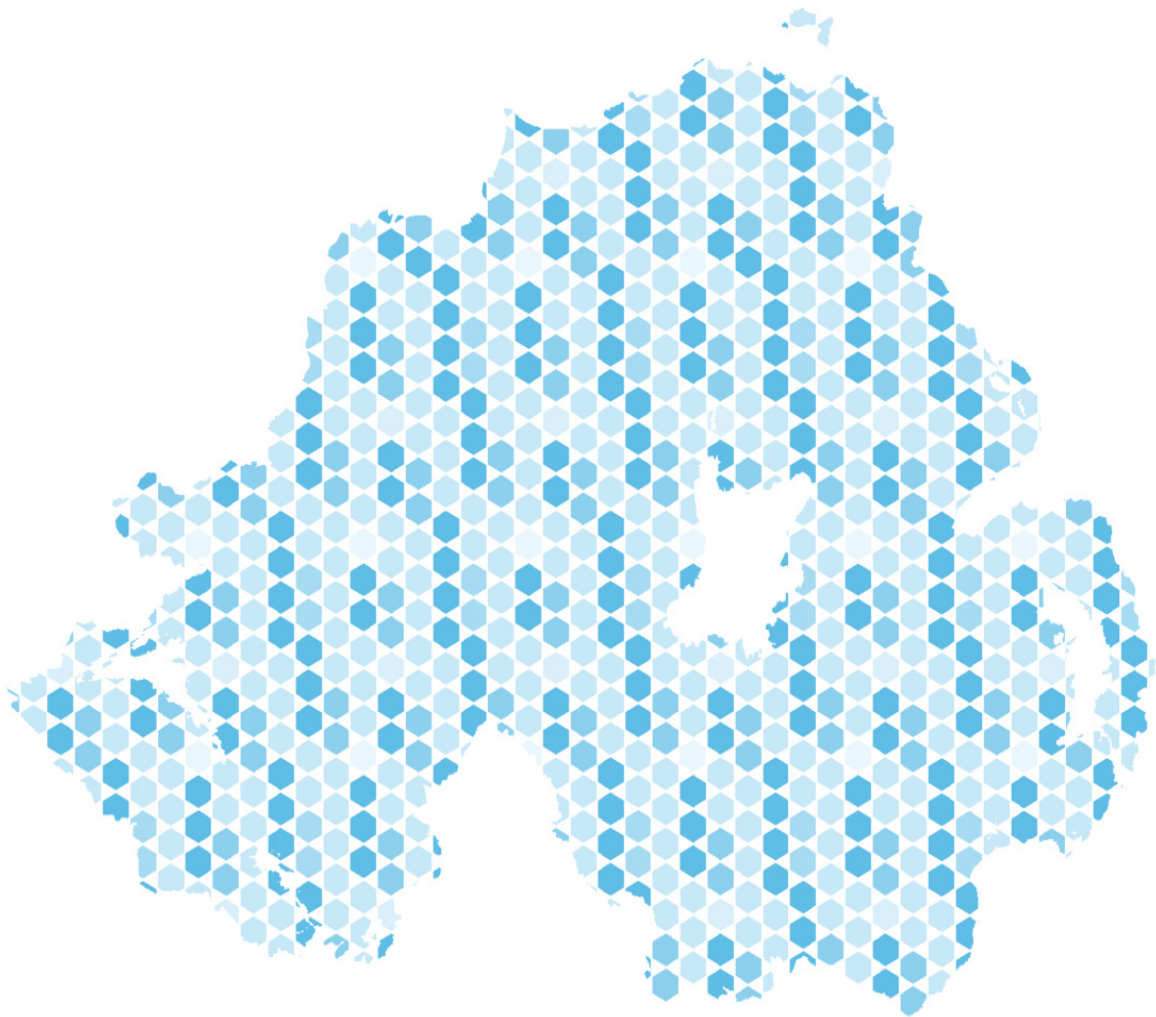


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School,
Donagh

Report of an Inspection
in October 2011



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Joseph's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 17/10/11**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-6107** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	8	11	9	10	17
Enrolments					
Primary	77	75	77	73	78
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
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): 95.5% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 94.1%
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 4.4 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.5 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 19.5
- iv. Class Size (Range): 11 to 28
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support: | 17.5 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 20 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 0 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.5%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 14%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age:
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 21.7%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2010/11 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools):
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------|--------------------|------|--------------|-----|
| English | 91.67% | Mathematics | 100% | Irish | N/A |
|----------------|--------|--------------------|------|--------------|-----|

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

St Joseph's Primary School is situated between Lisnaskea and Roslea in the parish of Galloon, Newtownbutler, Co Fermanagh. Almost all of the children come from the local and surrounding rural area. The enrolment has remained steady and is currently 78. At the time of the inspection, 22% of the children were entitled to free school meals. Fourteen per cent of the total children enrolled in the school are on the special needs register.

