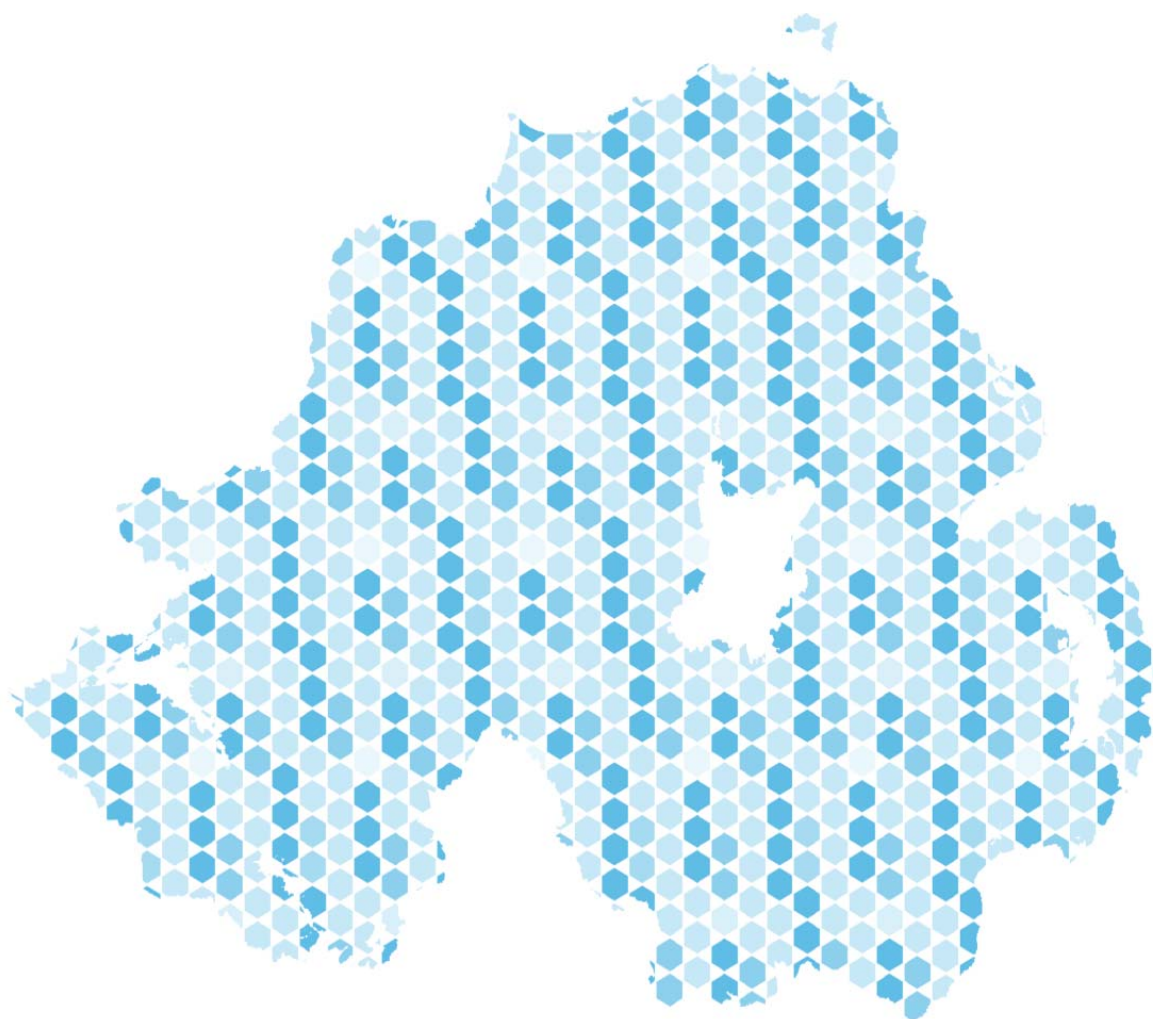


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Sunnylands Primary School,
Carrickfergus

Report of an Inspection
in March 2010

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, the Inspectorate relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Sunnylands Primary Carrickfergus** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 22/03/2010**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 301-0860** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Year 1 Intake	20	11	12	26	14
Enrolments					
Primary	187	166	152	141	125
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium Unit	0	0	0	0	0

The enrolment for the current year is the figure on the day of notification of inspection.
 For previous years it is the figure in the annual return to the Department of Education.

