



*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 Patrick's Primary School and Special Unit Dungannon

Inspected: April 2007

CONTENTS

Section		Page
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK	1
3.	CONCLUSION	6

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|---|------|--|
| A. | i. | School: St Patrick's Primary
Dungannon | iii. | Date of Inspection: W/B 30.04.07 |
| | ii. | School Reference Number: 503-6504 | iv. | Nature of Inspection: FI/En/SEN/ICT |

B.

School Year	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Year 1 Intake	68	82	63	86	64
Enrolments					
Primary	542	536	536	559	584
Reception	25	23	23	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	52	52	52	52	52
Special Unit	45	35	24	19	25

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): 93.41%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
---------------------	--------------	--------------

- | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|----|---|---|
| D. | i. | Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 25 | 2 | 3 |
|----|----|---|----|---|---|

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 23.36 NI PTR: 20.5

- iii. Average Class Size: 24

- iv. Class Size (Range): 21 to 31

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|------|---|
| v. | Ancillary Support: | | |
| | Number of Hours Per Week: | i. | Clerical support: 56 |
| | | ii. | Official Making A Good Start Support: 100.02 |
| | | iii. | Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 107.80 |

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| vi. | Number of children with statements of special educational needs: | 30 |
|-----|--|----|

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| vii. | Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | 0 |
|------|---|---|

- viii. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 19.5%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 St Patrick's Primary School is situated in the centre of Dungannon. The children come from the town and the surrounding area; they represent a diverse socio-economic background and a wide range of cultures which enhance significantly the welcoming and friendly ethos that permeates the life and work of the school. The enrolment of the school currently stands at 661. Nineteen and a half per cent of the children are entitled to receive free school meals.

1.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of children from years 6 and 7. One hundred and nine questionnaires were issued to parents in the primary school and twenty five to the parents in the special unit; approximately 70% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) from the primary school, of which 28 contained additional written comments, and 13 were returned from the special unit with eight written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires were generous in their support of the school and, in particular, drew attention to the commitment of the Principal and the staff to the well-being and education of the children. The governors expressed their appreciation of the dedication and hard work of all the staff, and commented on the quality of the learning and teaching as well as the very positive ethos that exists in the school. The Education and Training Inspectorate endorses all of these views. The comments and areas for clarification raised by the parents have been discussed with the Principal and the governors. The children indicated that they feel happy and safe in the school.

1.3 The inspection focused on the work in English and the effectiveness of the school's special educational needs (SEN) provision. In addition it also evaluated the work in information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting learning and teaching in English and the school's procedures for pastoral care, including child protection.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 The staff have worked very hard to create successfully a positive ethos based on an atmosphere of inclusivity, tolerance and mutual respect for all. Working relationships at all levels are excellent. The teachers make stringent efforts to meet and provide for the different needs of all the children. The behaviour of the children is exemplary; they are respectful of their teachers, of one another and courteous to visitors. The teaching and support staff work closely as a team and the non-teaching staff make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school. The learning environment is attractively presented and colourful displays throughout the school celebrate the children's work and record their activities and achievements.

2.2 The school gives consistently good attention to promoting health and well-being and has a Healthy Living policy and appropriate provision for health education across the year groups. Programmes are in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles through links with relevant external agencies and the wider community. There is evidence of commitment on the part of the staff to promoting healthy eating and to improving children's

eating habits through an established Healthy Breaks policy and the popular fruit and water trolley with associated monitoring of fruit sales. The children demonstrate a very good knowledge of food and are articulate and confident in their understanding of health and well-being matters. There are opportunities for the children to participate in a wide range of physical activities both during and after school.

2.3 The children's experiences are enriched through a wide variety of extra-curricular activities which include music and sporting activities and also through links with other primary and post-primary schools. In addition, their learning and social development are enhanced through regular visits to places of educational interest and visitors to the school. The children's views are sought on a range of issues and they make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school. The school contributes to selected charities and an appropriate emphasis is placed on the importance of caring for others in the wider community.

2.4 The high quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection is a significant feature of the school. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of helpful policies that guide the work of the school. There is good communication with parents and governors; excellent working relations are encouraged effectively among all the children. The teacher in charge of pastoral care and child protection demonstrates particularly effective leadership.

2.5 The school is committed to maintaining and extending links with the parents and the wider community. Induction procedures are in place to welcome new parents and children, and a range of information meetings and a regular newsletter, which is translated into different languages, are provided throughout the year to encourage the parents to play an active role in the education of their children. The Parent Teacher Association has raised significant funds on behalf of the school which are used to further enhance the experiences offered to the children.

