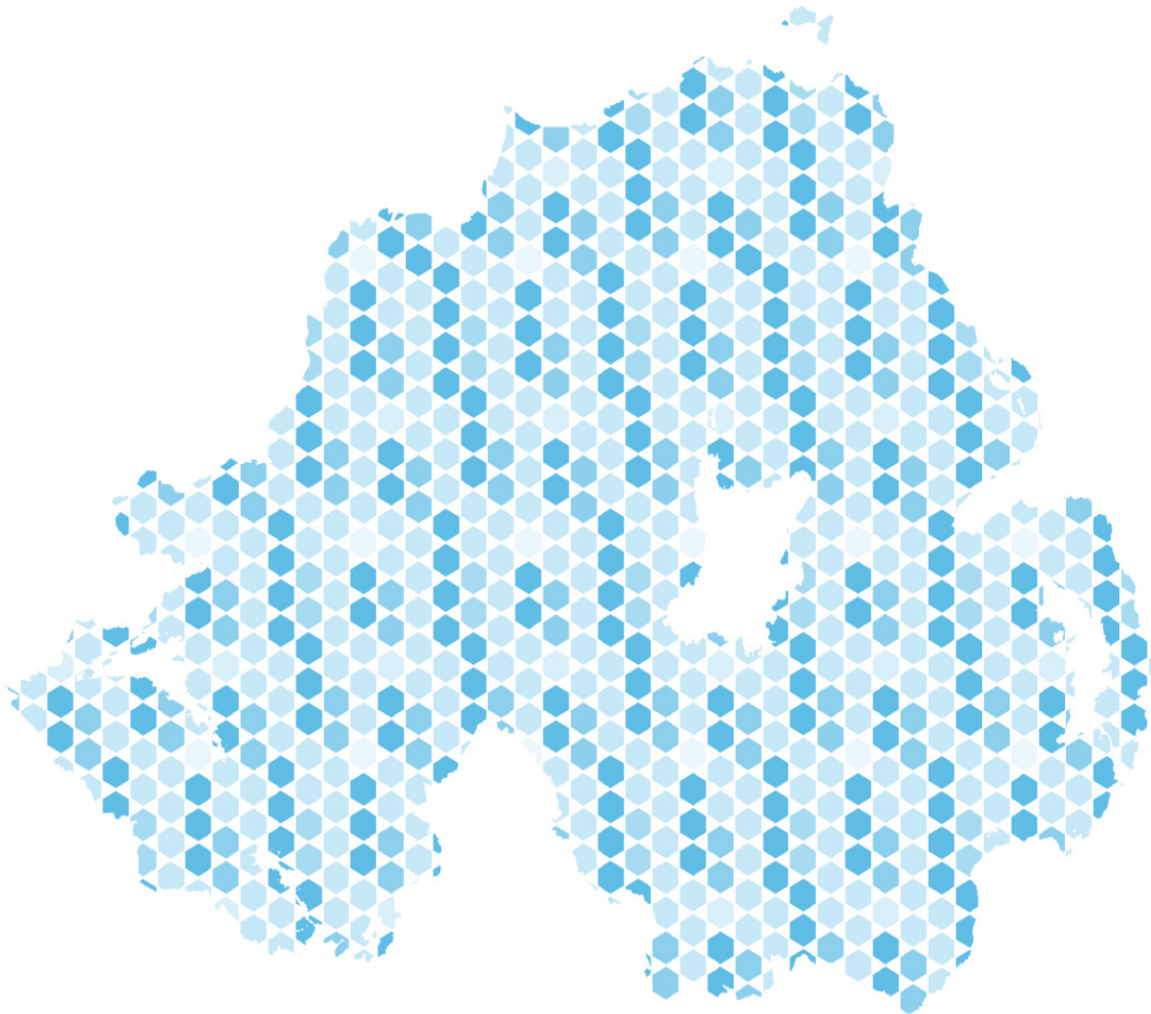


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Taughmonagh Primary School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in November 2010