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 teaching and 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, the teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Meetings were held with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors), and the children from year 6.

Of the 49 questionnaires issued to the parents; 47% were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which seven contained additional written comments. An analysis of the questionnaires and the comments made by the parents and the staff were shared with the Principal and the governors. Almost all of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the caring and hard-working staff, and the value placed on the school in the community. A small number of concerns raised are addressed in the body of the report. No teacher or support staff questionnaires were returned.

The Board of Governors praised the quality of the teaching provided and the welcoming atmosphere in the school.

In discussions held with the year 6 children, they spoke positively about many aspects of school life. In particular they valued the help of the teachers and support staff and the opportunities available for extra-curricular activities. They indicated strongly that they feel happy and safe in school and know what to do if they have any worries or concerns.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good; there is a welcoming, family atmosphere and supportive ethos. All the staff, classroom and auxiliary, are committed to the care and welfare of the children. The adults have encouraged an ethos in which the children's views and opinions are listened to and acted upon. The children's work and achievements are recognised through a whole school reward system.

The school has developed a good Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme. The children have opportunities to celebrate their achievements in singing and music through participation in whole school assemblies, feiseanna and through engagement in cross-community projects.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good 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 very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example, through the provision of the fruit break, and the promotion of healthy lunches. There is a strong focus on sport, including the key stage (KS) 2 swimming programme and the coaching provided in a range of games, which encourages the children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The parents receive information about the children's learning and school events through newsletters, formal parent-teacher consultations and curricular meetings. There is very good collaborative work with two neighbouring schools in shared education, for example, the staff and children have been involved in film making and animation projects. The children have also been involved in a stage production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory which they performed in the local theatre.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children are highly motivated to learn; and in almost all classes they settle quickly to their work, demonstrating very good communication and organisational skills, levels of independence and engagement in their learning. They work together collaboratively in pairs and small groups, expressing their own ideas confidently and showing respect for the opinions of others. Their behaviour is exemplary.

An analysis of the KS2* assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics that the school's performance has improved, in the last three years at level 4 or above, it is consistently well-above above the Northern Ireland average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and

* 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.

mathematics are well-above the average in similar schools in the last three years. An analysis of the children's internal performance data indicates that in English most, and in mathematics almost all the children achieved standards which are in keeping with their age and commensurate for their ability.

An analysis of the information provided at the time of the inspection indicates that most of the children registered with special educational needs (SEN) have made appropriate progress commensurate with their ability. During the inspection, almost all of the children identified with special needs were fully engaged in all lessons and well-supported by the classroom assistants.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The literacy co-ordinator has carried out audits of reading and writing which have led to the development of a yearly overview for whole school literacy provision. The literacy policy and scheme provides helpful and appropriate guidance for the teaching of English throughout the school.

The children demonstrate very good talking and listening skills. In the best practice, the teachers provide very good opportunities for the children to talk about their learning and share their views in pairs and groups and through whole class discussions which are guided by very effective teacher questioning. The children are confident and demonstrate a clear understanding of the rules of group discussion.

The children achieve very good standards in reading. The school has developed a literacy rich environment to support the children's learning and promotes the enjoyment of books through the very good use of the recently refurbished library. The children are enthusiastic about reading and are keen to talk about their favourite authors and characters, having assisted in the planning and selection of reading material for the library. The children learn to read using a well-structured programme which incorporates a range of methods and reading material, including novels, to meet the interests and abilities of all the children. The children read with fluency and expression and show a very good understanding of the text. By the end of KS2, most are reading at a level commensurate with, or above their ability.

The standard of the written work achieved by the children is very good.

The children use a variety of digital media with confidence to express their ideas and to enhance the attractive displays of their work. The teachers and children make very good use of the interactive whiteboards. By the end of KS2, most of the children are able to write in a variety of genres and for a variety of audiences, including the development of script writing for a film making project. The children have opportunities to write across the curriculum and to develop their skills through extended pieces of writing. Most of the children write with accuracy and to a very good standard.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

The numeracy co-ordinator is enthusiastic and demonstrates a clear understanding of the provision, areas for development and standards achieved.

The school gives a high priority to developing the children's mental agility, their flexibility with number and their reasoning skills. The teachers build on the children's prior learning; they focus appropriately on the development of processes, engage in purposeful discussion with the children about their chosen strategies and, very skilfully, turn the children's mistakes into opportunities for further learning. In these lessons, the teachers provide the children with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills within meaningful contexts; they also challenge and extend their mathematical thinking through the use of graded extension activities.

