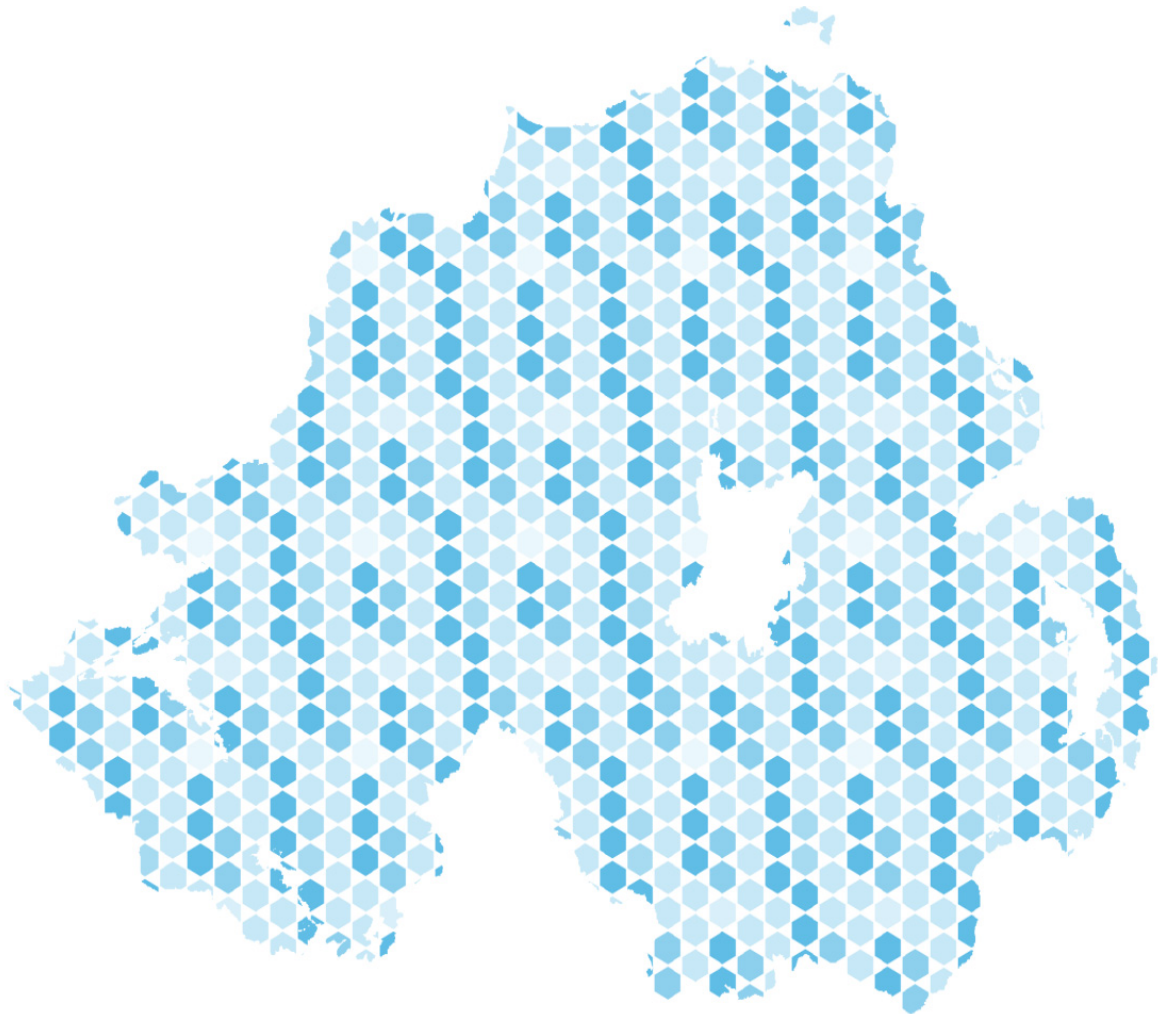


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Ninnidh's Primary School,  
Derrylin

Report of an Inspection  
in October 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

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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 Ninnidh's Primary Derrylin**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-1880**  
 iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 15/10/10**  
 iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	22	22	18	19	13
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	145	147	134	137	134
Reception	1	1	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): 94.8% **NI Avg Att: 94.9%**
- |  | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 7 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.1 NI PTR: 20.7
- iii. Average Class Size: 19
- iv. Class Size (Range): 13 to 23
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 25 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 20 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 15 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 22%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 18%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 9%
- 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 86.7 Mathematics 93.3**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT

St Ninnidh's Primary School serves the Derrylin and Knockninney parishes and is situated in the village of Derrylin, 13 miles from Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh. Almost all of the children come from the village and surrounding rural area. The enrolment is steadily maintained at 134, including 18 Newcomer children. At the time of the inspection, 9% of the children were entitled to free school meals (FSM). Eighteen per cent of the total children enrolled in the school are on the special needs register; 88% of the children registered have educational needs and 12% have medical needs.