The calculations at C and D should be based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year
 (expressed as a percentage): 92.3% **NI Avg Att: 94.9%**
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 7.6 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 16.4 NI PTR: 20.4
- iii. Average Class Size: 20
- iv. Class Size (Range): 14 to 25
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week:**
- | | |
|---|-------|
| i. Clerical support: | 27.5 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 40 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 100.5 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 4%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 46%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 44%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2008/09 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics: **English** 56% **Mathematics** 60%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Sunnylands Primary School is situated off the North Road in Carrickfergus, Co Antrim. The majority of the children who attend the school come from the local area. The enrolment has decreased over recent years and is currently 125. The school reports that 44% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 46% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. At the time of the inspection the Principal had been in post for just under two years.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, the quality of provision for learning and the quality of leadership and management. In addition, the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection were evaluated.

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

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives of the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of children from years 6 and 7. Of the 96 questionnaires issued to the parents, just over 37% were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 16 which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the parental questionnaires and written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction; the parents highlighted, in particular, the caring and approachable staff, the child-centred ethos and the very good communication between school and home. The responses from the teachers and support staff were very positive regarding the work of the school. An analysis of the questionnaires and the written comments and any issues raised were shared with the Principal and the governors.

The governors expressed their appreciation of the leadership of the Principal and the commitment of the staff to the children, and their support for the school's links with the local community.

The children in year 6 indicated that they feel happy and secure in school and are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being. The children spoke enthusiastically about how the teachers help them in their learning and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them including sports, cookery and needle work.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. The Principal, teaching staff, classroom assistants and support staff work effectively to provide a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where all of the children are valued and respected. The strengths of the pastoral provision include: the excellent behaviour of the children and their ability to work in support of one another; and the children's knowledge and understanding of the rules which promote positive behaviour. The school has consulted widely with the parents when revising pastoral policies, and monitors and evaluates their effectiveness in the classroom to ensure consistency of application.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The well-established healthy breaks scheme and the gardening club promote and encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has developed effective links with the parents by encouraging greater parental involvement in supporting their child's learning. The Principal makes very good use of voluntary and statutory agencies to support and enhance the provision for the children. The school facilitates courses in English, mathematics and ICT for adults within the local community which is helping to develop an ethos of lifelong learning.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children are motivated, engage well in their learning and work collaboratively in pairs and groups supporting and encouraging one another. When given the opportunity, the children talk confidently about their work. The children are given opportunities to succeed and experience a sense of achievement in their learning. There needs to be a more consistent approach to the quality of presentation of the children's work.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 data over the past four years shows that in English the school's performance was below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the level of attainment in English remained below the average.

An analysis of the KS2 data over the past four years shows that in mathematics the school's performance was below the NI average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the level of attainment in mathematics was in line with similar schools.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of the provision for English and literacy is satisfactory. Having undertaken an analysis of the performance data, the literacy co-ordinator has begun to review the literacy programme with the aim of developing a greater range of learning and teaching strategies designed to improve the children's literacy skills.

The children demonstrate good talking and listening skills. In the foundation stage (FS) the children are keen to talk about their work and are able to express their thoughts and ideas with confidence. In KS1 and KS2 the children continue to develop their talking and listening skills through paired, group and whole-class discussions.

The teachers use an appropriate range of strategies to develop the children's reading. These strategies are supported well by carefully selected and appropriately banded reading material. In addition, the children have access to a selection of fiction and non-fiction books matched to the topics they are studying. Effective use is made of the class and school

libraries to promote an enjoyment of reading among the children. There is evidence that the children benefit from the support of reading partnerships. Across the key stages most of the children read with increasing accuracy, fluency and expression.

In the FS, the children have good opportunities to develop their writing through play-based learning. By the end of KS1 the children are developing independence in writing and can write in different forms including stories, poems, letters, and reports on visits to places of interest. In KS2 the children write for a wider range of purposes and audiences with increasing accuracy and proficiency. The school has maintained 'writing records' for each child; these records provide good evidence of the children's progress. The children's written work is celebrated and displayed across the school foyer and corridors.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of the provision for mathematics and numeracy is good. Through effective monitoring and evaluation, the numeracy co-ordinator has prioritised appropriate areas for further development. These include the review of the policy and scheme for numeracy and the further integration of ICT to support and enhance the learning and teaching in mathematics.

