



*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

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Focused Inspection**

**St Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit  
Beragh, Omagh**

**Inspected: April 2009**

## CONTENTS

Section		Page
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	3
3.	THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	5
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
5.	CONCLUSION	7
6.	THE NURSERY UNIT	9
	APPENDICES	

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Oliver Plunkett Primary School and Nursery Unit**      iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 30/04/2009**
- ii. **School Reference Number: 203-6291**      iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 1 Intake	17	9	20	13	9
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	110	97	105	96	103
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	26	27	24	23	26
Special 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%

<b>Primary &amp; Reception</b>	<b>Nursery Unit</b>	<b>Special Unit</b>
------------------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

- D. i. Number of Teachers  
(including the principal and part-time teachers):  
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)

5	2	0
---	---	---

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):      20.6%      NI PTR: 20.7%

- iii. Average Class Size:      21

- iv. Class Size (Range):      18 to 22

- v. Ancillary Support:

Number of Hours **Per Week**:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 25 |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support:                   | 6  |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 44 |

- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs:      3.8%

- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register:      20%

- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age:      0

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals:      19%

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT**

St Oliver Plunkett Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Beragh, Co Tyrone. The children attending the school come from within an eight mile radius of the school. The enrolment of the school has decreased gradually over the last five years and currently stands at 103 children. Nineteen of the children in the primary school are entitled to free school meals; twenty percent of the children in the primary school have been identified as having special educational needs.

### **1.2 FOCUS**

The inspection focused on the quality of the children's experiences in literacy and numeracy, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting learning and teaching. The school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection, were also evaluated.

### **1.3 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS AND CHILDREN**

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of children from year 6 and year 7.

Eighty-four questionnaires were issued to parents in the primary school; 36 (43%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 22 contained additional comments. Most of the parents indicated that their child is encouraged to respect and value the opinions of others, that the school recognises their child's contributions to school life and that the school provides opportunities for their child to participate in out-of-school activities. A majority of the parents who made written comments raised concerns about communication, pastoral care, standards of teaching and learning, leadership and management and health and safety issues. All of the issues raised have been shared with the Principal and representatives of the governors.

Five teachers completed the online questionnaire. Their responses highlighted that the children's success is celebrated regularly, that there is effective communication within school and that the children contribute effectively to aspects of decision-making in school.

The governors spoke positively about the leadership and management of the school, the dedicated and hard-working staff and the governors' involvement in the life and work of the school.

In discussions held with year 6 children, they spoke positively about their experiences in school and the support provided by teachers and classroom assistants. They also indicated that they are happy in school and know whom to go to if they have a concern.

## 1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care within the school is good. An inclusive, caring and stimulating atmosphere is evident in the classrooms; children are encouraged and praised by teachers, and the non-teaching staff contribute to the pastoral needs of the children by providing care and support throughout the nursery unit and school. Individual teachers work to ensure the needs of the children with English as an additional language (EAL) are being met; however, there is a need to devise a whole-school based policy and approach for this provision. The bright and stimulating wall displays in the corridors and classrooms celebrate the children's achievements, and record a range of school activities. Whole-school assemblies are used effectively to acknowledge the achievements of individual children and classes. The school has a good range of after-school activities and clubs which provide further opportunities for the children to develop creative and sporting interests. The children talk enthusiastically about the clubs and enjoy the range of activities on offer.

## 1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school's arrangements for safeguarding children are satisfactory and broadly reflect the guidance issued by DE. The areas that need to be addressed include the need to update the Child Protection Policy to reflect the current job share arrangement including clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the designated teacher and pastoral care co-ordinator. There is also a need to review and develop further the Behaviour Management Policy and the Code of Conduct for staff, implement a personal care plan for individual children in consultation with parents and update training of all staff in child protection.

Health and Safety issues which need to be addressed are referenced in the appendix of the report.

## 1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the fruit tuck shop and healthy school dinners, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## 1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS

The school has a monthly news-sheet to which the children contribute regularly; a Foundation Stage (FS) news-sheet is also published on a monthly basis and includes information about activities across the curriculum. The school reports that it has provided information sessions for parents on the Revised Curriculum, Healthy Eating, anti-bullying and reading. Parents of new children are also provided with information about the curriculum for early years. Parents are invited to attend for interview about their child's progress early in the school year and receive a written report at the end of the year. Parents of children with special educational needs are invited to attend for review meetings three times each year. A Parent/Teacher Association raises funds for the school.