### 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 and representatives of the student council from year 7.

Of the 97 questionnaires issued to the parents; approximately 37% were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which 16 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. Most of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the approachable, hardworking and dedicated staff, valuable sport and music activities, and the promotion of the children's self-esteem within an inclusive learning environment. A small number of parents raised some concerns about the mathematics provision, the amount of homework and the lack of parent information shared with them about aspects of the school arrangements.

Six teachers and four support staff completed the on-line questionnaire and all were wholly positive about working in the school. Four teaching staff added written comments about the constraints of using the shared resource areas as classrooms due to the lack of classrooms. One member of the support staff made comment about the valuable experiences gained within the school.

The governors expressed their appreciation of the work of the teaching staff.

In discussions held with year 6 and representatives from the School Council in year 7, the children talked enthusiastically about all aspects of school life. They indicated strongly that they feel happy and safe in school and know what to do if they have any worries or concerns. The children spoke confidently about their roles in the School Council and reported on the significant contribution the council makes to the life of the school.

#### 1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good; there is an inclusive atmosphere and a strong community ethos that permeates the school. All the staff are committed to the care and welfare of the children. There is a mutual respect between adults and children which is reflected in the excellent behaviour observed in all classes during the inspection. The children's work and achievements are celebrated through attractive displays and through a whole school reward system. The children contribute confidently to assemblies and are well supported by the staff and by their peers.

Through participation in the School Council, the children make a valuable contribution to the pastoral life of the school; the older children help the younger children at break and lunchtime; the council manages the healthy break tuck shop and have promoted well the school's anti-bullying policy.

The children have been given valuable opportunities to link with another school in the Connecting People's Project.

#### 1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection has been in post since September 2010 and has availed of training for this role. The Deputy Designated Teacher has just been appointed. 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 popular Fruit Tuck Shop, the promotion of healthy lunches, the involvement of the children in the school's fruit and vegetable gardens and the strong focus on sport and exercise which encourage the children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

#### 1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The parents receive appropriate information on the children's progress through an annual written report, formal parent-teacher consultations and an open-door policy exists for informal consultations about concerns, for example, about homework and the children's progress. In addition, each class teacher provides regular information about class topics, and throughout the school year parent classes are provided to share the methods used for aspects of literacy and numeracy teaching. The Principal keeps the parents informed of special events and curricular developments through newsletters and through the school website which is frequently updated.

The children in year 5 have worked effectively with their parents on a World Around Us (WAU) history project to produce very interesting audio interviews and individual Memory Boxes which have a high quality of presentation.

The ICT co-ordinator has developed effective links with the local post-primary school, St Aidan's High School. This provides the children with good opportunities to develop their ICT skills. There are also good links with the local playgroup. The school supports the local charities and has good links with the local sporting clubs.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

### **2.1 LEARNING**

The children's behaviour is exemplary, they demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and high levels of participation in their lessons. The teaching staff know the children well and respond in a supportive manner to the needs of all the children including those with special needs and newcomer children. The children actively engage in a broad range of learning experiences and have developed very good collaborative skills. Most of the children are able to talk about their own learning and the learning of others, and in the best practice they are fully involved in the planning of strategies to develop their knowledge and skills.

An analysis of the End of Key Stage (KS) 2 assessment data for over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics at level 4 the school's performance has been improving and has risen from below the Northern Ireland (NI) average to above in the last two to three years. The school's performance has fluctuated around the average when compared with schools of a similar low FSM category.

The schools internal data indicates that while most of the children are achieving in line with their ability, there are a small minority of children underachieving in both English and mathematics.

Last year the children in year 4 and year 7 successfully participated in the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Accreditation Scheme and achieved standards in ICT that were well above the NI average.

### **2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY**

The quality of the provision of English and literacy and the standards attained by the children in the school are very good.

The literacy co-ordinator was absent at the time of the inspection. A literacy action plan is being implemented and identifies appropriate actions; for example, a whole-school phonics programme. The teachers have made a good start in developing this programme to improve the children's reading skills and effectively create a literacy-rich learning environment.

The children display very good talking and listening skills. In the foundation stage (FS) and KS1, play-based learning promotes the children's thinking and comprehension skills. Most of the children communicate very effectively during group work. They have a clear understanding of the rules of group discussion. During 'hot seating' activities, the children demonstrated effective questioning skills and high levels of empathy with fictional characters. As the children progress through the school they listen well and speak with increasing confidence and maturity about their work. The drama programme in the school is effective in developing the children's confidence in speaking to and performing for a variety of audiences.

