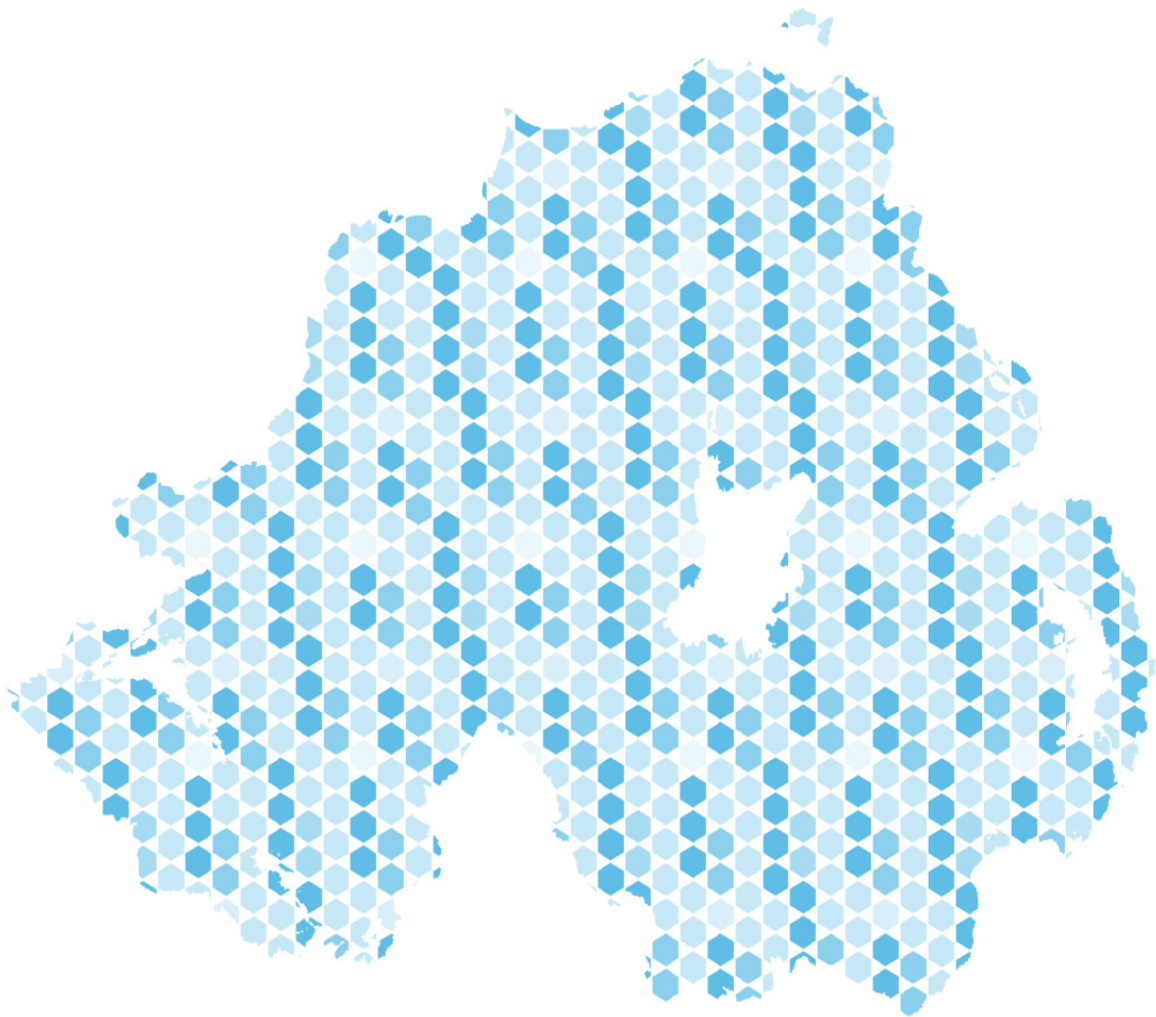


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Colmcille's Primary School
and Nursery Unit, Claudy

Report of an Inspection
in June 2011



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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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Colmcille's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 06/06/11**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-6082** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	47	28	25	32	30
Enrolments					
Primary	293	289	259	250	237
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	26	26	26	27	26
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium 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):

