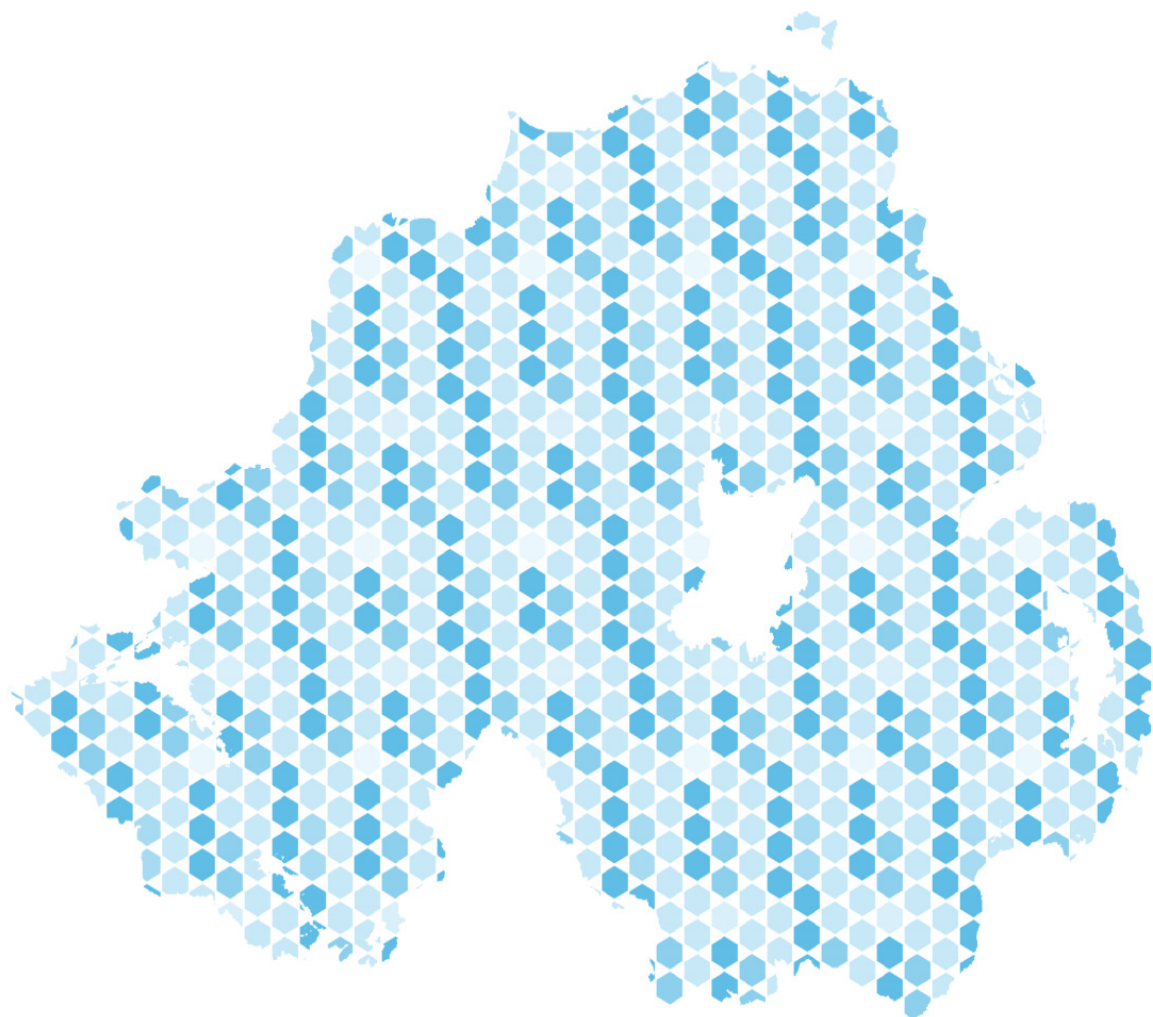


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí,
Magherafelt

Report of an Inspection
in February 2011



*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

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

Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí is an inter-denominational, Irish-medium primary school. It is situated off the Ballyronan Road on the outskirts of Magherafelt, alongside Naíscoil an tSeanchaí, the feeder pre-school centre. It was established in September 2009 and achieved grant-aided status in October 2010 when the Department of Education (DE) approved funding for an initial period of three years. A total of 18 children are enrolled currently in years 1 and 2, and most of them have attended the adjacent Irish-medium pre-school. All of the children come from the local and surrounding areas. Just over 60% of the children are entitled to free schools meals. The school has identified 11% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and behaviour.