The children achieve good standards in reading. Through the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) Raising Achievement Programme (RAP) in Literacy the school has developed the teaching of reading. The teachers effectively use an effective range of reading methods to develop the children's basic skills in reading. The reading materials are appropriately levelled to match reading abilities. Most of the children, read with fluency, demonstrate very good word attack skills and have a good understanding of the text. As the children progress through the school they use a range of novels to develop their reading skills. In KS2 the children were able to discuss enthusiastically their text preferences, favourite authors and characters. There is a need, however, to ensure that all children in KS2 are using appropriately challenging material to develop further their reading ability and responses to literature.

A Reading Partnership Programme provides additional support for a small number of children who require help with their reading

The children achieve very good standards in writing. In FS the teachers support the children well to develop letter formation, to write words and to express ideas in simple sentences. During play-based learning activities, the children have well-planned opportunities to experiment with early writing. The teachers use cross-curricular lessons to develop the children's writing skills. In KS1 and 2 the children develop increasing fluency in their writing. They write in a wide variety of genres and for a variety of audiences. Most children write with accuracy and to a very good standard; however, the handwriting style in KS2 needs to be reviewed.

The teachers use ICT, creatively to develop the children's literacy skills; for example, in year 2 the children have added combined sounds and voices to photographs to create and present a story that they had developed through their shared and guided writing.

### 2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory and the standards attained by the children are good.

The numeracy co-ordinator has identified the need for a greater whole-school focus on numeracy and it is a priority within the school development plan (SDP). The numeracy action plan appropriately identifies problem-solving as an area for development. There is a need for a greater focus in the actions required to maintain and improve further the standards in numeracy attained by the children. The co-ordinator needs to develop more systematic processes for monitoring and evaluating the provision in order to ensure the consistent implementation of the strategies identified in the action plan.

The teachers have recently produced useful numeracy overviews for each year to aid medium and short-term planning and aim to ensure continuity and progression in the children's learning.

All the teachers have worked hard to develop the role of mental mathematics and there are opportunities at the start of all numeracy lessons for the children to develop their mental mathematics skills. In almost all the lessons observed these activities were practical, well paced and challenging.

In the FS the children show a very good understanding of the number system through a range of appropriate sorting, ordering and counting activities and they have very good opportunities to develop mathematical language and ideas through well planned play-based learning activities. They benefit from the frequent and appropriate use of practical materials which consolidate very effectively their mathematical learning.



In KS1 and KS2 the teachers use games and practical resources well to consolidate the children's learning. There is a good emphasis on the development of the children's mathematical language and the children work well in groups, pairs and as a whole class to explain their thinking and compare a range of mathematical strategies.

The teachers make effective use of ICT, including interactive games and programmable devices to support learning and teaching in mathematics. The children demonstrate a good understanding of number operations and they can collect, sort and represent data in various ways.

The teachers need to ensure that the teaching especially in KS2 reflects the full breadth of the mathematics curriculum on a more regular basis and that opportunities for the children to use mathematics across the curriculum are further developed. There is an over-emphasis on routine calculations and a lack of appropriately differentiated and challenging activities especially for the more able children. In addition, the children need to be given greater opportunities to write about their mathematics, particularly in response to investigative and problem-solving activities.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

#### **3.1 PLANNING**

The teachers diligently prepare long, medium and short term planners to guide learning and use topic webs to support connected learning across the revised curriculum.

The teachers use a range of approaches to record evaluations of the planning and in the best practice take action in future cycles of planning to develop the children's ideas. The planning provides for differentiated approaches for the children with individual education plans (IEPs).

The learning through play and the planning for progression in the activities and the use of the resources is outstanding in FS and as a result the children are developing a range of communication, ICT, personal and social skills, mathematical concepts and creative techniques to share ideas and represent information.

#### **3.2 TEACHING**

During the inspection, the quality of the teaching ranged from outstanding to satisfactory; the majority of the teaching was very good or outstanding. In the best practice, effective staff interaction supported learning matched to individual needs. The teachers shared the learning intentions and negotiated the success criteria with the children to effectively focus the children's attention, scaffold thinking and consolidate learning. The plenary sessions were effectively managed and used to facilitate peer assessment of learning and to plan for further work. The children were made aware of the teacher expectations for high standards of work and involvement in class activities.

In the less effective practice, there is a lack of challenge in a few of the lessons and as a result the children need activities that are better suited to their higher levels of ability in order to sustain their interest and motivation to learn. The standard of presentation of work in some class books needs to be improved.

There is a need to identify and disseminate best practice to ensure consistency in the children's learning and to sustain improved levels of progress and attainment.

