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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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*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**

**St Naile's Primary School  
Kinawley, Enniskillen**

**Inspected: November 2006**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 St Naile's Primary School is situated on a spacious site on the outskirts of Kinawley village in County Fermanagh. The children come from the surrounding area. The enrolment is likely to remain stable for the next three years. Just over 3% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

1.2 Prior to the inspection, the parents received a confidential questionnaire seeking their views about the life and work of the school; 54% of the questionnaires were completed and returned to the Department of Education (DE). Meetings were also held with the school's Board of Governors (BoG) and a group of the year 6 children. Nearly all of the parents expressed total satisfaction with the school's provision. In their written comments, they highlighted the school's caring ethos, the good links established with the parents, the commitment of the Principal and the hard-working staff. Additional comments made were shared with the BoG and the Principal and are addressed in the body of the report. The BoG commended the commitment of the Principal and the staff, the quality of learning and teaching in the school and the attention given to meeting the children's individual needs. The children reported that they enjoy school and that they feel safe and know where to seek help if they have a concern.

1.3 The inspection focused on English, including information and communication technology (ICT), the provision for special educational needs, and on the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK**

2.1 The staff have established a happy family atmosphere, which promotes a positive ethos, based on mutual respect and good working relationships at all levels. The children are courteous; the standard of their behaviour in class is good. Much thought is given to creating a bright and attractive learning environment; examples of the children's art, written and topic work, photographs and evidence of their achievements are displayed and celebrated throughout the school.

2.2 The Principal and the staff know the children well. Their sensitive and inclusive approach in lessons and around the school helps to promote the children's self-esteem. Effective arrangements are in place to support the children with English as an Additional Language. Regular assemblies help the children develop confidence through the sharing of their work, ideas and feelings on a variety of relevant issues.

2.3 The provision for pastoral care is a significant strength of the school. The teachers encourage the children to become responsible, reliable and hard-working; there is evidence that these values impinge very positively on the children's motivation and attitude to learning.

2.4 The children know and accept the standards of behaviour expected of them; they have opportunities to create their own class rules. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars. The BoG, staff, parents and children are aware of the school's procedures in relation to pastoral care and child protection.

2.5 The school pays particular attention to promoting health and well-being. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of appropriate programmes which encourage the children to reflect on their own well-being and to adopt healthy lifestyles. There is a good commitment to promoting healthy eating and to improving the children's eating habits. There are opportunities for all the children to participate in a range of physical activities. As a result of this approach, the children demonstrate a good understanding of the significance of making healthy choices.

2.6 The school has a range of extra-curricular activities, which includes sport, art, music and dance. The parents and the wider community are strongly supportive of special events such as the Christmas play, the summer musical and sports day, and raise funds for the school. In addition, the children are aware of the needs of others and raise considerable funds for charity.

2.7 The parents are welcomed into the school; they are encouraged to play an active and supporting role in the education of their children and in the life of the school. They are kept informed about aspects of the life and work of the school through termly newsletters and information, including for example, events which prepare them for their role in the Reading Partnership programme in the school.

2.8 The staff have developed a consistent approach to planning across the curriculum. The planning for lessons identifies clearly the intended learning outcomes and is used effectively to guide the teachers in their day-to-day work with the children.

2.9 All of the teachers have composite classes that include two and three year groups. This places considerable demands on the teachers in terms of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the work across a number of different year groups. The teachers are extremely hard-working and conscientious and have realistic expectations of what the children can achieve. During the inspection, the lessons observed were well-organised, purposeful and enjoyable. The quality of the teaching was always good and at times excellent. In the best practice observed, the teachers had taken account of the varying abilities within the class and employed effective teaching strategies that both challenged and motivated the children and encouraged them to do their best.

2.10 The children are well-motivated and settle quickly to work; they display a positive attitude to their learning. Often they show perseverance with tasks and they are developing enquiry skills. They are well-supported by the teachers and classroom assistants. In the best practice, they are encouraged to become independent learners and to explain choices made.

2.11 The school creates a stimulating environment for English and makes effective use of the central and class libraries. The English co-ordinator effectively promotes a high expectation for the development of literacy skills across the curriculum and to the integral part it plays in the children's personal and social development and to their lifelong learning. The staff implement the literacy policy holistically, incorporating the talking and listening, the reading and writing elements across the curriculum. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the overall attainment of the children is good.

2.12 The majority of the children talk confidently about their work and are able to sustain their concentration when involved in listening activities. In the best practice, the children responded positively to questioning that helped them to consider and organise their ideas and to clarify their understanding. The children are confident speakers and the good opportunities provided to talk and listen in the foundation stage (FS) and KS1 establishes an effective approach for the development of communication skills. In KS2 the children's talking and listening opportunities are well structured and the learning outcomes for communication are clearly identified. The children contribute effectively in pairs and in groups, listen attentively, taking turns and valuing each other's contributions. In the best instances, the children interacted with one another and with the teacher and classroom assistants; this practice needs to be consolidated and account taken of incidental learning opportunities to extend the oral responses and explanations from the children in KS2.

