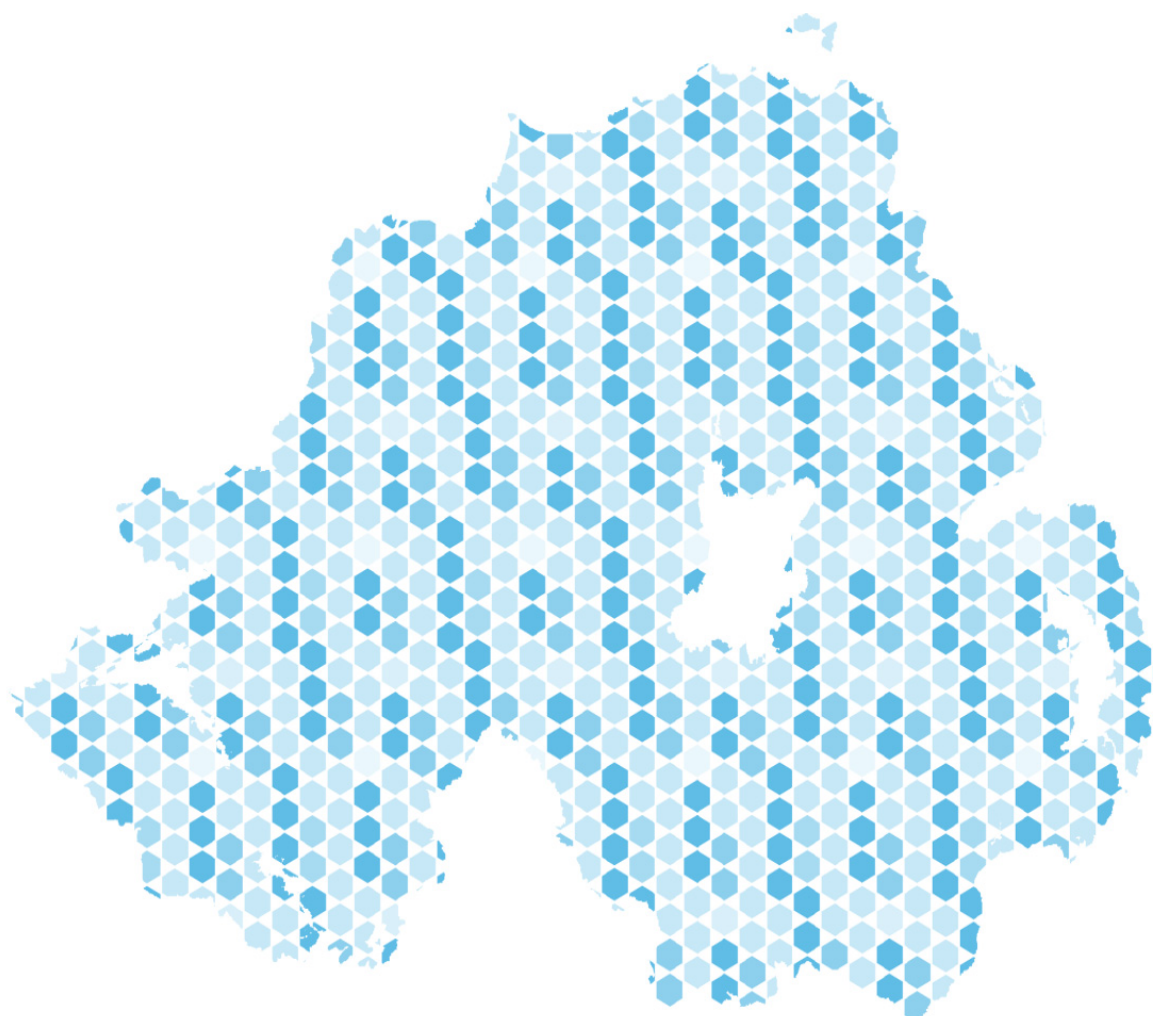


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Friends' School Preparatory
Department, Lisburn

Report of an Inspection
in March 2011

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

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Friends' School Preparatory Department is situated in purpose built accommodation in the grounds of Friends' School, Lisburn. The enrolment in the Preparatory Department currently stands at 141 children. The children who attend the school come from a wide catchment area. The school has identified approximately 12% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

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

OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

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

No follow-up inspection is required.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Achievement and Standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards is outstanding.

- In English and mathematics, almost all of the children attain outstanding standards. The children demonstrate confidence in talking and listening, reading and writing within meaningful contexts across the curriculum.
- Most of the children identified with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve the very good standards of which they are capable.

