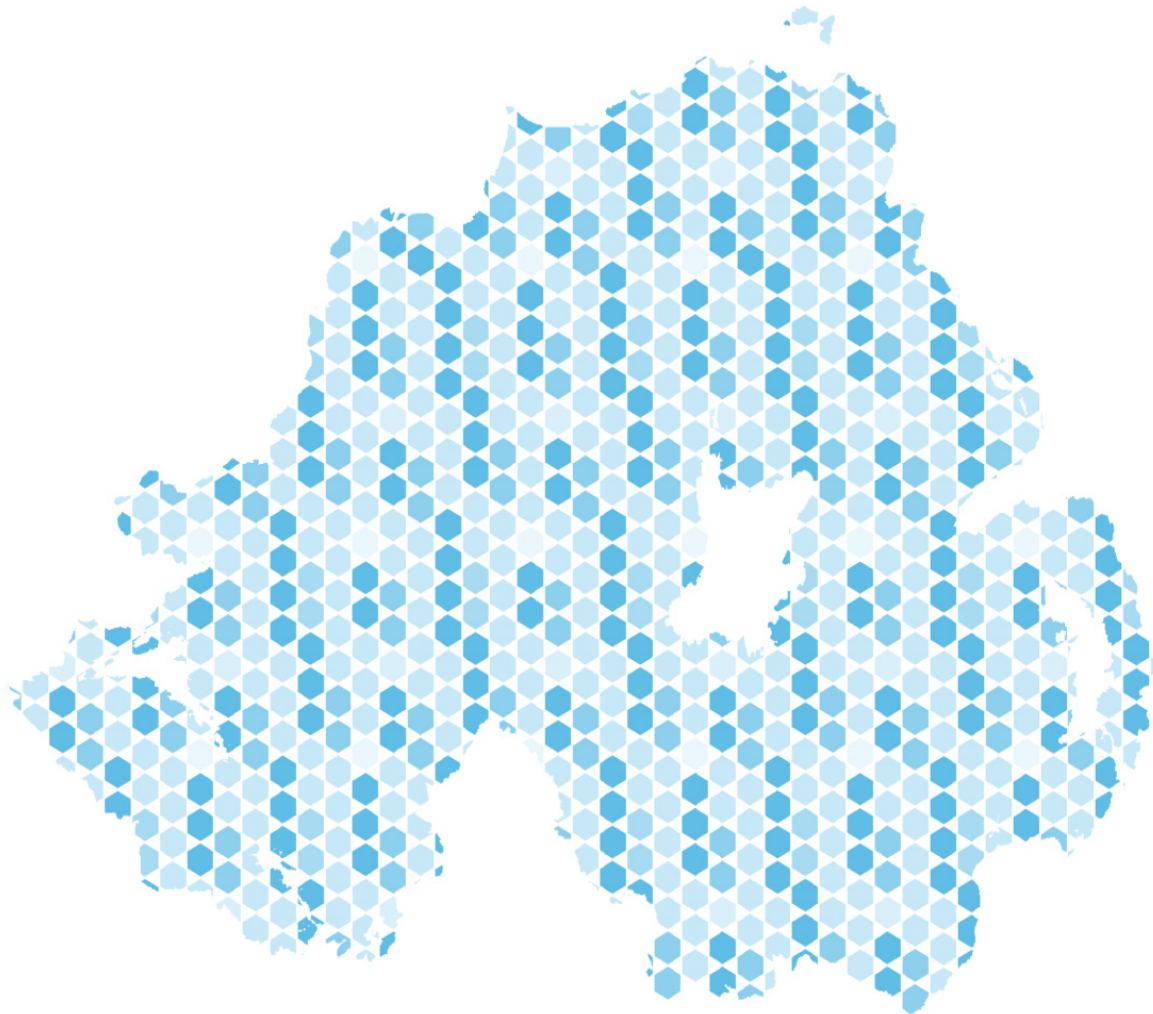


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Anne's Primary School,
Derry

Report of an Inspection
in January 2011

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	6
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 on Upper Nassau Street in the Rosemount area of Derry. The children who attend the school come from a wide catchment area. The enrolment of the school has decreased slightly over the past five years and currently stands at 439 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 28% of the children were entitled to receive free school meals and 24% were identified by the school 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 safeguarding 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 a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Meetings were held with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of the children from year 6, including members of the school council.