2.13 The children benefit from the well-structured and balanced reading programme. They are given a sound start in the FS with enjoyable and contextualised opportunities for shared and guided reading and for exploring books during the play sessions. Good use is made of ICT to create personalised reading resources for the children and the interactive whiteboard stimulates an interest in reading, writing and spelling activities. The children demonstrate confidence in the use of a range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words, for example, phonetic, pictorial and contextual clues. By the end of KS1, most children demonstrate positive attitudes towards reading and are able to read at a level appropriate to their abilities. During the inspection, the year 6 and 7 children read for a specific purpose and were able to give opinions backed up with evidence from the text. In addition, they make effective use of non-fiction material for locating and gathering information, including that from the Internet. By the end of KS2 the majority of the children are reading at a level matched to their ability. It is appropriate that the school continues to promote positive attitudes to reading in order to stimulate an interest in books and to raise the attainments of a minority of reluctant readers. Reading partnership schemes and in particular the Reading Volunteer Scheme are used effectively to encourage and improve the children's reading standards and attitudes.

2.14 The children make consistent progress in writing. They are encouraged to write in a variety of forms for a good range of purposes and audiences. The children make effective use of resources such as dictionaries and thesauri to assist the writing process and to extend their vocabulary and understanding. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught systematically. The school needs to implement more effective writing strategies for the KS2 children in order to improve the editing and redrafting processes and to extend the children's imaginative writing opportunities. The quality of handwriting is largely satisfactory by the end of KS1 and it is appropriate that the school establishes an agreed handwriting style for the KS2 children.

2.15 Increasingly, ICT is being effectively led by the co-ordinator and developed by the teachers; it is used for a variety of purposes in writing and for the presentation and display of work. The school is a member of the Intranet, Super Clubs Plus and makes effective use of the communication tools, including opportunities to write using e-mail. There are e-mail links with well-known authors and the children are benefiting from this form of communication. Programmable devices and the digital camera are used to good effect to improve the teaching and learning of English across the school.

2.16 The children in the FS have daily opportunities to learn through well-organised play sessions. The sessions are often planned around themes, which enable the children to explore and consolidate aspects of their learning through a range of practical activities. The teacher and the classroom assistants interact effectively to support and promote the children's thinking skills. The children appear confident in their play and show a high level of independence, creative ability and enjoyment. The staff have recently reviewed their play policy and identified appropriately the need to provide breadth and balance in active learning processes throughout KS1.

2.17 The school has identified eleven children who require additional support with aspects of their learning; three of the children have statements of special educational needs. A series of diagnostic tests is used on a regular basis to assess the needs of individual children. Currently, the Speech Therapy Service provides support for the children identified with specific language needs. It is assisting the teachers in the development of new teaching strategies in order to sustain improvement in the children's language skills. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the class teachers collaborate to prepare useful education plans to address the children's needs. The teachers and classroom assistants support the children in class; work is differentiated and well matched to the children's abilities. The progress of the children is kept under review and close links are maintained with the parents about their improvement and attainment.

2.18 The teachers assess routinely the children's work in class and they use standardised tests to record their progress in English. The children's books are marked regularly, mainly to identify and correct errors. In the best practice, the teachers add positive comments that affirm the children's work and provide some guidance on how the learning can improve further. There is a need to develop an agreed marking policy and to consider how the children can be encouraged to become more independent and responsible for improvement in their own work. The parents receive an annual written report on their children's progress and the school emphasises the importance of verbal communication with parents about their progress and development. In addition, the children maintain samples of their best work and record their involvement in school activities.

2.19 The Principal is hard-working and is fully committed to ongoing school improvement in the interests of the learners. She combines effectively a teaching, leadership and management role, takes a personal interest in the work of each class and the progress and development of individual children. The Principal effectively communicates a clear rationale for the areas where the school needs to improve and she is well supported by the Vice-principal and dedicated staff. Good team-building approaches result in the support of the broad school community for the work of the school. There are effective links established with the local pre-school and post-primary schools.

2.20 There is a collegial approach to the development and improvement of learning and teaching. The teachers support one another well; they discuss and share information on the children's progress in order to identify effective practice and develop whole-school approaches. It is appropriate that priorities have been indicated in the school development plan, however, the school needs to refine the action planning process and make systematic use of school performance data to inform the BoG and to plan for further learning.

2.21 The challenges of managing a budget deficit have resulted in the reduction of the teaching staff from four to three teachers and the Principal release days are only used occasionally for administration. The funding for this purpose is used to supplement the overall school budget.

2.22 The accommodation is maintained well. The school grounds are litter free and the standard of caretaking is very good.

### 3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the caring family ethos and the good pastoral care provision;
- the very good working relationships at all levels;
- the good behaviour of the children and their positive attitude to learning;
- the quality of the teaching that was always good and at times excellent;
- the quality of the work and the good standards being achieved in English;
- the effective use of ICT to enhance the children's learning;
- the contribution made to the children's learning by the classroom assistants and other support staff;
- the vision of the Principal for the development of the school and the support provided by the dedicated staff; and
- the support of the parents and the BoG for the life and work of the school.

3.2 In the areas inspected, the school has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.



## **APPENDIX**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- The entrance doors to the school and the mobile classroom are not secured effectively.
- The electricity substation fence and gated entrance are not secured appropriately.
- The play areas need to be defined and secured during the arrival and departure of the children at the school.

### **ACCOMMODATION MATTERS**

- The school roof is leaking.
- The toilets are in need of refurbishment.
- The noise levels between two of the classroom are high at times because of the poor sound-proofing in the dividing wall.

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