



*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
Mullanaskea, Enniskillen**

Inspected: March 2009

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Patrick's Primary**
Mullanaska, Enniskillen
ii. **School Reference Number: 203-1828**
- iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 09.03.09**
iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

| School Year | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Year 1 Intake | 28 | 27 | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| Enrolments | | | | | |
| Primary | 188 | 187 | 183 | 184 | 195 |
| Reception | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nursery Class/Classes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 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):

96.7%

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

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

8.5

0

0

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 23 NI PTR: 20.8

- iii. Average Class Size: 28

- iv. Class Size (Range): 23 to 31

- #### v. Ancillary Support:

- Number of Hours
- Per Week:**

- | | | |
|------|--|------|
| i. | Clerical support: | 27.5 |
| ii. | Official Making A Good Start Support: | 30 |
| iii. | Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 0 |

- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 3%

- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 25%

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

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 10.7%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Patrick's Primary School is situated in a rural area, three miles from Enniskillen in County Fermanagh. Most of the children who attend the school come from Pobal Parish and the surrounding Enniskillen areas. Since 2004, the enrolment has changed little within the range 188 to 195 and is currently 195. The applications for admission to the school exceed the enrolment number of 182. Approximately 11% of the children are entitled to receive free school meals. Twenty-five percent of the children are registered with a range of special educational needs according to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

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 and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection.

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 a group of children from year 6. There was a requested meeting by a member of the governors to discuss governance matters and the outcomes are addressed in the body of the report. One hundred and thirty-two questionnaires were issued to the parents; a significant minority (36%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 28 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires indicated that almost all of the parents appreciate the care provided for the children, the school's encouragement for the children to respect and value the opinions of others and that the school is well-thought of in the community.

A small number of parents indicated that they would like to have better communication with the school, more information on how to help their child with their work, have access to school policies on Internet usage and on the procedure about how to make a complaint and further opportunities for out-of-school activities. Concerns were raised about the large class sizes, charging for school activities and about the quality of the school management and organisation. The issues arising from the parental questionnaires were shared with the Principal and the governors and are addressed in the body of the report.

The governors expressed their appreciation for the work of the Principal and the staff who create a nurturing ethos in the school and praised the school for its high standards of academic attainment and the very good reputation it has within the local community.

All the teaching staff responded to the teacher questionnaire and a majority included positive written comments about the effective leadership, hard-working staff, good team-work and child-centred ethos of the school. A small number of staff raised concerns about the impact of financial constraints in the school.

The year 6 children talked enthusiastically about their good friendships, supportive teachers and enjoyable lessons. They are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety and well-being.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. Among the strengths are the welcoming, supportive and caring family ethos within the school and the range of the pastoral care policies which have been developed. Most of the policies are shared with the parents following appropriate consultation procedures. The school regularly rewards achievement to encourage the children's sense of self-esteem. There are effective and appropriate links with the community and local businesses to promote sporting, creative and enterprise activities which enhance the children's personal development and mutual understanding by developing their resilience, resourcefulness and appreciation of others.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department and it is appropriate that the school has made arrangements to consult with the parents about an Internet policy and to develop a staff code of conduct for the children's personal care arrangements.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and has received the gold standard in the Heath Promoting Schools Award in recognition of the variety of ways the staff encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The learning environment in the classrooms and throughout the school is stimulating and celebrates the wide range of creative opportunities and interests that the children experience both in school and within their wider learning communities.

The children enjoy learning and often show good levels of maturity in deploying self-management skills and effective group work strategies to achieve their learning goals.

The parents are actively encouraged to become involved in educational support programmes; for example, the 'Paired Reading' programme and the 'Parents in Numeracy' programme. The school has also established links with a local bank that provides computer programs, website access and other classroom resources.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of provision for literacy is very good; most of the children at the end of key stage (KS) 1 and KS2 achieve standards in English which are in line with and at times surpass expectations for their age and level of ability. Literacy is identified as a current priority for

the school and the literacy co-ordinator works to very good effect with the rest of the staff to implement a number of key strategies to promote improvement in the children's oral and writing skills. A detailed and progressive programme guides the development of literacy throughout the school. In addition new resources and initiatives have been introduced to enhance the literacy experience for the school community, for example new reading schemes and books to suit a range of reading abilities, improved library resources, and children's increased participation in literacy events.

The younger children develop their talking and listening skills through a range of well planned creative activities such as play-based learning, 'show and tell' sessions, rhyming activities and story-telling. They talk confidently about their work and can express their ideas and opinions articulately. The older children work well in pairs and groups; they engage in exploratory talk by discussing ideas, justifying opinions and trying to reach agreement, for example in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding lessons. There are extended and thoughtful responses as a result of skilful questioning and prompting by the teacher. By year 7, the children develop further communication skills by preparing and presenting information for an audience of children in another school through a video-conferencing link.