Almost 68% of parental questionnaires were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 49 included additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires were highly affirmative, indicating very strong support for the educational and pastoral provision provided by the school. In particular, the parents acknowledged the hard-working and approachable staff, the wide range of extra-curricular activities available for the children, and indicated strongly that their children were happy and enjoyed school.

All of the teachers and eleven members of the support staff responded to the confidential online questionnaire. These responses were entirely positive indicating strong support for the work of the school, commenting on the collegial working relationships among the staff.

The very few issues raised through the questionnaires were shared with the Principal and the governors.

The governors expressed very strong appreciation of and support for the school. In particular they commented positively on the commitment and professionalism of the Principal, and the very active role taken by the staff in involving parents in the education of their children.

In discussions, the children in year 6 spoke enthusiastically and loyally about the friendship of their peers, the caring and approachable Principal and staff, the excellent reward system in place to celebrate wide-ranging achievement, the varied and interesting curriculum and the exciting opportunities available to engage in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. They reported that they feel safe and secure in school and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent; there is a distinctive caring, supportive and inclusive ethos within the school. The key staff with responsibility for pastoral care provide highly effective leadership. The children contribute regularly to the decisions that affect them in school, including those taken as a result of the 'Rights Respecting Schools' initiative. The individual learning, social and emotional needs of the children are accorded paramount importance in the school and there are effective procedures in place to promote the staff and the children's health and well-being. A range of valuable links have been established with business and external agencies in support of all of the children.

1.5 SAFEGUARDING

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 particularly through its longstanding involvement and success in prestigious health promoting school awards. The active school council has formally discussed the healthy eating programme with relevant staff and has implemented improvements, to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has excellent links with the parents and with the local and wider community. Communication with parents is maintained through a regular newsletter, the school web site and a series of curricular information evenings. The children, supported well by their teachers, have achieved outstanding success in a series of recent competitions, including a 'No 2 Drink' health education campaign, resulting in an advertisement to be featured on television. The school supports regularly local and worldwide charities and promotes the community use of their accommodation for a wide range of parent support group activities including, literacy, numeracy and Irish classes.

2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 LEARNING

The children are friendly, courteous and very well behaved; they are highly motivated and demonstrate a very focused and positive attitude to their learning. They interact confidently with their teachers and demonstrate interest and skill in learning collaboratively though group and paired work. They take pride in their written work and have extensive opportunities to apply their learning in a variety of contexts. Effective and well-embedded inclusive systems are in place, to integrate the curricular and pastoral provision within the school.

The children who receive further support in literacy and numeracy benefit greatly from the carefully planned withdrawal classes which integrate a range of well-chosen strategies and short motivating activities, to address gaps in learning, and to enable the children to develop personal confidence in their work. By the end of year 7, most are achieving standards in literacy and numeracy which are in line with their ability.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years indicates that in English and mathematics the school's performance is mostly above the Northern Ireland average. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are mostly above the average. The school participates, at both KS1 and KS2, in the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) Accreditation scheme and achieves standards in ICT that are above the NI average.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of the provision in English and literacy is outstanding.

The children demonstrate excellent talking and listening skills. They engage confidently and co-operatively in collaborative group activities and are keen to listen enthusiastically and to talk about their work. The teachers develop further the children's language through effective and challenging questioning which encourages them to generate their own ideas and to make their own judgements. The school provides excellent opportunities for the children to enhance their talking and listening skills through participation in the school drama production and in the local feis.