96%

NI Avg Att: 94.9%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers): 11.62 0.62 0 0
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 22.3 NI PTR: 20.7
- iii. Average Class Size: 24.5
- iv. Class Size (Range): 16 to 33
- v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support: | 25 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 40 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 45 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.53%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 24%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 18.98%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2009/10 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics: **English** 75.5% **Mathematics** 71.4%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Colmcille's Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated in the village of Claudy approximately seven miles from Derry. The children who attend the school come from the village and the surrounding rural areas. The enrolment has decreased over the last four years and currently stands at 247. At the time of the inspection 19% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 24% were identified as requiring additional support for aspects of their learning.

The nursery unit is situated within the school and offers 26 part-time places; currently, six of the children attending are in their penultimate pre-school year.

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 a group of the children from year 6.

One hundred and twenty questionnaires were issued to the parents; 47% of these were returned to Inspection Services Branch with 23 containing additional written comments. Almost all of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision in the school. In particular, the parents valued: the happy, caring and family ethos within the school; the supportive Principal and teachers; the opportunities provided for the development of the children's personal and social skills; and the close links that have been developed with local schools. The small number of issues that were raised by the parents were shared with the governors and the Principal.

In the nursery unit, 44% of the parents responded to the questionnaires and three included additional written comments. All of the responses indicated that the parents regard the nursery highly; in particular, they acknowledged the work of the staff in creating a caring and enjoyable learning environment for the children.

Ten of the teachers and six members of the support staff responded to the online questionnaires. Two of the teachers and one member of the support staff supplied additional comments. All of the responses affirmed highly the work of the school and in particular the very good working relationships at all levels.

The governors spoke positively about the welcoming and nurturing ethos within the school, the commitment of the Principal and staff to meeting the needs of the children, and the school's close links with the local and wider community.

The children in year 6 talked enthusiastically about the many aspects of school life they enjoyed including the range of sporting and extra-curricular activities. They valued the support given by their teachers and their role in the school council. They indicated strongly that they feel happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries about their care and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) reported to the Principal and the governors the main messages emerging from the questionnaires and discussions.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in both the school and the nursery unit is outstanding. The strengths include: the very caring and supportive ethos within the classrooms, which promotes well the children's confidence, self-esteem and positive behaviour; the attention given to meeting the individual needs of the children; and the celebration of the children's achievements. The school works hard to meet the pastoral needs of the children and very good use is made of support services to address specific issues. The children contribute meaningfully to discussions and decisions about aspects of school life that directly affect them through the active and effective school council and the eco-team; their opinions and ideas are valued and acted on. In the nursery unit there is well focused guidance for the parents to help them support their children's learning

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school and the nursery unit have very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school and the nursery unit give excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through, for example, the healthy break and lunch routines, the high levels of participation in the walk-to-school initiative, the range of extra-curricular activities, and the promotion of health and wellbeing topics through the curriculum.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school is committed to forging strong links with the parents. In the nursery unit the parents are provided with guidance on how they can support their children's learning at home, through the use of specific games and activities which they can play with their children. The school keeps the parents well-informed about important events through regular newsletters and a texting service. The parents are encouraged and supported to become involved in their child's education and their views are valued. There are regular formal and informal opportunities for them to consult with the teachers through parent-teacher meetings and curriculum information sessions. The parents play an active role in supporting the school and the Friends of the School group has raised significant funds to provide resources which support the children's learning.