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 including the school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational provision and very good pastoral provision.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Achievements and Standards

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

- In Irish and mathematics the children make good progress. They are able to write phrases and sentences in Irish on a range of topics, and to sequence simple stories. Their oracy skills in the target language are developing well and they can follow simple instructions. They engage in shared reading activities and the older children show a keen interest in books. In mathematics, they have a sound grasp of early number work gained through a variety of appropriate practical activities. The children benefit greatly from the well-planned play sessions which enhance their personal and social skills.
- The children identified with **special educational needs** (SEN) make progress in line with their ability.

Provision for Learning

The quality of provision for learning is good.

- The school provides a **calm and secure environment** in which the children are valued and cared for. The **children's behaviour** is very good; they respond positively to the high expectations set by the teacher. Classroom routines are effective and the children work well together. There is a positive rewards system which promotes good behaviour.
- The **teacher** works hard and is committed to continuous improvement. She has developed a general overview for all areas of the curriculum. In addition, there are six-weekly schemes of work for literacy and numeracy, and topic-based planning for play. The planning takes good account of the needs of the different groups of children in the composite class. It is important to ensure that there is always appropriate challenge to meet the learning needs of the more able children.
- The **quality of the teaching** observed was always very good. The learning intentions are conveyed effectively to the children at the start of each session and revisited at the end. The classroom assistant makes a valuable contribution and collaborates very well with the classroom teacher.
- The children need to have more access to **information and communication technology (ICT)** in order to enhance their experiences and promote their learning in literacy and numeracy. The school has plans to acquire interactive white boards in the near future.
- The provision for SEN is good. There are individual education plans for the children containing broad targets; the education plans need to outline more specific, short-term steps in order to track improvement more effectively.
- The quality of **pastoral care** is very good. A comprehensive audit has been carried out and an appropriate action plan has been devised. The children engage in Circle Time and they respond well to the buddy system which operates between the older and the younger children.
- The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. The arrangements reflect the **child protection** circulars issued by DE.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The **teacher in charge has a Bachelor of Education (B Ed) with first class honours** in Irish and Irish-medium education **and is in the first year of Early Professional Development**. She speaks highly of the assistance she receives from the Principal of another Irish-medium school who acts as her teacher tutor and mentor. The feedback received on her teaching has been very positive. The school has received good support also from the North-Eastern Education and Library Board Curriculum and Advisory Support Service (CASS) and the Irish-Medium CASS team.

- In the short time since the school has opened, the teacher has developed a wide range of suitable policies to guide the work of the school.
- There are very strong links established with the local naíscóil, which shares the same site.
- There is excellent parental support for Irish-medium education; for example, evening Irish language classes are very well attended by parents, as well as by members of the local community. Communication with the parents is very effective, through regular newsletters and the school's recently developed website.
- The development planning process is very good. A rigorous and accurate evaluation of the challenges and issues facing the school is set out in the three-year school development plan. The plan focuses on learning, teaching and on the standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy. The school gives very good attention to, and meets fully, the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.
- The parents of 15 children have indicated their intention of enrolling their children in the year 1 class in September 2011.
- A good start has been made to **using initial assessment data** to baseline the children's performance and to focus on the continuous improvement of their standards of achievement.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is **good**. The school has important strengths in most of its educational provision and very good pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. It is:

- the need to focus more sharply on meeting the learning needs of all of the children, through greater challenge for the more able children and more specific short-term steps for children who require extra support with their learning and behaviour.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress in the area for improvement

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí Magherafelt
 ii. **School Reference Number:** 304-6691
 iii. **Date of Inspection:** W/B 07/02/11
 iv. **Nature of Inspection:** Short

B.

School Year	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	8	10
Enrolments		
Primary	8	18
Reception	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0
Special Unit	0	0
Irish Medium Unit	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): N/A **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) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 18 | NI PTR: 20.7 | | |
| iii. Average Class Size: | 18 | | | |
| iv. Class Size (Range): | 8 to 10 | | | |
| v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | | | | |
| i. Clerical support: | | | | 0 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | | | 25 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | | | 0 |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | | | 0 |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | | | 0 |
| viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | | | 0 |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | | | 61% |
| 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
N/A | Mathematics
N/A | | |

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

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching and the support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Of the 18 questionnaires issued to the parents, 16 (88%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including ten which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the parental comments expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents praised the teacher for her skill in, and commitment to, achieving positive educational outcomes for the children. The information from the questionnaires has been shared with the teacher and the Chair of the Committee.

The Chair of the Committee met with the inspection team and expressed strong support for the work of the school. He raised serious concerns in relation to the children's lack of any access to the Classroom 2000 (C2k) facility and to the lack of provision for free school meals to which over 60% of the children are entitled.

ACCOMMODATION

- There are insufficient toileting facilities to cater for the number of children enrolled.
- The cabling for and installation of C2K has not yet taken place. There is no wireless connectivity to the C2K network.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- At the time of the inspection, eleven of the 18 children enrolled do not receive the free school meals to which they are entitled.

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