All of the teachers use a good range of practical resources and strategies, including mental mathematics, effectively to develop and support the learning and teaching. Across all of the classes, the teachers exploit well opportunities to link the children's learning in mathematics to other areas of the curriculum, and use meaningful everyday contexts which motivate and engage the children in the learning. In most of the lessons observed, the teachers used effective questioning and gave the children time to reflect on and explain their thinking. On a few occasions, the teachers missed good opportunities to develop the children's mathematical thinking and language.

The children demonstrate a good understanding of key mathematical concepts. The children in FS and KS1 enjoy using practical resources to support and consolidate their learning. In KS2, the children engage well, working alongside others, in investigative and problem-solving activities. Most of the children can talk confidently about their learning, using the appropriate mathematical language; they demonstrate flexibility in their thinking and can apply their learning in real situations and across the curriculum. At the end of KS2 the children achieve good standards in numeracy.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers prepare well for lessons. The medium-term planning is coherent and provides a clear overview of progression for the children's learning. The teachers need to ensure that the planning includes further differentiation matched to the children's ability and appropriate evaluation of the children's learning which can be used to inform future planning, learning and teaching.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Nearly all of the teaching observed was good or better.

In the best practice observed, the lessons were characterised by: skilful questioning to encourage extended responses from the children; effective use of group and paired work; appropriate use of practical resources to engage the children in problem-solving activities

and the display of appropriately high expectations held by the teachers. The classroom assistants were deployed effectively to support and enhance the children's learning. In the small number of lessons which were less effective the activities did not sufficiently engage and challenge all of the children.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school ensures that the parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through parental interviews and written reports. The children's work is marked regularly and, in the best practice, this includes evaluative feedback and guidance on how to improve future pieces of work. There needs to be a more consistent approach to marking for improvement across the school.

Over the last two years the school has begun to make good use of standardised scores to measure and track the progress made in year groups and by the individual children in literacy and numeracy. The school needs to build upon this good work and to use the data to set individual and whole-schools targets.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the provision for children with special educational needs is good. The very inclusive and supportive ethos throughout the school promotes the children's confidence and self-esteem and ensures that every child is valued. There is good liaison between the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and the class teachers to ensure early intervention, and the school uses appropriate screening and diagnostic tests to identify the children's needs. A strength of the provision is the flexibility in the timetabling for the individual and group withdrawal sessions to ensure that the needs of the children are given priority.

In the withdrawal sessions observed, almost all of the children responded well to the encouragement, support and praise, displayed a positive attitude to their learning and achieved success. In the mainstream classes, the children with special educational needs participated fully in the lessons alongside their peers.

The Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are monitored and reviewed regularly, and the children are involved, as appropriate, in this process. The IEPs outline useful support strategies to promote improvement but, the targets need to be more focused to enable rigorous evaluation of the children's progress.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of the leadership provided by the Principal is very good. She has a clear knowledge and understanding of the needs of the school and the local community. The Principal leads by example and holds high expectations for the children's educational and social development.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Principal has developed a collegial approach to school development planning which includes a developing culture of self-evaluation. The staff prioritise the areas to be addressed in the three year plan, create action plans within their area of responsibility, and review the progress made against the previous targets. The school development plan (SDP) meets the requirements of The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

4.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

There is an effective staff development programme that is linked appropriately to the SDP priorities and meets well the needs of the school.

4.4 ACCOMMODATION

The staff make very good use of the extensive accommodation throughout the school which is bright and welcoming. The standard of caretaking is excellent and the children take pride in helping the teachers and the support staff to maintain their school.

4.5 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are supportive of the Principal and staff, take an active role in the work and life of the school and are fully involved in the strategic planning and policy development for the school. The school is well resourced.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the pastoral care provided for the children;
- the engagement and motivation of the children in their learning;
- the quality of the teaching which was good or better in almost all of the lessons observed;
- the nurturing and inclusive environment where all of the children are valued and respected;
- the highly effective links established with the community and external agencies to support and enhance the children's learning experiences; and
- the very good leadership provided by the Principal.

5.2 The area for improvement is:

- the need to make more effective use of performance data to set individual and whole-schools targets to improve further the standards the children attain.

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

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