2.6 The teachers have worked diligently and co-operatively in planning effectively for learning and teaching. The staff in each year group meet regularly to prepare their work together; they are well-organised and prepared for lessons. The teachers have adopted a common format for planning their work across the curriculum and there is a good match between the planning and classroom practice; in addition, the documentation reveals a good emphasis on the intended learning outcomes for the children, progression and assimilating and consolidating their learning. A feature of the work in most classes is the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are shared with the children at the start of lessons, during and at end of the lesson to ensure that these have been achieved. Teachers generally evaluate their lessons and record the outcomes in their planning. In the best practice, these are appropriately detailed, enabling the teachers to plan effectively for future learning.

2.7 During the inspection, most of the teaching observed was good and often excellent. In the best practice, the teachers used a variety of approaches and provided a good balance of direct teaching and opportunities for the children to work independently, in pairs or in groups.

The lessons were interesting and often differentiated to match the range of abilities of the children. The children co-operated readily with their teachers and one another; they appeared enthusiastic, engaged and challenged. The teachers promoted the children's confidence and self-esteem and offered them much praise and encouragement in their work.

2.8 The school shows strong commitment to promoting all aspects of literacy and during the inspection, there were many examples of effective integration of talking and listening, reading and writing in lessons: for example, class discussion of jumbled pictures developed into a sequencing activity and the writing of a basic narrative; or where class discussion led into guided reading. The staff work closely together to agree approaches to literacy and to ensure that they adopt a common approach to their planning.

2.9 In all of the lessons observed across key stage (KS) 1 and KS2, the teachers sought to provide good opportunities from across the curriculum to encourage the children to listen and to respond orally. The good relationships established by the teachers in most of the classrooms further encourage children to contribute to discussions. Often sufficient time is given to allow considered responses and the children's contributions are valued and at times used as a stimulus to engage other children in contributing to the work of the class or to promote more sustained responses.

2.10 The teachers plan systematically for the teaching of reading. In KS1, good use is made of Big Books, core reading schemes and phonics to promote engagement with text, and the enjoyment of reading has a high priority in the school. Each of the classrooms contain a well-stocked class library often including bi-lingual texts and books that reflect the multi-ethnic profile of the school. The children are presented with a wide range of texts including fiction, non-fiction and poetry; these link effectively with curricular themes and topics such as health and safety. As they progress through school the children become increasingly aware of the important features of books such as author, illustrator, title, and summaries of the plot. Often texts can be displayed on the interactive whiteboards to further facilitate shared and guided reading. Dictionaries and reference books are used spontaneously by children. Overall, there are very good standards of reading throughout the school.

2.11 The development of children's writing is well integrated with the other aspects of the curriculum. In line with the children's ability, the rapid development from emergent to extended and independent writing is developed effectively throughout the school. Some of this work observed was of a high standard with many children writing in a wide variety of forms across the curriculum. Detailed formative marking of written work by teachers helps children to understand better and improve their written language. Information and communication technology is often embedded effectively in the development of literacy and helps the children of all abilities and ethnic origins with their language development, through for instance: constructing sentences and reports, editing texts (sometimes in bi-lingual format) from one form of language to another, creating multi-media materials to promote healthy eating, reviewing their class novel and their responses to it, and recording and presenting accounts of their recent personal experiences. Some of this work is enhanced

further by creating digital videos and media texts. The progress of the children is recorded in a form which is maintained as part of the children's progression file. The children's achievements are reflected in the generally good standards attained in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT Accreditation scheme at the end of KS2.

2.12 The teachers mark the children's books frequently, often giving good guidance on how the children can improve their work. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through detailed reports which provide clear information on attainment, particularly in English and mathematics, and also sensitive and useful guidance on how an individual child can improve on this performance. Detailed records are maintained on each child's attainment across a range of standardised tests and these are analysed appropriately by the class teacher in order to identify children in need of additional advice and support.

2.13 The school enrolls a significant number of children from Eastern European and other countries who have come with little or no English. The provision for these children is excellent. They receive appropriate additional support through a complementary mix of in-class and out-of-class teaching which is initially mainly focused on oral language and which is well integrated into the children's whole-school experience. The children settle well in class, are keen to learn and there is clear evidence that they make significant progress and soon assimilate well into normal school activities. The school environment actively promotes a multi-lingual and cross-cultural ethos which enriches the learning experiences of all the children.

2.14 The school values the importance of learning through play. The early years co-ordinator has worked hard, and made good progress, in developing a play programme with the year 1 and 2 teachers. In these classes, the regular sessions of structured play support the younger children's learning in other curricular areas, in particular, the development of language and ICT skills. Each year group plans conscientiously for the areas of learning and are beginning to make some very relevant observations of the children's responses to play. The sensitive interaction of the teachers and the classroom assistants frequently promote settled and concentrated learning. In the best practice, this extends effectively the children's learning and thinking. There is scope for building on the excellent practice that exists in order to ensure greater coherence and progression in the children's learning experiences through play from nursery through to year two.