eti

*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



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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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, Inspectors 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: Taughmonagh Primary Belfast** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 08/11/10**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 101-0301** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	15	16	26	17	20
Enrolments					
Primary	97	103	124	143	141
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	52	52	52	52	52
Special Unit	37	36	29	34	30
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):
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | 91.4% | 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): (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| | 9 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
|--|---|---|---|---|
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):
- | | | |
|--|------|--------------|
| | 15.7 | NI PTR: 20.7 |
|--|------|--------------|
- iii. Average Class Size: 20.1
- iv. Class Size (Range): 16 to 23
- v. Ancillary Support: Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| | i. Clerical support: | 35 |
| | ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 40 |
| | iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 175 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 6.4%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 47.5%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 48.9%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2009/10 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics:
- | | | |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| | English | Mathematics |
| | 63.2% | 52.6% |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Taughmonagh Primary School is situated in the Taughmonagh estate, off the Upper Malone Road. Since the last inspection in 2000, the enrolment has increased steadily from 103 children, to the current figure of 141 children. Almost half of the children in the school are entitled to free school meals with approximately 48% identified as having a wide range of special educational needs (SEN). Most of the children who attend the primary school come from the immediate locality. The school consists of the primary school, a double nursery unit and a speech and language unit. The children attending the speech and language unit travel from within the wider Belfast area.

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.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection were evaluated.

In addition, the school was selected as part of a sample to monitor the implementation of the healthy food in schools initiative.

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

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching and support 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 the children from year 6 and year 7.

The parental responses for the school, speech and language unit and nursery unit all expressed a high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision being provided. In particular, they appreciated the pastoral care of the staff, supportive ethos and the progress being made by their children.

The responses to the teacher questionnaires strongly endorsed the whole staff commitment to the health, pastoral and educational care of the children. The questionnaires completed by the support staff indicated that the staff enjoy their work and feel their work is valued.

The governors reported a clear view of the challenges faced by the school and acknowledged the hard work and commitment of the staff and Principal, and acknowledged the children's good behaviour in the school environment.

The small number of issues raised through the questionnaires have been discussed with the Principal and the governors.

In discussion a group of the children from year 6 and year 7 reported that they feel happy and safe at school and are aware of whom to approach if they have any concerns. They talked about their enjoyment of school life and explained the range of strategies they can use in their classes to help them to become independent learners.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in this school is very good. The strengths of the pastoral care provision include:

- the caring, supportive and inclusive ethos which promotes the children's confidence, self-esteem and respect for others;
- the friendly children who displayed very good behaviour and good manners throughout the inspection;
- the effective links established with others, parents, agencies and the community;
- the good range of extra-curricular activities provided for the children; and
- the effective integration of the children with a wide range of additional needs.

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 but the following issues need to be addressed:

- the updated policies for the nursery unit need to be shared with the parents;
- the appointment and training of a designated governor with responsibility for child protection needs to be finalised; and
- the access points to the school need to be more carefully monitored.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating, for example, through the healthy food provision across the school day, and popular cookery club which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. The children also have very good opportunities to participate in a range of physical activities.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school is developing very good links with the parents and the community. Parents are encouraged to be involved in a range of school-based activities. They have the opportunity to attend useful sessions focused on their children's learning and receive regular information about school life and their children's progress. The children's experiences are enriched by the interesting range of visitors to the school and the children's participation in a range of initiatives such as Fair Trade, Eco-Schools and the Comenius project.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance is consistently well below the Northern Ireland average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are also below the average. The data is beginning to show improving trends in recent years; these improvements need to continue.

The school promotes a positive climate for learning and, as a result, the children display very good attitudes to and enjoyment of their work. The children are able to work co-operatively in smaller groups, both with adult involvement and independently; they take turns and help each other. They demonstrate the ability to be independent and self-manage the organisation of tasks within the classroom as they progress through the school. They listen to instructions, and most can persevere at tasks. The children are prepared to take risks in their learning and when given the opportunity, contribute confidently within the class.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The overall quality of provision in English and literacy is satisfactory.

On entry to school, a majority of the children display difficulties with their learning; including speech and language difficulties. As they progress through the school, the majority of the children make good progress and are becoming more confident in expressing themselves orally. In the best practice observed, the children were encouraged by their teachers to explain their thinking and to extend their answers. The senior management team (SMT) should place greater emphasis within the nursery stage on the promotion of the children's language and communication skills. The school has been successful in developing the children's listening skills; by year 7, most of the children demonstrate very good listening skills when taking part in whole class and paired or groups tasks.