The school has well-established links with other nurseries, schools and local businesses. The nursery staff liaises effectively with neighbouring nurseries to share ideas and good practice. The nursery also makes very good use of visitors and educational trips to enhance the children's learning experiences. The school maintains a highly-valued community relations link with a neighbouring primary school, which promotes mutual understanding and environmental responsibility. The older children link with a nearby post-primary school for projects which develop further their ICT and entrepreneurial skills. These arrangements support well the children's transition to the next stage of their education

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

Almost all the children, including those in the nursery unit are confident, well-motivated and work well both independently and with others. They engage well with adults and visitors. They participate well in the learning activities set and show a willingness to focus and persist with tasks. In the nursery unit most of the children demonstrate very good levels of independence and self-management skills. The younger children are well settled, integrate well with their peers and demonstrate independence in their personal care and choice of learning activities. At the foundation stage (FS), the children learn through a range of play-based and formal activities. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of the planned learning activities and in the adult expectations of what the children are able to achieve. The teachers need to take greater account of the children's prior learning and to meet more effectively their individual learning needs. As they progress through the school the children work well with their peers and when given the opportunities, they are able to reflect critically on their learning, identify aspects that might be improved and begin to work towards setting and achieving personal targets.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the last four years shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance has been mainly below the Northern Ireland average. However, the standards in English have improved over the last two years. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics have been generally in line with or just below the average.

The school's own performance data, including the outcomes of standardised tests, shows that, by the end of KS2, most of the children make good progress in literacy and numeracy. While most of the children make good progress, the teachers are monitoring closely the progress of the children who are underachieving. The inspection findings confirm that this is an important area for development. By the end of year 7, most of the children identified with special educational needs make progress and reach standards in literacy and numeracy which are in line with their abilities.

Over the last two years the children in year 4 and year 7 have successfully participated in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Accreditation Scheme and achieved standards that were well above the Northern Ireland average.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of the provision for literacy is good.

There is a very strong emphasis placed on the development of the children's oral skills and as a result of this the children are confident and articulate. In the nursery unit and FS very good opportunities are provided to develop the children's language and communication skills. The children listen attentively to each other and their teachers. In nearly all the

classes observed, skilful questioning by the teachers was used to extend the children's language and ideas and to develop their knowledge and understanding. The children respond positively to the teacher's challenging questions; many showing a mature understanding of current and topical issues. By the end of KS2, the children discuss a wide range of issues including those which require sensitive and careful planning and preparation by the teachers. Most of the children are able to make sustained contributions in class.

The literacy co-ordinator has introduced a more structured approach to the teaching of reading and this is being used throughout the school. As a result of careful analysis by the co-ordinator, there is evidence to show that the children are making progress and many show improved reading attainment. In the FS and KS1, most of the children are developing independent reading skills effectively and are able to read unfamiliar words with ease. A wide range of appropriate support materials such as novels, 'big books' and reference materials are also used and the children, particularly in KS2 are able to talk with confidence and knowledge about books they have read and their favourite authors. As the children move through the school, the teachers employ strategies such as shared, guided, modelled and independent reading to extend the children's experiences and improve their reading ability. By the end of KS2, the children achieve good standards in reading in line with their abilities.

In FS, through a variety of activities, the children begin to learn to develop letter formation, to write words and to express ideas in simple sentences. This work needs to be more consistently matched to the children's needs and interests and more opportunities provided for the children to write independently. In KS1 the children's skills are further developed and they often write in a more extended manner responding to books, poems, current affairs and school visits. As the children progress through the school, they are introduced to a range of forms and styles linked appropriately with other areas of the curriculum and to their interests. In KS2, the examples of the children's personal writing include poetry, letter writing, book reviews, descriptions, stories and reports, much of which is of a high standard. Despite the range and quality of the writing observed during the inspection, there is a need to raise further the standards the children achieve in literacy.

Information and communication technology is used creatively and effectively to enhance the learning for the children in all aspects and stages of literacy

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is good.

Across all key stages the children engage well in their learning and enjoy mathematics. In the nursery there are very good opportunities to develop the children's understanding of early mathematical language and concepts. Throughout the school, the children are able to talk about their mathematical learning and can explain well the processes they deploy, using appropriate mathematical language. Mental mathematics skills are promoted and developed systematically and the children have good opportunities to apply their skills in meaningful and interesting contexts. The teachers make explicit the learning connections, both within mathematics and to other areas of the curriculum. The standard of numeracy presentation in the children's books is good.