Provision for Learning

The provision for learning in the school is very good.

- The **children** are highly motivated and are keen to learn. They participate eagerly in a wide and meaningful range of individual and collaborative learning activities. The learning and teaching supports the effective development of the children's thinking skills and the teachers ensure the children have regular opportunities to review and evaluate their own and others' work. The children are provided with good quality feedback that helps them understand how to improve further their work.

- During the inspection, **the quality of the teaching** observed was always good or better, with three-quarters of the lessons evaluated as very good or outstanding. All the lessons were well structured and had a clear focus on how the children's knowledge, skills and understanding were to be progressed through active learning approaches. In addition, the teachers used skilful questioning to develop the children's thinking and to consolidate their learning at appropriate intervals throughout the lesson.
- The teachers' **planning** is effective and makes very good links within and across the areas of learning in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The planning is clear, systematic and guides the learning well. In the best practice, the teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and use this to inform future planning to meet the needs of all the children.
- The teachers make very good use of **information and communication technology (ICT)** to support the children in their learning in both literacy and numeracy. Years 4 to 7 use regularly an ICT suite in the post-primary school and access to it enhances the children's learning experiences. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the children achieve very good standards.
- The provision for **special educational needs** is very good. The school deploys a learning support teacher to support literacy and numeracy through withdrawal sessions and in-class support. These sessions are provided in a supportive atmosphere and are of a high quality; realistic targets for achievement are set and there is evidence of the children's year on year improvement.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** in the school is very good. This is evident through the excellent working relationships between the staff and children; these contribute to the positive learning environment throughout the school.
- The school has very good and comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the **child protection** guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting **healthy eating**. There is an appropriate emphasis on healthy eating and participation in sport for the children throughout the day, with additional sports coaching and a wide range of organised playground activities at lunchtimes.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The **Head of the Preparatory Department** provides outstanding leadership and management. She places a strong emphasis on child-centred provision and a collegial approach to school improvement that involves the children, staff, parents and the Board of Governors (governors).
- The numeracy, literacy, assessment, pastoral care and ICT **co-ordinators** provide very good leadership. They lead by example and through well-conceived staff development, they create high quality learning experiences for all of the children.

- The whole school **self-evaluation** and **school development planning (SDP)** processes are very good. The SDP makes effective use of a wide range of performance data and qualitative information to prioritise appropriate areas for continuous improvement.

CONCLUSION

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

No follow-up inspection is required.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Friends' School Preparatory Department, Lisburn** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 09/03/11**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 462-0050** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	17	21	25	14	14
Enrolments					
Primary	153	145	168	153	141
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): 97.3% **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): 8.2 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.6% NI PTR: 20.7
- iii. Average Class Size: 20.1
- iv. Class Size (Range): 12 to 26
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support: | 27.5 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 23 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 78 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.13%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 12.06%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 0%
- 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** 100% **Mathematics** 100%

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

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching staff and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Sixty per cent of the **parental questionnaires** from the Preparatory Department were returned to Inspection Services Branch. Twenty-nine of the returns included additional written comments. Almost all of the parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision provided by the school. In particular, they acknowledged the leadership of the Head of the Preparatory Department, the high quality of care provided by the staff, the holistic approach to developing the children's capabilities and the wide range of extra-curricular activities to enrich the children's learning experiences.

Eight **teachers** responded to the online questionnaires; all of the responses were very positive about the collegiality of the staff and were affirmative of the developmental, curricular, and pastoral work of the school.

The Head of the Preparatory Department and staff acknowledged the important pastoral, curricular and administrative guidance given by the Principal of Friends' School, Vice-principals, the governors and the school bursar.

Six members of the **support staff** responded to the online questionnaires. Almost all of the responses were affirmative of the work of the Preparatory Department and indicated a strong sense of teamwork and high morale.

The representatives of the **governors** and Principal of Friends' School met with the inspection team. The governors take pride in their school's Quaker ethos and the educational provision that affords continuity and progression in learning from the primary phase to post-primary. They commended the dedication and talent of the staff team who focus on the provision of child-centred education and the achievement of excellence. A few matters raised through the questionnaires were brought to the attention of the Head of the Preparatory Department, the Principal of Friends' School and the governors.

In discussions, the **children in year 6** reported that they feel very safe and secure and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being. They talked enthusiastically about many aspects of school life and about the support and care provided by the teachers and the support staff.

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