The overall quality of the children's writing needs to improve. The children have insufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills, to engage in activities which demand more extended responses and to write for a wide variety of purposes across the curriculum; as a consequence, their ability to write is developing too slowly. In the best practice, the teachers have appropriately high expectations of what the children are capable of achieving; they have also made a good start in marking for improvement and providing opportunities for the children to assess their own work in order to improve the quality of their writing. When the teachers make effective use of ICT to support the development of the children's writing skills through, for example, the drafting and editing of work, it makes a significant impact on the quality of writing produced. This good practice needs to be implemented more consistently within and across the key stages. The school has correctly prioritised the need to improve the standards of the children's writing across the school.

The school's internal data shows that, over the last few years, most of the children are beginning to make satisfactory progress in their ability to read. A suitable range of reading materials and strategies are being used to develop the children's readings skills and, throughout the school, the children enjoy listening to stories. As the children progress through the school their enjoyment of reading is encouraged through timetabled silent reading time and the use of appropriate class novels. In most of the classes, the children make use of well-resourced class libraries. The children in KS2 are able to talk with enjoyment about books they have read.

The school has adopted a whole-school phonics programme for which all the permanent teachers have been trained. Many of the younger children require further support in acquiring a basic vocabulary for both reading and writing. In the more successful practice, the teachers avail of a wide range of strategies to promote the children's reading, writing and spelling skills; this good practice should be disseminated and developed throughout the school.

The SMT needs to provide greater oversight and continued support for the work in English and literacy to ensure that there is greater consistency in the quality of provision across the school. This support should include more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the role of the nursery unit in developing the children's language and communication skills, interest in books and emergent writing skills. The literacy co-ordinator needs to develop the work by taking a more strategic overview of progression from pre-school level through to year 7.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of provision for mathematics is satisfactory.

The strengths of the provision include the enthusiastic and well-informed numeracy co-ordinator who has developed clear lines of progression for number, mental mathematics and mathematical language. The school has analysed its data effectively to identify the children who are under-achieving in mathematics; and there is a good programme of differentiated support for these children. The teachers use a very good range of practical resources and activities to engage the children actively in their learning. In response to these developments the children display positive attitudes to mathematics throughout the school. By year 7, the children have made satisfactory progress in mathematics in line with their ability.

In the most effective lessons observed, the teachers use mental mathematics strategies effectively and promote the children's understanding of processes through effective open-ended questioning. In the best practice, the teachers use the plenary session well to consolidate the learning and promote the children's mathematical language by encouraging the children to explain their work to one another.

In the foundation stage (FS) and KS1 there were some good examples of a cross-curricular approach and the effective integration of real and natural materials. The children need to experience a consistently coherent and broad range of mathematical experiences in order to improve the standards they attain by the end of KS1.

By the end of KS2, the majority of children are able to work flexibly with numbers, and have a sound understanding of shape, space and measure. The children's ability to solve problems, carry out investigative activities and handle data is less secure. In addition, the standard of the children's presentation in mathematics needs to improve and the children need more opportunities to give extended written responses to mathematical investigations across the curriculum.

In order to enhance further the overall provision in mathematics, the co-ordinator needs to develop clearer learning intentions for the other areas of the mathematics curriculum including shape and space, measure, data handling, problem-solving. More robust monitoring and evaluation is also required to ensure that the teachers translate the lines of progression for each topic into their medium and short-term planning and classroom practice.

During the inspection, the children used a wide range of computer programs and websites to support their independent learning in mathematics. The ICT co-ordinator has identified the need to ensure appropriate progression in skills from year 1 to year 7 and to develop further her role in monitoring and evaluating. The Education and Training Inspectorate endorses these as appropriate areas for development.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers plan conscientiously and have worked hard to develop very useful short-term planning for literacy and numeracy groups which take account of the learning, teaching approaches and the wide range of the children's ability. The planning indicates that a range of interesting and often creative experiences are being provided for the children. At times, there needs to be a better match between the tasks planned for and the children's stage of development. In the best practice, regular evaluations, which focus clearly on the children's learning, are used effectively to inform future planning. The approaches to planning need to be more closely monitored to ensure consistency of practice across the school and to ensure suitable progression in learning for the children from the nursery unit through to year 7.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Most of the teaching observed was good or better with a third being very good to outstanding. The teachers' supportive approach with the children and consistency in promoting good behaviour ensure a settled and purposeful learning environment. The teachers use a good range of materials, resources and real life experiences as a stimulus for learning. The very good classroom management and effective deployment of additional staff to work with smaller groups during lessons help to maximise the learning opportunities for the children. In the best practice observed, the teachers used effective questioning which extended the children's learning, language and thinking skills; they also helped the children to make meaningful connections across the curriculum in their learning. In addition, the teachers gave relevant and immediate feedback to enable the children to improve further and made effective use of plenary sessions to consolidate the children's learning.