## **1.8 LINKS WITH OTHERS**

The children's learning and social development is enhanced by local and international links with other schools, visits to places of educational interest, links with local businesses and visitors to the school. The curriculum is further enhanced through regular planned visits to places of local interest and the school supports several local and international charities. The individual needs of children are also addressed through the development of links with external agencies.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

### **2.1 LEARNING**

Throughout the school the children are generally motivated and engaged; they complete work independently and participate in paired and group activities, often taking on roles and responsibilities. They persevere with tasks and show enjoyment in their learning. The children are given opportunities to develop independence and the school has made a good start to developing thinking skills through practical activities. The Key Stage 2 (KS2) children are also provided with opportunities for independent learning and use ICT resources effectively for research and presentation.

### **2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY**

The overall quality of provision in English is satisfactory. By the end of KS2, a majority of the children achieve or surpass the expected level of attainment in English.

The school provides a text rich environment with colourful annotated displays and appropriate labelling in classrooms and corridors. Within each classroom there is a class library and there is also an inviting central library which the children use for curriculum research and personal reading.

The school literacy co-ordinator has led a whole-school audit of provision which included an analysis of performance data; raising standards in reading and the further enhancement of reading resources were identified as priorities in the school development plan. A new literacy policy and programmes of work for writing, reading and talking and listening have been put in place to guide the work of the teachers. The literacy co-ordinator regularly reviews children's work to monitor standards and progression; there is a need to develop further this practice and more effectively use the outcomes to inform future strategic planning for whole-school improvement.

The children's reading skills have been developed through the use of a core reading scheme, Reading Recovery resources and novels. Shared, guided and modelled reading strategies are used throughout the school. A Paired Reading Programme has been introduced for year 4 children and their parents; the school reports this as having been effective in raising the children's reading standards. Whilst the school has recently received a substantial number of new fiction and non-fiction books, they have appropriately identified the need to provide further reading resources, particularly an appropriate range of novels for KS1 and 2 children.

At FS the children are introduced to reading through appropriate play activities, picture books, core reading material, Big Books, story telling sessions, songs and rhymes and the provision of Storysacks which are shared with parents. A structured phonic scheme has also been introduced from year 1 to year 3 and during the inspection there was evidence that this is having a positive impact on the children's ability to read unfamiliar words. Children in year 1 are articulate and confident in discussing aspects of picture books. As they progress through the FS some of the children are beginning to read independently from the core reading scheme. However, there is a need to provide additional reading activities to challenge the more able readers and to ensure that the level of the activities are matched to the children's individual learning needs and stage of development.

By the end of KS1 the children are reading with enthusiasm and confidence from the core scheme and from digital media. By the end of KS2 the children are reading appropriate novels and talk enthusiastically about personal reading preferences.

Writing in the FS is developed through play activities and more formal planned tasks. While children in year 2 are writing with some independence there is a need for higher expectations of learning outcomes and the need to provide further challenge for the more able children in both years 1 and 2.

In KS1 and 2 the children have opportunities to write for a range of purposes using writing forms which include poetry, recipes, character profiles and descriptive extended writing. Several of the extended writing activities presented at KS2 lacked challenge for the more able children and there is a need to review planned independent writing to provide progression and ensure consistent standards for the children. There is also a need to develop the children's independence in writing through further use of dictionaries and thesauri. The school has appropriately identified the need to raise standards in spelling and the inspection team concur with this finding. At both KS1 and 2 there is evidence of planning, drafting and editing and there are opportunities to develop written activities for different audiences for example the year 7 class regularly contribute to the school newsletter. The standard of presentation is variable and the school has appropriately recognised the need to review the handwriting policy and procedures throughout the school to ensure consistency and progression.

The children have opportunities to develop oral skills through whole-class and group discussions. At FS the use of story time and play sessions provide opportunities for the children to interact orally with adults and peers. In KS1 and 2 the children are encouraged to justify opinions and express points of view; however, the quality of the management of the talking and listening opportunities across the classes was variable. In the best practice, teachers consistently reinforced the rules of talking and emphasised the importance of listening. While the children are enthusiastic and articulate there were occasions during the inspection when activities involving the development of talking and listening skills were not managed effectively. There is a need to provide a consistent whole-school approach to strategies and procedures for talking and listening.

