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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Focused Inspection

St Scire's Primary School
Trillick, Omagh

Inspected: October 2007

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** St Scire’s Primary School, Trillick, Omagh
 ii. **School Reference Number:** 203-6153
 iii. **Date of Inspection:** 01.10.07
 iv. **Nature of Inspection:** Focused

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	15	10	17	10	14
Enrolments					
Primary	81	81	91	88	86
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): 97.3%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 4.5 - -
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.1 NI PTR: 20.8
- iii. Average Class Size: 21.5
- iv. Class Size (Range): 18 to 28
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support: | 17.5 |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support: | 10 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 42.5 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 3.48%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 6.97%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 2.32%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 St Scire's Primary School is situated in the village of Trillick in County Tyrone. Almost all of the children come from the local area. The enrolment has remained steady over the past four years; at the time of the inspection it stood at 86. Approximately 2% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

1.2 As part of the inspection process, meetings were held with the Board of Governors (governors) and the children in year 6. The parents' and teachers' views on aspects of the life and work of the school were sought by means of confidential questionnaires; of the 57 parental questionnaires issued, 41 (72%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE); 19 included a written comment. The parents spoke favourably of the high quality of care and support provided for the children and the standards they attain. All of the teachers completed the online questionnaire; their responses were wholly positive; no written comments were received. The governors commented favourably on the dedication of the teaching and ancillary staff, the quality of the pastoral care, and the high standing of the school within the community. The children in year 6 reported that they feel safe, enjoy school and know what to do in the event of a concern. The inspection endorses these positive views. The few issues raised by parents were discussed with the Principal and the governors.

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

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 A very positive and caring ethos is evident throughout the school. The children are friendly and welcoming and relationships at all levels are excellent.

2.2 The children's efforts are consistently valued and acknowledged and their self-esteem and confidence are boosted through a number of reward initiatives, including a merit points system. Records of the children's achievements and samples of their work enliven the school; the classroom displays are of a high standard and provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment.

2.3 The children's experiences are enriched through regular visits to places of educational interest, by visitors to the school and by participation in local competitions and festivals. Games coaching and music tuition are provided within the school day.

2.4 Parents are kept well informed about the life and work of the school through regular newsletters and annual meetings with the teachers. Information on individual children's progress is provided through the annual written report.

2.5 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is very good. 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 effective policies which guide the work of the school.

2.6 The school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has important strengths, with appropriate attention being given to the development and implementation of practices to promote healthy eating habits and a healthy lifestyle among the children. There is a need to extend the opportunities for the children to participate in physical activities.

2.7 The teachers' medium-term planning is detailed and identifies the intended learning outcomes for most areas of the curriculum. All of the teachers have composite classes; while the planning identifies the programme of work for each year group in a class, there are instances when it should be differentiated further to take greater account of the different abilities within a year group. All of the teachers evaluate the outcomes of their teaching and, in the best practice, use the information to inform future planning.

2.8 The teachers are very hard-working and committed fully to the children's development. The quality of the teaching observed was always satisfactory; in most lessons it was good or better. In the best practice, the intended learning was shared with the children, there was a suitable range of teaching approaches and the children had opportunities to discuss and explain their learning. In the small number of instances where the teaching was less effective, the tasks and activities were insufficiently matched to the varying needs and abilities within the class.

2.9 At years 1-3, the teachers provide a supportive learning environment which helps to promote the development of the children's language skills and personal capabilities. The classes are well-resourced and the children experience a range of play activities; routines are well-established and the adults interact effectively with the children to promote their confidence and to help them make connections in their learning. The teachers have begun to review the school's policy on learning and teaching in the early years; this is an appropriate development to ensure clearer progression and greater challenge in the children's learning. In the years 4-7 classes, there is an increasing emphasis on actively involving the children in their own learning; activities such as reviewing and evaluating their own and others' work, and being aware of the strategies they use in their learning, are helping the children to become more reflective, independent and confident.

2.10 The children's behaviour is excellent and they settle readily to their work. They cooperate well with one another, are capable of sustained periods of work and take pride in their efforts and achievements. The children's work consistently reaches the high standards expected of them.

2.11 A vibrant literacy environment is evident across the school. The classrooms and school library contain suitable ranges of fiction and non-fiction books, while word walls, vocabulary lists and access to dictionaries help promote the children's general language development. The school's programme for English is currently under review, with a particular emphasis on the further development of the children's writing skills and the introduction of a new phonics programme.