Children enjoy reading and show an interest in stories and books. They are acquiring basic reading skills through the development of phonological awareness and experience of shared and modelled reading. In the early years the children are able to recognise key words and letters, to retell stories and to begin to read with expression and understanding. By the end of KS1, most of the children read with increasing fluency, confidence and competence. The KS2 children talk enthusiastically about the opportunities they have to read a range of fiction and non-fiction books and there is evidence from their written work that this has had a positive impact on the range and quality of their writing.

There is regular monitoring and evaluation of the standards that the children attain in their reading including the use of a range of standardised tests. The outcomes of these are analysed and this has led to the introduction of a number of appropriate strategies such as phonics support to help children with word recognition. In addition, lines of progression have been developed to promote a whole-school approach to improving children's comprehension skills. By the end of KS2, most of the children are reading at a standard that is in line with or above their ability level.

Children in the foundation stage (FS) contribute to guided writing activities and are well-supported to begin to write and sequence their own stories with a title, beginning, middle and end. By the end of KS1, the children can write in their own words and with increasing accuracy. A whole-school approach to recount writing has been successful in encouraging children to write more independently and for a broader range of purposes, including formal and informal letters, science investigations, newspaper reports, book reviews, imaginative and descriptive writing. The older children use the Internet to research topics and integrate information to suit audience and purpose. The standards attained by most of the children in writing are very good.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall provision for mathematics in the school is very good. Almost all of the children at the end of KS1 and KS2 achieve standards which are in line with and at times surpass expectations for their age and level of ability. A detailed policy and programme of work guides the teacher's planning effectively and ensures a broad coverage of number, shape and space, measures, data-handling and processes. The co-ordinator has managed the development of this curricular area well and has worked hard to maintain the high standards achieved by the children throughout the school. Through effective monitoring the school has recognised the need to develop the children's mental abilities in mathematics and a new programme of mental maths has been implemented. In addition to core mathematical planning the teachers use topic planning to ensure that the skills acquired are used and developed by the children in work they do in other areas of the curriculum.

The children in FS are introduced to mathematics through practical sessions and play-based activities; the children are presented with real life situations to encourage the transference of mathematical skills to everyday life. The teachers in FS use the available mathematical resources creatively and effectively; the range of activities engage the children and provide variation in meeting the needs of all learners.

In KS1 and KS2 the children learn through whole-class, group, paired or individual activities and are encouraged to develop reasoning, think logically and justify decisions. Mathematical thinking is extended through the use of planned investigations and problem-solving activities. The children talk confidently about mathematics using an appropriate mathematical vocabulary and demonstrate enjoyment and perseverance with tasks; they are flexible in their thinking and have a broad mathematical understanding. Mathematics class books are beautifully presented and marked regularly; the teachers have high expectations of the children who, in turn, take pride in their written work. The school has one interactive whiteboard and this is shared by some of the KS2 teachers to enhance the teaching and learning of mathematics; computer programs are also used to provide valuable reinforcement within individual classrooms and there is emphasis placed on the use of the available ICT resources to record and analyse data from a variety of planned mathematical activities. The school is participating in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment ICT accreditation programme and has plans to extend the programme to all of the children in KS2 in the next academic year.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The staff have worked effectively to develop comprehensive planning for the curriculum. There is evidence of planning for continuity and progression in English and mathematics through whole-school and individual class programmes; in particular the teachers work hard to make provision for the wide range of needs. Learning outcomes are clearly identified in the planners. There is effective evaluation of the learning intentions and these are used to inform future planning and meet the individual needs of children.

3.2 TEACHING

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is set within the context of the sound development of the children's personal and inter-personal skills to help them to achieve success and competence as learners. A recently installed interactive whiteboard and video-conferencing facilities are used to extend the teaching and learning approaches and effectively challenges the children to develop understanding about the wider world. In the teaching observed most of the lessons ranged from good to outstanding. In the best practice, lessons were characterised by the purposeful use of learning intentions and success criteria which helped the children focus on what they were going to learn and provided them with targets to reflect on the effectiveness of the learning at the end. There was a variety of well-paced and challenging activities with a good balance of whole-class, paired and group tasks to engage the children throughout the lesson. The children demonstrated thinking skills, such as sequencing, reasoning, justifying opinions and generating possible solutions as a result of the teachers' use of effective questioning strategies, writing frames to develop their literacy skills, and scaffolds to support mathematical investigations.