In the FS, the teachers make good use of a range of appropriate practical materials during numeracy lessons and play-based learning sessions, to stimulate the children's interest and embed the foundations of mathematical concepts. In KS1 and KS2, the children respond well to a range of activities such as paired and group work, practical work, discussion, investigation and problem solving which consolidate and extend their mathematical understanding. The numeracy co-ordinator monitors closely the quality of the children's

learning experiences through scrutiny of the teachers' monthly planning, sampling of the children's work and detailed analysis of performance data at whole-school level. The teachers use effectively the wide range of information available to target and support the children who are identified as under-achieving; the teachers also monitor and evaluate well the progress made by these children.

The numeracy co-ordinator has recently updated the school's mathematics policy and has begun to review the medium-term planning at FS. There is a lack of coherence and progression in the planning and provision for some areas of the mathematics curriculum, within and across the key stages. It will, therefore, be important, to build on this good work to ensure that the planning takes sufficient cognisance of the children's prior learning and identifies sufficient challenge for all the children.

Information and communication technology is used effectively and creatively to extend the children's enjoyment and mathematical understanding.

The highest attaining children demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of all of all areas of the mathematics curriculum, and excellent use of mathematical language. The children are articulate in their explanations of the strategies they use to solve the mathematical problems posed. By the end of KS2, most of the children achieve good standards in mathematics.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers have worked hard to develop their medium and short-term planning, which is focused on clearly defined learning outcomes. They identify specific and appropriate opportunities to develop skills and capabilities within the plans and this is impacting positively on the learning and teaching. The teachers complete very detailed written evaluations of the children's learning; these should be used more consistently to inform subsequent learning activities that meet more precisely, the needs of all the children.

There is very systematic and thorough planning for ICT throughout the school. This supports the teachers in delivering the requirements of the ICT programme in a manageable way and ensures very good progression in the development of the children's ICT skills.

The teachers take responsibility for devising and implementing the individual education plans (IEPs) to support the children with additional learning needs. In the majority of classes the IEPs are well focused on realistic and measurable targets which guide the work in the classroom. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and the Learning Support Team need to guide the teachers to ensure greater consistency of the target setting in the IEPs across the school.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. In most of the lessons observed it was good or better, and in almost one-half of the lessons it was very good including a few that were outstanding. In the best practice observed: the teachers built effectively on the children's prior learning and interests; the children applied their skills and capabilities to real and relevant scenarios; the teachers had high expectations for the

children; and they used questions effectively to engage the children in higher quality thinking. In addition ICT was used very effectively to support the children's learning across the curriculum. In the nursery unit the adult interactions are of a consistently high quality; the adults listen to the children's ideas and use skilful questioning to extend the children's thinking and develop in them a sense of enquiry about the world around them.

In the less effective lessons, the learning activities were not appropriately matched to the abilities and needs of the children, with limited opportunities to write and work independently. Opportunities were also missed to enable them to transfer their skills to other areas of the curriculum.

The Learning Support Teacher provides very good support for individuals and small groups of children in the withdrawal sessions. She creates a purposeful and nurturing atmosphere and uses an appropriate range of strategies and resources to address the children's specific learning targets. The children respond well to this support, are gaining in confidence and most are making progress in literacy and numeracy as a result.

There is a need to disseminate the aspects of the very good and outstanding practice more effectively in order to ensure consistently high-quality teaching and learning experiences for all the children.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The parents are kept well informed of their child's progress through two parent meetings and an annual written report. The annual report provides the parents with a comprehensive evaluation of their child's progress and identifies a focus for further development for each child.

The teachers mark the children's written work regularly and, in the best practice, the teachers annotate the work, indicating appropriately what has been achieved and how the work could be improved. In KS2, the children are involved in regular peer and self-assessment of achievement and learning and they set individual targets for self-improvement. It is important that the teachers provide the children with opportunities to meet the individual targets set and also provide the children with regular feedback on the progress towards the achievement of their target.

The school uses a suitable range of standardised and non-standardised testing to assess the children's levels of achievement in English and mathematics. The available performance data is used effectively to analyse trends at whole-school and class level. The school has begun appropriately to use this data to monitor and track the progress of individual children; this data now needs to be used more effectively to inform short-term planning. In the FS the teachers need to develop further the observation and record keeping procedures in order to help them track the children's progress, to identify their needs and to assess their stage of development.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the special educational needs (SEN) provision is good.

