school. The children peer and self-assess their work regularly and set meaningful individual learning targets.

The teachers monitor the children's progress regularly and systematically, and collate the information centrally. At the FS, there is effective monitoring of individual children's progress. The school is making good progress in, and has identified the need to develop further, the use of available assessment data to track longitudinally the children's progress and inform teaching and learning. The inspection findings confirm that this is an appropriate area for further development.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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

The school promotes a strong sense of inclusion in which each child is valued. The provision for SEN has been reviewed and updated recently. Appropriate targets have been set to enhance the provision, which is mostly within literacy and met primarily through one-to-one in-class support. The Principal and acting special education needs co-ordinator have formed a good professional partnership in consultation with the teachers, education and library board personnel and outreach agencies, to support seven of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning.

Appropriate screening and diagnostic tests are used to diagnose effectively the children's specific learning difficulties or delays. The school has recently identified this important aspect of the provision as an area for further investigation and development. The individual education plans (IEPs) contain clear and measurable short-term goals that are linked to the teachers' planning and reviewed each term. The children with special educational needs make good progress. Evidence of the progress towards meeting their goals is retained to support and inform the review of the IEPs and to identify further areas for development, in consultation with the parents.

The school deploys and utilises effectively the very good and sensitive support provided by the classroom assistants.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of the leadership provided by the Principal is outstanding. She has a clear vision for school improvement and has high expectations of what the children can achieve. She demonstrates a strong commitment to the pastoral care and well-being of the children and the staff, and to developing the role of the school within the local and wider community. The co-ordinators lead the development work, and monitor and evaluate effectively the quality of provision, in key curriculum areas. There is very good internal communication at all levels and a strong sense of collegiality within the school.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school's process for improvement has many strengths; it is linked clearly to a school development plan (SDP) that complies with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. There are very good opportunities for consultation about the SDP within the school community, and effective target-setting and benchmarking at whole-school level. Appropriate actions plans are in place to develop, for example, SEN, literacy and numeracy. There is an outstanding culture of self-evaluation and associated action to promote improvement throughout the school.

4.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

There is an effective staff development programme that is linked appropriately to the SDP priorities and meets well the needs of the school. The school has demonstrated a commitment to building the capacity, and developing the monitoring and evaluating role, of the co-ordinators, and meeting the individual continuing professional development needs of the staff.

4.4 ACCOMMODATION

The quality of the accommodation and the standard of caretaking in the school is very good. A health and safety issue relating to the school grounds is detailed in the Appendix.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the provision in literacy and numeracy and the standards achieved by the children by the end of KS2;
- the exemplary behaviour of the children who demonstrate high levels of motivation and the ability to learn collaboratively;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, most of which was very good;
- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care and the links established within the community to enhance learning;
- the outstanding leadership of the Principal, supported by committed teachers who provide very good co-ordination of key areas of the curriculum; and
- the outstanding culture of self-evaluation throughout the school and associated action to promote improvement.

5.2 It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The fencing around the perimeter of the school is inadequate. Access to the school grounds needs to be reviewed to ensure the safety of the children at all times.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2010

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