In the less effective practice, the planned learning activities were poorly matched to the children's abilities, insufficient time was provided for the children to complete tasks to a reasonable standard and the expectations of the quality of work to be produced was too low.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

There are appropriate procedures and records for keeping most of the parents informed about their child's progress. These include written reports and formal parent-teacher consultations. The nursery co-ordinator needs to review the arrangements for reporting to the parents of children attending the nursery unit to facilitate an exchange of information earlier in the school year.

The school uses a suitable range of data to assess the children's level of achievement in English and mathematics and this data is used to identify areas for further development and inform class teachers in setting individual targets for the children. In the best practice, the children are aware of their own personal targets and are beginning to contribute to the self-assessment process. The assessment methods need to be widened to include a sharper focus on the standards attained in the children's written work.

There is variation in the quality of marking across the school. In the best practice, teachers give meaningful spoken and written comments to the children on how to improve the quality of their work; the SMT needs to ensure that this good practice is disseminated across all classes.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The overall quality of the provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is very good.

Almost half the children attending classes in the main school have been identified as being in need of additional learning support; 6% of these children have a written statement of special educational needs. There is also a small number of newcomer children for whom English is not their first language. The school is strongly committed to meeting the needs of all these children.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), provides very effective leadership in her role. She maintains a comprehensive range of information which is used to identify and support each child's social, educational, communication and to manage their medical needs. A rigorous system of diagnostic testing ensures that sharply focused targets are identified within each child's individual learning plan and that progress can be measured. The additional learning support for both literacy and numeracy in the mainstream classes from years 3 to 7 is provided in a systematic and effective manner. The SENCO is a skilled practitioner; the quality of support observed during withdrawal sessions was outstanding. The children enjoy the withdrawal sessions, interact well with the teacher and produce work of a good quality. The children receiving this intensive support are making good progress.

A strength of the school's provision for children with additional needs is the identification of children who are underachieving; these children are given short-term intensive support in "booster groups". The year 3 children also benefit from the support of a literacy support classroom assistant who is funded through the Achieving Belfast programme. This additional, well targeted, in-class and withdrawal support is having a positive influence on helping the children involved make good progress in their areas of need.

The school also works effectively with a number of outside agencies to enhance further the provision for children with additional needs; this provision includes good links with a neighbouring special school which, along with support from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) peripatetic support service, provides effective out-reach support for a number of children. The school also receives beneficial multi-discipline support for those children requiring specialised help.

The SENCO, along with other members of the SMT, has identified, and implemented, specific and appropriate actions to promote improvement across the school. These have provided good support to the teachers in the development of differentiated teaching approaches to support the wide range of needs within their classrooms; this good practice should be continued. Along with the teachers, the classrooms assistants have attended external and/or in-school training in relation to their work with children with additional needs; the school efficiently deploys and utilises the good support provided by these classroom assistants.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT

The overall quality of the support provided for the children in the speech and language classes is very good.

The school includes a speech and language unit, consisting of three classes for 30 children with significant speech and language difficulties. The children attend for specialist support for a period of up to three years. The Head of Unit is a good role model; she manages and organises the provision very well and is actively supported by the other members of staff. Work is progressed collaboratively and in conjunction with the speech and language therapists.

Well-planned and differentiated teaching is underpinned by a clear focus on language-based lessons and a strong focus on developing the children's social competence, confidence and self-esteem. A strong feature is the social cohesion and sense of security the children develop while in the unit; their behaviour is good and their achievements are celebrated in oral and written form. The unit provides an important resource for children with significant delays in language and communication in the wider Belfast area.

The children make good progress from very low starting points. While the majority will require continuous support with aspects of their learning on leaving the unit, all of the children demonstrate a willingness to engage in learning, enjoy whole class and group practical activities and achieve literacy and numeracy standards matched to their levels of ability. This includes an interest in reading, and enjoyment in mental and practical mathematics. All of the children demonstrate improvement over their previous learning; all show improved communication and most have begun to write clearly to record their learning.