There is a rigorous and systematic approach to the teaching of reading throughout the school. The teachers have created a literacy rich environment to support the children's learning, and they promote the enjoyment of books and the written word through a number of initiatives which engage the children very well in their reading. A range of reading materials and methods are used, including a well-structured phonological awareness programme, to meet appropriately the needs of all the children. A paired reading programme in KS1 provides further support in helping them to acquire core reading skills. By the end of KS2 most of the children read with a very good level of fluency, expression, understanding and enjoyment and can speak enthusiastically about their favourite books, authors and characters.

The teachers provide the children with a wide range of opportunities to experiment with writing, to express ideas in a range of genres and to write across the curriculum. In KS1, basic conventions such as simple sentence structure are developed effectively through well-planned opportunities for the children to collaborate on pieces of writing. The standard of written work achieved by the children is excellent; by the end of KS2 most of the children are able to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, and the use of real life contexts makes this work meaningful to them. They take great pride in their work and the standard of presentation is consistently very high.

The literacy co-ordinator provides very effective curricular leadership. The literacy policy provides clear direction for the teaching approaches deployed across the school. The children's progress is monitored effectively and evaluated with constructive feedback to all staff; this informs the literacy and special educational needs (SEN) priorities in the school development plan (SDP). Information and communication technology, including the interactive white board, is used successfully by the staff, and the children, to enhance all aspects of literacy provision and to support writing across all key stages; in years 6 and 7 the children are using the internet well for suitable research purposes.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is outstanding.

In the foundation stage (FS), the children experience a range of well-planned opportunities to consolidate and extend their mathematical language and understanding. Practical equipment and everyday materials are used to good effect, and the children develop their ability to sort, match, count, and recognise and create patterns. This early mathematical development is built upon effectively in KS1 and KS2, with the children's knowledge, understanding and skills being extended through a broad and balanced approach to the mathematics curriculum. Importantly, the children have excellent opportunities to apply their mathematical learning in a range of different contexts across the curriculum, and in everyday life. The teachers make effective use of a range of ICT, including interactive games, websites and programmable devices to support learning and teaching in numeracy. A significant strength of the provision is the teachers' high expectations for the children's mathematical learning.

The curriculum leadership of the numeracy co-ordinator is highly effective. The very comprehensive whole-school lines of development in number, shape and space, measures, handling data and processes guide the teachers' thorough planning in mathematics. This guidance is complemented effectively by a similar line of development for mental mathematics. The numeracy co-ordinator monitors regularly the medium-term planning and undertakes rigorous analysis of the children's performance in standardised tests. The further involvement of the parents in their children's mathematical learning has been identified by the school as a priority for improvement; there is evidence that the parents appreciate the initiatives to help them support their children in mathematics.

By the end of KS2, almost all of the children achieve excellent standards in mathematics and are working at a level in line with, or above, their ability. During the inspection the children in years 4 and 7 demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of number facts, shape and space, estimation and measures, and showed an ability to think flexibly and confidently in these areas.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers prepare diligently long, medium and short term planners to guide the learning. The plans are well informed by the teachers' knowledge and understanding of all of the children, identify clear lines of progression, and detail appropriately the intended learning outcomes and the teaching strategies to be used. The written plans are evaluated effectively by the teachers in order to inform future planning and take full account of the range of ability within the class.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection the quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory; almost all of the teaching was good or better with more than four-fifths being outstanding or very good. A key strength of the provision is the commitment and perseverance of the whole staff. The teachers understand the children's learning needs,

engage their interest, differentiate appropriately, and ensure high levels of motivation and involvement. They set appropriately high expectations for all of the children. The lessons are very well-paced and challenging; skilful questioning is used to stimulate thinking and to develop extended oral responses from the children. The learning support assistants make a very significant contribution to the effective teaching and learning within the classrooms.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school has designed and implements very effective processes for the continual assessment of all the children. Through a detailed and comprehensive analysis of standardised and non-standardised tests, the teachers identify promptly those children who are under-achieving or who are having difficulty with aspects of their learning. An appropriate range of intervention strategies are being used very successfully to meet the needs of these children. The school is making good use of this performance data to inform the setting of whole-school targets for improvement in aspects of literacy and numeracy.