### 3.3 ASSESSMENT

The staff make effective use of the external and internal test results to set annual targets for improvement. The test results need to be backed up with moderation of samples of the children's class work representing their on-going progress in literacy and numeracy. In KS1 and KS2 the children need to be given better guidance on how to improve the quality and presentation of some of their written work. The feedback and marking policies need to be developed further, shared with the teaching staff, the children and the parents and monitored to assess the impact on improvements in literacy and numeracy.

The staff maintain a variety of records of the children's test results and there is a need to develop further the assessment system in order to systematically manage the data.

### 3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides very good leadership of the provision for SEN. She initiates the implementation of the SEN policy and action plan; these are coherent and underpinned by best practice in raising achievement and supporting the children.

There are opportunities for close liaison, three times per year, with the parents and an open door policy exists to ensure that there are clear lines of communication between home and school. During the inspection, two parents met the inspectors and praised the work of the SENCO and the staff in meeting the needs of their children. An important feature of the work is the incorporation of Care Plans with the IEPs which appropriately address the promotion of social and life skills of the children and aim to reduce barriers to learning.

There is a very inclusive and welcoming ethos and the provision for SEN is given a high priority. The school uses the teachers' knowledge and expertise, as well as a wide range of standardised tests, to identify early those children requiring additional help and to understand the holistic needs of children and their families. Appropriate early intervention and IEPs support the children mainly in literacy and occasionally in numeracy and the children make good progress in their learning.

The recent school policy adopted for supporting children identified with SEN is that differentiated support is provided within the small class sizes. At this early stage of implementation the teaching is generally well focused on the targets for the children identified with special needs in both literacy and numeracy. The school leadership need to ensure that this model is kept under review and meets the needs of the children underperforming in literacy and numeracy.

The school receives beneficial multi-disciplinary support for those children requiring specialised help through, for example, the services of the Speech Therapy Service, The Physiotherapy Service, Occupational Therapy Service, the WELB Curriculum Advisory Support Service Outreach Support Team and the Educational Psychology Service.

## **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1 LEADERSHIP**

The Principal is in post for 12 years and is committed to the development of the school. Recently, due to the adoption of the smaller class size policy, he has become a full-time teaching Principal. There is a need to ensure that appropriate use of and time for whole-school leadership and management responsibilities is developed further to meet the current and future needs of the school.

The Vice-principal is also the SENCO and in this role, has a clear vision for the development of SEN provision and the school. She provides very good leadership for the staff and clearly communicates best practice in SEN, including systematic monitoring of the individual education plans and supportive guidance for the staff.

All of the teaching staff share a range of curricular leadership roles and work very hard to effectively manage a breadth of very good learning experiences and good outcomes for the children.

### **4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT**

There is a collegial approach to identifying the priorities for improvement in the SDP and it addresses the main requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. In the previous and current SDP the priorities in literacy are effectively supported by the WELB RAP.

Most of the co-ordinators take responsibility for the implementation and the outcomes of their action plans; however, this process needs to be underpinned by a more systematic approach. The Principal needs to plan more strategically for school improvement; particularly the embedding of effective self-evaluation processes in order to address a few areas of underachievement in the children's standards.

There is a need to focus more specifically on the evaluation of the quality of the teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy and to identify and disseminate the best practice in the school in order to maintain recent improvements in standards.

### **4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The Board of Governors are fully involved in the strategic planning and development for the school and effectively support the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP. The Board of Governors have efficiently managed the financial needs of the school to sustain staffing levels and to meet the identified priorities in the SDP.

### **4.4 ACCOMMODATION**

The school opened as a new state-of-the-art building in 2005. The two resource areas are used as classrooms and the teaching staff make best use of the accommodation to meet the needs of the children. The large outdoor play area is developing well and is effectively used to develop children's physical skills and outdoor interests. The school was runner-up in the Tesco Green Schools Award and this work was effectively supported by the commitment and gardening skills of the caretaker who was absent at the time of the inspection. The caretaking of the school is of a high standard.

The controlled access system and front door are faulty and needs, as a matter of urgency, to be rectified.

## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the exemplary behaviour and high levels of participation by the children in their lessons;
- the quality of the majority of the teaching which was very good to outstanding;
- the breadth of literacy-rich learning experiences and the very good standards in English, including the very good progress made by the newcomer children and the children with special needs;
- the creative use of ICT to support and enhance learning and the very good standards attained by the children;
- the very good pastoral care, including the commitment of the SENCO to the holistic needs of all the children; and
- the hard-working and innovative teaching staff, and the high level of learning support and care provided by the classroom assistants for the children.

### 5.2 An area for improvement is the need to:

- develop further the assessment and moderation of the children's learning and plan for greater challenge within aspects of the teaching in order to address a few areas of underachievement.

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

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