An added strength of the provision is the effective assessment arrangements which provide a useful tracking record of individual progress and inform staff decisions about how the teaching can be adjusted to suit the individual children's responses. The staff has rightly identified the need to develop their capacity to address the needs of some children with significant multi-sensory problems; this action would enhance the unit's capacity to meet more challenging needs. The inspection findings also indicate the need for members of the staff from the main school to observe the work of the unit teachers to share the expertise and experience across the school as a whole.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of leadership and management within the school is satisfactory. The Principal has led the implementation of a wide range of useful initiatives in recent years. She demonstrates a strong commitment to the children and has a good understanding of the increasingly complex range of needs of many of the children and families within the community. The collaborative links developed with the educational, health and community services are helping to address these needs. The Principal fosters an inclusive and strong team approach within her staff and involves them in leadership roles and the decision-making processes.

The literacy, numeracy and SEN co-ordinators provide good leadership in developing their respective areas. The leadership and management of the nursery unit is inadequate.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The wide range of staff development and training for the teaching and support staff is generally well matched to the needs of the school and is linked closely to the school development plan (SDP). The school has received intensive support through the Achieving Belfast programme; there is evidence that the focus on raising standards and the implementation of specific teaching approaches in the classrooms is beginning to have a

positive impact on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. More focused support by the BELB is required to ensure improvement in the quality of the whole early years provision and to optimise the effectiveness of early intervention. The Principal and staff are reflective in their approach; they have appropriately amended a number of priorities on their SDP. While there is clear evidence of whole school improvement in many aspects of school life since the last inspection, there remains a need for more rigorous and focused monitoring and evaluation at all levels and focused more clearly on improved standards in the children's achievements. The current SDP should be amended to reflect the inspection findings. The SDP is compliant with the Department of Education School Development Planning Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005/19.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION, RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The quality of the current accommodation is inadequate; there is limited outdoor play space and a lack of storage. The school is due to start a rebuild programme that should address these deficiencies. The school buildings have a good level of caretaking and attractive displays of the children's work enhance the school environment; there is a good range of resources to support learning and teaching. The governors are very supportive of the staff and are committed to the continued development of the work of the school.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the positive ethos and very good pastoral care which results in the children's good behaviour and fosters positive attitudes and dispositions for learning;
- the quality of the teaching, which ranged from good to outstanding in most of the lessons observed;
- the valuable contribution made by the classroom assistants and support staff to the children's learning;
- the very good links established with the parents and the community;
- the very good provision made for children with additional and special educational needs both in the school, and in the Speech and Language Unit; and
- the improvements made within the primary school since the last inspection, led by the Principal and supported by the staff's strong team approach

5.2 The areas for improvement include:

- the need, at all levels, for more rigorous and focused monitoring and evaluation, which focuses more clearly on outcomes and the raising the standards for the children, particularly in their written work; and
- the need for more focused support and training to address the inadequate provision within the nursery unit and to ensure systematic progression in the children's learning through their early education.

5.3 In the areas inspected, the quality of the education provided by this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards and leadership and management, which the school needs to address if the needs of all the learners are to be met effectively.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 The double nursery unit is situated in the grounds of Taughmonagh Primary School and offers 52 full-time places. The majority of the children come from the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, the teacher-in charge of the nursery unit was absent and the temporary teacher had only been in post five days.

6.2 The main strengths within the nursery unit's educational provision include:

- the caring and respectful relationships between the staff and the children and the effective implementation of positive behaviour management; and
- the settled play of most of the children and their general confidence to ask for help and support.

6.3 The inspection identified areas for improvement of which the following are the most important:

- the quality of the staff interaction with the children needs to be improved to foster the children's language and learning more consistently;
- the development of all areas of the pre-school curriculum to ensure quality and progression of provision leading to better outcomes for the children; and
- the use made by the staff of their records of the children's progress to inform their short-term planning and match activities more closely to the children's individual needs and stages of development.

6.4 In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this nursery unit is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the nursery unit is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON TAUGHMONAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, BELFAST

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	26
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	1	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	1	4
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	1	0
With English as an additional language	0	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.	19.23%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93.5%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4 hours 55 mins (Mon-Thurs) 4 hours 10 mins (Friday)	-	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants	0	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	2	0

Number of: ****	
Students	2
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	
Percentage returned	%
Number of written comments	

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The school needs to carry out a risk assessment of the access points to the school grounds and school buildings and ensure they are monitored more closely.

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