The teachers mark the children's work diligently and in the majority of classes are giving evaluative and supportive comments to reinforce the learning. The children are taught appropriately to use a range of strategies to improve the standard of their work; they are involved fully in setting targets to develop their subject knowledge and skills.

There are highly effective procedures in place to keep parents well informed about their children's progress; these include written reports and two formal parent-teacher consultations. The annual reports on the children are of a very high standard; they are detailed, informative and indicate clearly to parents how they can reinforce and contribute to the education of their child.

3.4 HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT

The number of children in the Hearing Impaired Unit (HIU) has fallen over the last six years from a total of eight children in 2005-2006 to three children currently, in 2010-2011. In addition, the HIU specialist teacher and assistants, in professional liaison with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), support very effectively another hearing impaired child integrated within the mainstream classes and withdrawn for individual support. As a consequence of the falling enrolment in the HIU the role of the specialist teacher has changed to include support for other mainstream schools, as part of the Western Education and Library Board services for the hearing impaired.

The children benefit collectively from a supportive, caring start to the day, and from the staff's understanding of their individual educational and pastoral needs. The effective teamwork established between the specialist teacher and the assistants provides important continuity for the children when the HIU teacher leaves to take up her duties in the other schools.

The specialist teacher has established very good working relationships with the school leadership team (SLT), SENCO and staff. She is diligent and has provided effective professional development opportunities on deaf awareness for staff and on hearing impairment issues, including the effective use of technological aids for the children. She provides outstanding withdrawal teaching to supplement the children's learning in the mainstream classrooms. Planning and preparation for teaching and learning is meticulous. Assessment of the children's learning is thorough and parents are kept suitably informed through daily home-school diaries. Links with parents, and with the statutory and voluntary agencies associated with deaf issues, are used well to inform and support the work in the HIU and across the school. The children achieve very well as a result of this provision.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of leadership and management in the school is outstanding. The Principal provides excellent strategic and caring leadership and has an appropriate vision for the future development of the school. She has developed a dynamic and energetic distributive leadership structure, to manage the varied and challenging needs of the school. The Principal sets a very positive tone for the working of the school through her excellent working relationships with the children, parents and staff. She has very high expectations for all members of the school community and is committed and dedicated to providing the best possible standards of education for all the children. The Principal is highly reflective in her work and fosters a culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement. She is very well supported by the Vice-principal and SLT who have worked hard to develop an effective team spirit throughout the school and to promote the leadership roles of the curriculum leaders. Recently the school has been successful in achieving the Investors in People Award, champion status.

The leadership of SEN provision is outstanding. It is characterised by the shared ownership and understanding shown across the school regarding the special educational and additional needs of the children. The staff are well informed by the SENCO, of the range of complex issues the children are experiencing and which are impacting as barriers to their learning. Within the school lines of staff accountability for SEN are clear and effective.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

A highly effective culture of self evaluation has been established throughout the school; this involves all members of the school community in identifying the strengths within the existing provision and setting priorities for further improvement. The school gives very good attention to, and meets fully, the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. The Principal and SLT give a high priority to developing the skills and expertise of all the staff; this professional development is impacting positively on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The school governors make very positive contributions to the life and work of the school and support effectively the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP. They attend training regularly and ensure that all aspects of the life and work of the school are kept under review. Subject leaders report to the governors on improvements made to the areas under focus. The quality of the cleaning and caretaking in the school is of a very high standard.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the engagement and motivation of the children and the high standards they achieve in all areas, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- the cognisance taken by the diligent and committed teaching and support staff of the individual learning, social and emotional needs of the children;

- the outstanding provision for the children with special educational needs including those supported by the HIU;
- the high quality of the teaching observed, which was outstanding or very good in more than four-fifths of the lessons;
- the highly effective culture of self evaluation throughout the school and the resulting action to promote improvement in the best interests of all of the children; and
- the outstanding leadership of the Principal, Vice-principal and school leadership team, and the very high expectations set for the children and for all aspects of the school's work.

5.2 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Glass panels do not exist in several of the classroom doors impeding the view of the classroom from the corridor.

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