2.15 Special educational needs (SEN) is given a high priority within the school and significant resources have been made available for this work. The school has identified 92 children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The children's learning needs are identified at an early stage through a combination of observations and the use of standardised and diagnostic tests. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides good leadership and administers the support programme effectively; she has worked hard to prepare a useful policy statement in which roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The SENCO, class teachers, classroom assistants and therapist collaborate effectively to compile appropriate education plans (EPs) which identify strategies and targets to promote improvement; the targets are communicated effectively to the children. Detailed records of the children's progress are shared regularly with the parents.

2.16 The teachers and classroom assistants support the children very well; work is differentiated and well-matched to the children's ability levels. The withdrawal sessions are supportive and productive; the children respond well to the teacher and are gaining confidence, self-esteem and are making steady progress in developing their literacy skills. The tasks set during the withdrawal sessions are integrated effectively into the work in the classrooms. In addition, support provided in class during integration for the children who attend the special unit is effective and allows them to benefit from working alongside their peers in a range of settings.

2.17 There are 14 children enrolled in the two designated classes for moderate learning difficulties at KS1 and KS2. The teachers and classroom assistants have appropriately high standards and expectations for the children within a stimulating and caring environment. There are good quality individual EPs and specific targets for the children which are met within overall, detailed class planning. There is a purposeful, structured working atmosphere. The provision is well organised and co-ordinated effectively and the quality of education is very good. The Principal is informed, interested and supportive. The teachers work hard to involve parents and there are formal and informal opportunities to share information about the children's progress.

2.18 In addition, the school has provision in their designated class for children with speech and language problems. This provision, developed over the last five years is a very effective example of multi-disciplinary work. The teacher, speech therapist and classroom assistant work well together and create a rich environment to develop language. They plan together and provide stimulating and effective experiences which meet well the needs of a group of ten children who require intensive help over a period of two years, before returning to mainstream classes. All the children in these three classes derive great benefit from classroom access to interactive whiteboard technology; in particular to promote language development. There are good working relationships throughout the school.

2.19 The Principal has been in post for 12 years and provides outstanding leadership for the staff. She sets high standards for herself and the whole-school community and is thoroughly committed and dedicated to providing the highest possible standards of education for all the children in her care. She takes a personal interest in the work of each class and the progress and development of individual children. In addition to class visits and monitoring of the children's books, the Principal uses quantitative data to monitor the children's progress and to set targets for further improvement. She is highly reflective in her work and fosters a culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement. Her clear vision motivates the staff and promotes a strong sense of team-spirit. The hard-working Vice-principal is highly professional and well-informed in his work. The senior management team (SMT) ably support the Principal in her work and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school.

2.20 The School Development Plan (SDP) is comprehensive and identifies important areas for development, appropriate action plans have been drawn up to address each priority.

2.21 The staff display high levels of professionalism and are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities and to pursue opportunities for further professional development. The co-ordinators have an important role in monitoring and evaluating the work in their subject areas. A significant feature of this work is the extent to which a wide range of first

2.22 hand evidence is used to form judgements about the quality of the learning and teaching and the standards achieved by the children. The school's staff development programme includes school-based and external in-service training and has supported effectively, several of the priorities identified in the SDP.

2.22 The quality of the accommodation and the standard of caretaking in the school are excellent.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very positive ethos which promotes an atmosphere of inclusivity, tolerance and mutual respect for all;
- the attractive and well-organised learning environment which is used well to promote learning and to celebrate the children's work and achievements;
- the excellent working relationships at all levels and the strong links established with the governors, parents, appropriate support agencies and the local community;
- the exemplary behaviour of the children and their positive attitude to learning;
- the high quality of the pastoral care;
- the high standards achieved by the children in literacy and ICT;
- the excellent use made of the quantitative data for monitoring, evaluating and target-setting as an integral part of the school's self-evaluation process;
- the excellent ICT facilities in the school that are used to enhance the learning and teaching and to broaden the children's learning experiences;
- the very good quality education provided for the children with special educational needs and the significant contribution made by the Principal to ensure a cohesive and inclusive ethos; which meets a diversity of needs within a well organised and stimulating curriculum;
- the excellent quality of the support provided for the children who have English as an alternative language and the appropriate procedures taken by the staff to integrate them fully into all aspects of school life;
- the interesting and varied range of extra-curricular activities which enrich the children's experiences;
- the quality of the teaching observed, most of which was consistently good and often excellent;

- the outstanding leadership of the Principal who promotes the highest possible standards of education for the children in her care;
- the hard-working Vice-principal, SMT and co-ordinators who contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school;
- the professionalism of the teachers who promote a collegial approach to their work; and
- the excellent contribution of the classroom assistants and other ancillary staff to the life and work of the school.

3.2 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is excellent. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being very well met. The parents can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2007

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 or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.