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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Department of Education
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Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Short Inspection

Donacloney Primary School
Craigavon

Inspected: April 2009

DONACLONEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, CRAIGAVON, CO ARMAGH, BT66 7LP (501-6178)

Donacloney Primary School is situated off Baird Avenue in the village of Donacloney, Co Armagh. The school has a single class nursery unit attached to it. The enrolment in the primary school has been increasing steadily over the past five years and currently stands at 195; in addition, 26 children attend the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection, approximately 6% of the children in the primary school were entitled to free school meals and 16% of the children were on the special educational needs register.

The short inspection focused on achievements and standards, the quality of provision for learning and leadership and management.

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as a meeting with a group of children from year 6.

Of the 150 questionnaires issued to the parents in the primary school; 21% were returned to the Department of Education, including 13 which contained an additional written comment. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of provision in the school. In particular they were appreciative of the caring, very approachable and hard-working Principal and staff, and of the opportunities provided for them to attend class assemblies. One minor issue raised by parents was discussed with the Principal.

Eight teachers completed the online questionnaire, five of which contained an additional comment. The responses from the teachers were very affirmative of the work of the school.

The children in year 6 reported that they are happy and secure in school, that they enjoy their learning and like the way it is connected across subjects. They also indicated that they know whom to talk to if they have a problem.

In the nursery unit, 38% of the 26 questionnaires which were issued to the parents were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and three contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicate a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the nursery provision and acknowledge in particular the caring, supportive staff and the happy nursery environment.

Two members of the nursery staff responded to the questionnaire. They commented on the positive working relationships and the support from the school's management team for the nursery.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school and the nursery unit is very good. Among the strengths are the welcoming environment, the excellent working relationships between the children and the teachers and the very good range of activities provided to enhance and extend the children's learning beyond the classroom. The children are highly motivated and actively engaged in their learning; their behaviour is exemplary. The classroom assistants support the children's learning effectively and contribute significantly to the life and work of the school.

The primary school and the nursery unit have satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance in the relevant DE circulars. There is a need to ensure a more consistent approach to recording behaviour incidents, for long-term substitute teachers to be trained in the child protection procedures and for the school's intimate care policy to be explained more explicitly for the parents.

The main strengths of the school include:

- the outstanding working relationships at all levels;
- the children's positive attitudes to learning and their confident, articulate responses in class;
- the quality of the teaching observed, most of which is good or better;
- the strong culture of self-evaluation which is contributing effectively to the improvement in the children's standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the hard-working co-ordinators who have made a good start at monitoring and evaluating the curriculum in order to promote improvement; and
- the very good leadership of the Principal.

The inspection identified the following area for improvement:

- to develop further the strategies for improvement identified in the School Development Plan (SDP) in order to ensure sustained improvement in the children's standards in literacy and numeracy.

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 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.

THE NURSERY UNIT

The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- There are very good opportunities for the children's learning in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. The promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development and early scientific concepts are particular strengths.
- The daily timetable is well organised and provides a good balance between free play and purposeful group activities.
- The staff provide the children with sustained support during play. The majority of the interactions between the staff and the children are skilfully undertaken and promote successfully the children's thinking skills and decision-making capabilities.
- The staff have developed comprehensive methods of planning and assessment. Account is taken of the children's individual learning needs and the information is used appropriately to inform future planning. The children are making good progress.
- The nursery teacher provides a very good role-model in her work with the children. She provides effective leadership and the nursery development plan identifies appropriately the further expansion of the outdoor play resources.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery is very good. The nursery is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Throughout the report a number of quantitative terms are used which may be interpreted as indicated below:

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%

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