A few lessons of less effective teaching were observed when the children were unsettled and disengaged from the tasks set. There is a need for more stimulating resources and activities to support better teaching strategies designed to meet the wide range of individual needs. In almost all the classes the classroom assistants provide a high level of support.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers are developing an effective range of assessment strategies matched to the ages and stages of development of the children. There is a profile of each child's attainments across the year groups. The information is used to inform the parents, teachers and the children and to set improvement targets for teaching and learning and whole-school priorities in the school development plan (SDP). The marking for improvement strategies are developing well and in the best instances the teachers' feedback is regular, personalised and focused specifically on how the children can improve. Assessment for Learning has been identified by the staff as a basis on which to develop further their self-evaluation processes and action planning for improvement.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the provision in special educational needs (SEN) is very good. The school has a very inclusive and welcoming ethos for children with additional needs. The policy for SEN is kept under regular review and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides very good staff development training and advice.

Analysis of class work, internal tests and standardised test results provides indicators for identifying target groups of children within individual classes in need of additional long- or short-term support in specific areas of the mathematics curriculum. Teachers plan for and provide differentiated learning for the range of ability within their class. There are appropriate in-class and extra one-to-one support programmes which ensure that the children are supported effectively in literacy.

The children have individual education plans (IEPs) which are reviewed with parents and include an input from the children about their progress and future targets. The IEPs take account of all of the information available about the individual children's needs. There are appropriate targets and support strategies to guide the day-to-day work of the teacher. The children's progress in literacy is monitored to measure and ensure progress and development against targets previously set to promote improve attainment.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal is in her third year in post and is an effective leader with a clear vision for the school; she has high expectations of the staff and for the children. She is ably-supported by a well-organised Vice-principal who is an experienced classroom teacher and SENCO. The staff respond positively to the implementation of the curriculum and embrace a wide range of additional educational initiatives such as the Comenius, Languages, Sport and Health promotion programmes. There is a culture of supportive team-work and the staff give freely of their time to contribute to the life and work of the school beyond the school day. The Principal initiates, oversees and supports significant areas of curriculum planning and policy developments. Whole-school curriculum implementation and monitoring strategies are effectively led and managed by the Vice-principal and the co-ordinators.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The improvement process is clearly linked to a comprehensive SDP. The school gives good attention to and complies with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

There are some appropriate self-evaluation processes which include consultation with the school community about the pastoral care and discipline policies in the school. Self-evaluation needs to develop further to focus on the quality of teaching and learning within the classrooms. The effective use of data and target-setting for literacy and numeracy is based on the outcomes of internal school standardised tests and the external DE benchmarking data. Appropriate policies and action plans are in place; for example, in teaching and learning, and in literacy and numeracy which support effectively a culture of review and development for school improvement. There is a need to bring a greater coherence to the development planning process and to refine the target-setting for improvement to make the best possible use of all the available resources.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors have agreed the priorities for the SDP. There is a need to develop procedures for the communication of the SDP to the parents in order to involve them more fully in the consultation process. The parents need to be made aware of the policy and procedure on how to raise a concern or to make a complaint.

There are omissions in the School Prospectus including the enrolment and admissions numbers for the school. The applications to the school exceed the admissions and enrolment numbers set by the DE; there are 189 children (excluding six children with statements of special educational needs) enrolled for the 2008-2009 school year which exceeds the initial

enrolment number of 183 and admissions number of 25 agreed by the DE in October 2007. The school was granted a temporary variation in its enrolment and admissions numbers to 185 and 27 respectively for one year only 2008-2009. One class base is located in a resource area which is too small for large classes and it is used as a means of getting into two other classrooms. The governors need to seek and secure prior approval from DE to any request to exceed the admission and enrolment numbers before the children join the school and as a result ensure that the children are allocated funded school places. The Department of Education will consider any such request having regard to the availability of alternative school places within reasonable travelling distance. Some class sizes, particularly in the early years are large and resources are minimal; the teaching staff is making the best possible use of the space and resources.

The school's budget is supplemented by parental contributions and fund-raising. The governors need to clarify the enrolment number and comply with Article 10(2)(b) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and to monitor the implications of the SDP and ensure that efficient and effective use is made of the financial and human resources.

The quality of the caretaking in the school is of a very high standard.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the vision and effective leadership of the Principal, ably-assisted by the well-organised Vice-principal and diligent co-ordinators;
- the children's positive attitudes to learning and responsiveness to the high expectations of the teachers;
- the quality of most of the teaching which ranged from good to outstanding;
- the very good standards in English and mathematics attained by the children including the enhanced learning experiences enjoyed by them through the use of ICT;
- the team approach developed to planning for the curriculum and its implementation and the effective monitoring of progress in literacy and numeracy by the co-ordinators; and
- the good links established with schools and people in the local and wider communities and the purposeful connections made with local business.

5.2 The area for improvement is the need:

- to monitor, review and evaluate the implementation of the amended SDP.

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 areas which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the schools progress on the areas for improvement.

APPENDIX

ACCOMMODATION

- The Principal's office has unduly limited space.
- The perimeter fencing needs to be raised for security purposes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The loudness of the school bell ringing in the room is disruptive during work.
- There is a need for better school signage for traffic and visitors to the school.

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