Throughout the school, the teachers, the support staff and the children demonstrate enjoyment in mathematics. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. The children are very confident and competent in their use of ICT to support their learning. They use programmable devices and a range of age-appropriate software to consolidate and extend their understanding of key mathematical concepts and are often well-supported by the classroom assistants to extend learning.

In the mathematics lessons and play sessions observed during the inspection, the children engaged enthusiastically in a range of challenging activities which consolidated their understanding of key concepts, fostered their use of accurate mathematical language and connected their learning across the curriculum. In discussion with groups of children from years 4 and 7, they demonstrated confidence, understanding and competence in all areas of the mathematics curriculum. Overall, the standards achieved by the children, including those identified with SEN in mathematics and numeracy, are very good.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.2 PLANNING

The quality of planning to support the teaching and learning is very good. The medium-term planning by the respective year groups provides a broad framework for progression and ensures coherence in the children's learning and development of literacy and numeracy skills. The teachers evaluate their weekly planning regularly. In the best practice, these evaluations are reflective and focused on the needs of groups and individuals, particularly those with SEN within the class, and are used effectively to inform future planning to meet the needs of all of the children.

The short-term planning for Foundation Stage is underdeveloped to meet the needs of all the children.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection the quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. A majority of the teaching was very good or better and a significant minority was satisfactory.

In the most effective practice, the teachers had appropriately high expectations of what the children could achieve, there was a sustained focus on the planned learning and the lessons were well paced and purposeful. Through the use of open-ended and probing questioning, the teachers scaffold the learning and challenge the children's thinking to promote their understanding and learning.

In a significant minority of the lessons observed, there were missed opportunities to develop the children's learning and insufficient challenge to meet fully their needs which led to a lack of engagement by a minority of the children.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The staff often provides immediate and relevant feedback to the children through discussion about their work. The marking of the children's work is regular and positive; however, the quality of some marking lacks rigour in encouraging the children to improve their work.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the SEN is good.

The special educational needs co-ordinator has identified the need to review the SEN provision, particularly the tracking of the children's progress through their individual education plan and the criteria for those children who progress through and within the Code of Practice.

The school has identified 14% who require additional support with aspects of their learning. There is a culture of inclusion and the children readily participate in lessons. Most of the literacy and all of the numeracy support is provided through withdrawal sessions and differentiated class teaching which is well-supported by the classroom assistants.

The school receives beneficial multi-disciplinary support for those children requiring specialised help through, for example, the Curriculum Advisory Support Service Outreach Support Team and the Educational Psychology Service of the Western Education and Library Board.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of leadership and management is good.

The teaching Principal provides very good leadership for the school. He sets a positive and caring tone and has a clear understanding of how to establish a culture of mutual respect in the school. He has overseen many initiatives that enhance and support the learning experiences of the children and is thoroughly committed to providing high standards of education for all. He is very supportive of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, demonstrating commitment to their welfare.

The Vice-principal and the co-ordinators have multiple roles of curricular leadership and have effective overviews of their respective areas of responsibility. Monitoring and evaluation of most of the curricular areas is at an early stage of development.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The three year school development plan includes appropriate policies and action plans that effectively guide school improvement. The school has developed an effective collegial approach for the use of performance data for target-setting.

The Principal and co-ordinators need to continue to develop more rigorous self-evaluation processes through further scrutiny and sampling of the children's work, and the sharing of best practice in order to make best use of the target-setting process for improvement.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are highly committed to the school and are generous in their time to support its development. The governors and the staff need to 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

4.4 ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation and grounds are spacious. It is appropriate that the staff are action-planning to develop the outdoor area to promote learning.

The governors and the Principal have been trying for at least ten years to resolve the problem of a leaking flat roof. During the inspection, the extent of the severe leakage at several points in the roof was evident when the rain was observed flowing through the ceilings into buckets on the corridors. The caretaker promptly tried to remediate and minimise risk during the inspection however, the wet floors were hazardous. The standard of the caretaking is excellent.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the strong, supportive, family ethos;
- the majority of the teaching which was very good to outstanding;
- the highly motivated and enthusiastic learners who achieve very good standards by the end of KS2;
- the comprehensive planning for literacy and numeracy;
- the wide range of experiences and opportunities for the children's learning through the use of ICT; and
- the very good leadership of the teaching Principal and the supportive staff.

5.2 The area for improvement includes the need:

- to develop further the teaching and learning in Foundation Stage.

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 Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The perimeter fence is too low to adequately secure the school grounds.

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