The school is strongly committed to providing additional support to children who have a range of barriers to their learning. The school has identified 24% of children who require additional support with aspects of their learning; a small number of the children are identified with medical and behavioural needs and seven have statements of SEN.

The children who require additional support are identified through the teachers' observations and evaluations, consultation with parents, and the use of a range of standardised tests. The current provision is through in-class, withdrawal and peripatetic support. Where there is evidence, especially in the FS, that children are underachieving or having difficulty with aspects of their learning, it is important that the school puts in place early intervention strategies, particularly with regard to numeracy support.

The SENCO maintains good links with the parents and a range of support agencies and has developed sensitive and suitable individual programmes for children to help with their transitions through the school and towards the next phase of their education. It is appropriate that the school is currently introducing a management information system to maintain the SEN register and to track more efficiently the progress made by the children.

The SEN assistants provide a high level of pastoral support for individual children within the classes they make a significant contribution to the delivery of reading programmes. The children who receive additional reading support make good progress.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of leadership and management is good.

The Principal has been in post for ten years and provides very good leadership. She knows the children and is deeply committed to meeting their educational and pastoral needs. She is very supportive of the work in the nursery unit and is committed to developing the whole school within the parish and the community. She has worked hard to foster successful links with parents and other schools to enrich the learning experiences for all the children. She has developed a culture of self-evaluation and has promoted a strong sense of team-work within the school, providing opportunities for all staff to be part of the improvement process. The Principal is supported effectively in this work by a dedicated Vice-principal who provides support and guidance through the analysis and interpretation of relevant, quantitative data and the SENCO who guides effectively the co-ordination of the SEN provision.

The curriculum co-ordinators have started to monitor and evaluate the teachers' planning and the children's outcomes. The literacy and numeracy actions plans now need to be based firmly on the analysis of this information with clear priorities and actions identified for improvement

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The SDP meets fully, the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. It sets out a wide range of priorities for the medium and longer term which are based on the outcomes of a range of self-evaluation processes, including audits, consultations and the scrutiny of available data. The senior management team (SMT) have identified as a key priority, the need to bring about further improvements in the standards achieved by the children. The curriculum priorities and the action plans now need to focus more sharply on the actions which will guide these improvements.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

Very good use is made of all the available space in the school; the staff work well to create inviting learning environments in the classrooms, corridors and outside spaces. The quality of caretaking is very good, and the school and surrounding grounds are very well maintained.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are well-informed about the work of the school and support the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP. They contribute well to the life and work of the school.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very caring and supportive ethos and the outstanding quality of the arrangements for pastoral care;
- the confident and well-motivated children who engage enthusiastically in all aspects of their learning and school life;
- the good or better quality of teaching in most of the lessons observed and the very good quality of the provision in the nursery unit;
- the good standards reached by most of the children in literacy and numeracy and the very good standards achieved in ICT;
- the very good leadership of the Principal and the hard work and commitment of the teachers and the support staff to the life and work of the school, and
- the very effective links established with the parents and the local community which broaden and enhance the children's learning experiences.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- plan more rigorously and strategically at all levels, and disseminate good practice more effectively to bring about further improvements in the levels attained by a minority of the children in literacy and numeracy.

5.3 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 The main strengths within the nursery unit include:

- the confident, well-motivated children who demonstrate very good levels of independence, self management and enjoyment in their learning;
- the very good to outstanding opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum; in particular, the development of the children's early mathematical concepts and of their language and communication skills;
- the very good written planning which outlines clearly the planned learning within each area of the pre-school curriculum, ensures progression in the children's learning experiences and guides the adults effectively in their day-to-day work with the children;
- the consistently high-quality adult interactions with the children;
- the outstanding links with the parents to help them support their children's learning; and
- the very effective nursery teacher, skilful assistant and hard-working trainee team.

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST COLMCILLE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, CLAUDY

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***	1	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.	
Average attendance for the previous year.	95%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
-	2 ² / ₃ hours	-

3. Details of Staff

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

Number of: ****	
Students	2
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	25
Percentage returned	44%
Number of written comments	3

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