2.12 The encouraging and caring tone throughout the school helps promote the development of the children's oral skills. In the year 1 and 2 class, the children are encouraged to talk about their interests and experiences, and to re-tell stories they hear in class. They have opportunities to talk about their play and to participate in singing and rhyme sessions. As they progress, the children engage in group topic work and class discussions and become increasingly confident and articulate. Throughout key stage (KS) 2,

regular opportunities, including Circle Time, are provided for the children to express their opinions and to explain their learning. By the end of year 7, the children listen well to one another and are capable of mature and extended oral presentations. Participation at local festivals and in school productions enhances further the children's oral skills and confidence.

2.13 Reading is developed systematically across the school. In the first year, the children build up concepts about print and develop an early interest in stories and books. Resources such as Big Books are used effectively in shared reading sessions and help develop the children's understanding of text and sentence structure. The children are made familiar with a range of appropriate strategies, including aspects of the recently-introduced structured phonics programme, to decode words and to help build up a suitable sight vocabulary. By the end of KS1, most of the children read independently, with increasing accuracy and good understanding. The children's reading skills are promoted further throughout KS2; an extensive range of texts, including class novels, reference books and information accessed from computers, is used effectively to develop the children's fluency, expression and comprehension. Much of this work is connected to the children's writing and oracy, and to other areas of the curriculum. In the year 6 and 7 class, for example, the children, working in groups, accurately summarised detailed texts on the Vikings and then used their notes to put together multi-media computer presentations. By the end of year 7, the children achieve standards well in line with, or above, their level of ability.

2.14 The children's writing skills are developed progressively. In year 1 the children have frequent opportunities, through their play, to experiment with informal mark-making and writing. Structured activities, including modelled writing sessions, help the children to make connections between sounds and letters and increase their understanding of letter formation and sentence structure. As they move through KS1, the children become increasingly competent and write well-structured passages that are neat and grammatically accurate. While some of the writing is in the children's own words, there is, on occasion, an over-dependence on completing commercial worksheets which require simple or limited responses. Throughout KS2, the children are given frequent opportunities to write independently for a wide range of purposes. Much of this work supports learning in other curricular areas and includes letter writing, book reviews, instructional and creative writing and poetry. Effective use is made of ICT; the accessing of information sources, including the Internet, word-processing activities and multi-media presentations, help to enhance the children's learning and confidence. By the end of year 7, most of the children achieve a good standard in their work; they can write extended texts for a range of purposes in a well-structured and accurate style. The overall standard of presentation and handwriting is excellent.

2.15 The school has identified a small number of children who require additional assistance with their learning. In the main, support is provided on a withdrawal basis and focuses on the children's reading and writing development. Detailed individual education plans are in place which generally set out relevant and realistic targets to address each child's needs. These targets are reviewed regularly and shared with parents. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) provides very effective support for the children who require help, maintains the relevant documentation on the school's provision and liaises, as required, with external agencies. Two children have classroom assistants to help meet their specific needs. The assistants provide sensitive, valuable and well-directed support and contribute significantly to the all-round development of the individuals in their care. The quality of the SEN provision is a feature of the school.

2.16 Comprehensive records of the children's attainments are maintained and regularly updated. Information is received from the feeder pre-school and provides a valuable base-line from which to plan individual children's learning. A system of observing and recording the children's progress across the curriculum is currently being introduced in the year 1 and 2 class. In all classes, individual folders containing samples of work and test scores provide a detailed profile of each child's progress. A range of standardised tests is used to assess the children's learning. The performance data is used effectively to track progress and to set targets for improvement, both at an individual child and whole-class level. This close monitoring and evaluating of the children's learning provides important evidence for the school's process of self-evaluation.

2.17 The Principal has been in post for less than a year and combines successfully his teaching role and the administration and management of the school. He provides excellent leadership and has a clear vision for the development of the school. He has been central in the development of a range of effective procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of the children's learning experiences. This programme of self-evaluation and ongoing improvement is linked appropriately to the comprehensive School Development Plan (SDP), and is based on a number of detailed whole-school action plans aimed at broadening the children's experiences and raising the standards they attain. The Principal is ably supported by the other teachers who, over and above their teaching commitments, carry out important curricular or pastoral responsibilities; a good sense of team-work is evident throughout the school.

2.18 The accommodation is well maintained and the standard of caretaking is good. The classroom assistants, kitchen staff and school secretary make a valuable contribution to the work of the school.

3. CONCLUSION

The strengths of the school include:

- the stimulating and supportive atmosphere and the very high quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection;
- the commitment and hard work of the teachers and the good quality of most of the teaching observed;
- the excellent behaviour and very positive attitude of the children to their learning;
- the overall good standards of attainment in English;
- the quality of the provision for children who experience difficulty with aspects of their learning; and
- the example and effectiveness of the Principal, particularly his commitment to whole-school improvement.

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

No follow-up inspection is required.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The toilet facilities for the children are inadequate.
- The lack of adequate car parking facilities presents a safety hazard on the road outside the school, particularly when the children are being left off and collected each day.

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