## 2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of the mathematics provision in the school is satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a good start to developing the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics throughout the school. She has worked with the staff to identify priorities for development and evaluates the children's mathematical learning through, for

example, sampling of books, monitoring of planners and analysis of data. The school has identified the need to place a greater emphasis on the development of mathematical processes. The inspectorate endorses this as a priority; the teachers need to develop further the children's ability to think mathematically by providing challenging activities matched appropriately to their abilities.

The school has very appropriately identified the need to review long-term planning to ensure progression. In doing so it will be important for staff to carefully consider a whole-school approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics, identifying a range of strategies and resources that will be employed in developing children's mathematical knowledge and understanding. In the best practice the children are given suitable opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding through a range of experiences, including the use of practical equipment and opportunities for work in pairs and groups; for example, at KS1 a range of structured apparatus is used to help children develop a secure understanding of place value. This good practice needs to be more widely disseminated and consistently applied across the school.

The children are provided with good opportunities to apply their mathematics in context within other areas of the curriculum, for example, displaying graphically the various effects of the potato famine on Irish life. Information and communication technology is used effectively, with teachers making good use of interactive whiteboards, websites, programmable devices and computer programs to motivate children and support learning and teaching in mathematics.

By the end of KS2, a majority of the children achieve or surpass the expected level of attainment in mathematics. During the inspection, while the children demonstrated their knowledge of important ideas and concepts, for example, place value and multiplication facts, at KS1 they were unsure about aspects of measures and were slow to demonstrate flexibility in their mathematical thinking.

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

#### **3.1 PLANNING**

With the implementation of the revised curriculum, the school has recently reviewed whole-school planning; the majority of teachers medium- and short-term planning is appropriately detailed and differentiated to meet the needs of composite classes. Evaluations are insightful and are used to inform future planning.

#### **3.2 TEACHING**

During the inspection most of the teaching observed was good or better, and in a significant minority was very good. In the best practice teachers shared the learning intentions with the children, lessons were well structured and effectively paced, appropriate resources supported the learning including the use of ICT, teacher questioning was open-ended and challenging, and independent learning was promoted.

### 3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers mark the children's written work regularly and have made a good start to implementing assessment for learning strategies. Self and peer assessment strategies are also being introduced throughout the school and are promoting improvement in the children's work. The school uses a range of appropriate standardised tests to assess progress and has made a good start to analysing the available performance data to set targets for individual children and whole-school improvement. The analysis is also used effectively to identify children who may require additional support with aspects of their learning. Information is collated in pupil profiles which track the progress of individual children. Parents are informed of progress during the annual parent/ teacher interview and through a written report at the end of the school year. The school reports that it has an 'open door' policy for those parents who wish to further discuss the educational or pastoral needs of their children throughout the school year.

### 3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Twenty of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and behaviour. The school is strongly committed to meeting the needs of these children and the inclusive approach emphasises the education of children with special educational needs (SEN) alongside their peers in the classroom.

Children are appropriately identified for support from an early age and, in consultation with parents, teachers devise and regularly review Education Plans (EPs). In the best practice these are appropriately detailed and specific, setting out realistic targets and strategies to address each child's needs. Greater liaison between the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and class teachers is needed in the preparation of these plans to ensure a greater consistency in the quality of planning to meet the individual learning needs of children.

Withdrawal sessions are provided for some of the children. In the work observed, the children were supported effectively by the teacher using a variety of strategies to develop and support the children's learning. Good links are maintained with various external support agencies and these provide valuable assistance to individual children. The school efficiently deploys and utilises the excellent support provided by the classroom assistants.

The SENCO and teachers monitor and review the children's progress on a regular basis. There is evidence to show that actions taken have resulted in improvements in learning and teaching.

## 4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 The Principal has been in post for seven years. She effectively combines her teaching responsibilities for three days each week with the overall leadership and management of the school and the nursery unit over the remaining days. She has managed effectively the recent reorganisation of roles and responsibilities of staff and has led the school through a period of significant change with the implementation of the revised curriculum. She also encourages a collegiate approach to decision-making within the school and is ably assisted by the hard-working teachers, classroom assistants and support staff.

## 4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school's process for improvement is linked to a satisfactory School Development Plan. There is a developing commitment to action planning and monitoring and evaluating of children's attainments and experiences. There is a range of effective policies in place for example the teaching and learning policy, the assessment policy and the SEN policy. There are also a number of action plans in place which provide guidelines for school improvement. In order to meet fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, the school should consult fully with parents and pupils on this aspect of school management.

## 4.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The staff have availed of a range of professional development opportunities and this is having a positive impact on the quality of the teaching and learning throughout the school.

## 4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors take an active role in the life of the school including consultation on school improvement, management of finance and review of policies; the expertise of individual members is utilised effectively to assist the Principal in the running of the school. The building supervisor maintains the school to a high standard. The teachers make good use of the space available; classrooms are spacious and communal areas are used effectively.

## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the inclusive and welcoming ethos;
- the quality of the teaching observed, most of which was good or better, and in a significant minority was very good;
- the hard work of the teaching Principal, teachers and non-teaching staff, and the support of the governors in the life and work of the school;
- the use of performance data to monitor and assess the children's individual progress and whole-school improvement;
- the good links established with other schools, locally and internationally, external agencies, local businesses and charities which enhance the learning experiences of the children; and
- the range of curricular and extra-curricular activities which enhance the learning experiences of the children.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- review the literacy and language policy and planning throughout the school to provide appropriate challenge matched to the children's stage of development and ensure a consistent approach across all classes.

5.3 In most of the areas inspected the quality of the education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards and learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

## 6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 The nursery unit is situated in a rural area within the grounds of St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Beragh. The nursery unit opened in 2001; children attend from the surrounding area.

6.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. A majority of the parents responded to the questionnaire and eight made additional written comments. Those who responded indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the overall provision; they appreciate the range of activities provided and the care provided by the friendly staff. The responses from the staff were very positive about the work of the nursery. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the school.

6.3 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the nursery is good. Among the strengths are the caring relationships between the staff and the children and the hard work of the staff in creating a rich learning environment.

6.4 The nursery has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. The recently drafted behaviour policy should be shared with the parents and the locking mechanism on the front door repaired to secure access to the nursery.

6.5 The nursery gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. A healthy break is provided, there are good opportunities for energetic play and the children are encouraged to explore healthy options through the curricular programme.

**6.6 The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows:**

- The staff prepare a very stimulating and well resourced learning environment within the playroom; it is enhanced by attractive displays of the children's own art work and the addition of real and authentic items.
- The staff demonstrate skill in exploiting the children's learning potential as they interact effectively with the children during the play activities to promote a range of thinking and language.
- The planned programme is broad and balanced and provides satisfactory to good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- There are useful links with the adjoining primary school.
- There are appropriate systems in place for planning the programme and assessing the children's progress.
- The wide range of visits and visitors to the nursery enhance the children's awareness of the world around them.

**6.7 The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following is the most important area that needs attention:**

- review the organisation of the daily timetable and implementation of the behaviour management policy to promote longer periods of settled and concentrated play from all of the children throughout the session.

6.8 The nursery co-ordinator has worked hard to develop important aspects of the nursery unit since it opened. The staff regularly evaluate aspects of their weekly programme. The nursery unit action plans identify some relevant areas for further development and are included in the whole-school development plan. The plans should be amended in line with the inspection findings with a clearer focus on improved outcomes for the children.

6.9 In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this nursery unit is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the nursery unit's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

# STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON THE NURSERY UNIT IN ST OLIVER PLUNKETT PRIMARY SCHOOL, BERAGH (203-6291)

## 1. Details of Children

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	26	0
Under 3 years of age*	6	0
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	1	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	2	0
With English as an additional language	2	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.	0
Average attendance for the previous year.	84.1%

## 2. Duration of Sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
-	2½ hours	-

## 3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers		2
Nursery Assistants		0
Qualified Nursery Assistants		1

<b>Number of: ****</b>	
Students	2
Trainees	0

\*\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	73%
Number of written comments	8

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ACCOMMODATION**

- The back and side external doors of the school require security access.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff 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.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY (NURSERY UNIT)**

The front door needs to be repaired to secure accessibility into the nursery.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2009

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk) or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.