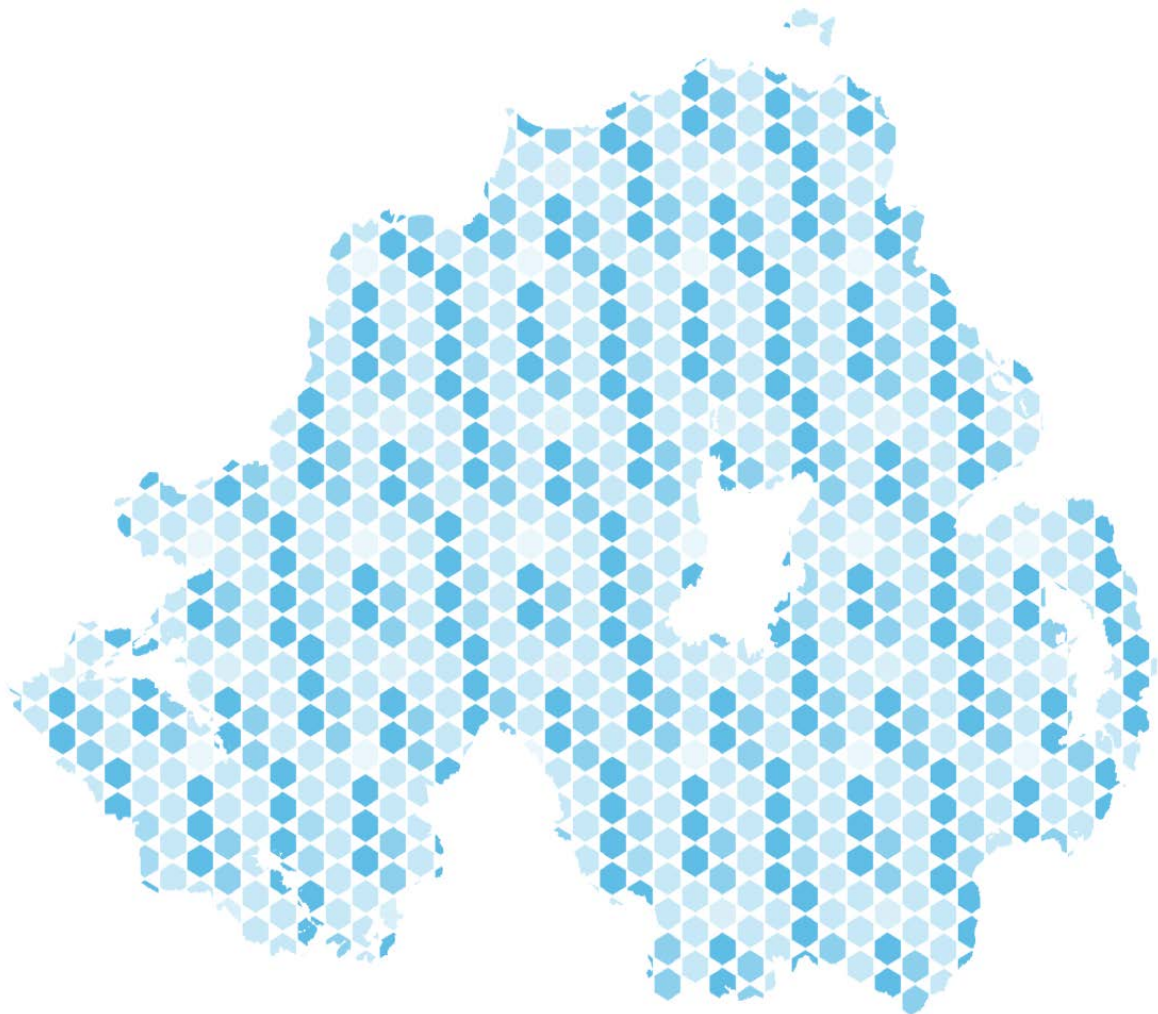


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Gaelscoil na Speiríní,
Draperstown

Report of an Inspection
in November 2012

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 na Speiríní is an Irish-medium primary school situated in the village of Moneyneany, three miles outside Draperstown. The school was established in 2004 and was recognised formally by the Department of Education (DE) in 2006. The children attending the school come from the town, the surrounding rural areas and beyond. The enrolment has increased in recent years and stands currently at 33. At the time of the inspection, approximately 15% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 12% of the children as having special educational needs.

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 FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

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.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Achievements and Standards

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

- In **literacy** most of the children attain standards that are in line with their ability or above expectation. In **numeracy**, a majority of the children achieve standards that are in line with their ability or above expectation.
- An analysis of end of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past two years shows that in Irish, English and mathematics, all of the children* achieved above the Northern Ireland (NI) average.
- The children with special educational needs are making good progress; although a small number of children have had their support discontinued their progress is still monitored.

* Due to the small enrolment numbers, only a very small number of children were entered for end of KS2 assessments in recent years.

Provision for Learning

The provision for learning is good.

- The children's behaviour is excellent. They demonstrate high levels of motivation and they respond positively to the tasks set. The children work well together in groups and pairs; their independence and self-management skills are developing well. The children take pride in their school and participate fully in local competitions and other organised initiatives.
- The teachers work hard and they are committed to the children in their care. The classroom assistant makes a valuable contribution to the life and the work of the school.
- The quality of the teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good; the majority of the lessons observed were very good. In the best practice, the teachers made effective connections across a range of subjects and the children acquired useful cross-curricular skills. The learning was tailored to meet the individual needs, interests and abilities of the children. The teachers used open questions effectively and encouraged the children to respond using extended responses in Irish. In addition, the activities planned had a suitable focus on the learning to be achieved which the teachers reinforced using effective plenary sessions. In the least effective practice, the lessons lacked appropriate pace and challenge and failed to focus sufficiently on the specific learning to be acquired by the children.
- The provision for special educational needs (SEN) is very good. Around 12% of the children receive in-class support for their learning. There is well-planned provision for the children; the individual education plans contain appropriate targets for improvement and both the children and their parents are involved in devising them.
- The school is characterised by its distinctive ethos and its promotion of the Irish language and culture. There is a strong community and team spirit associated with the school. Close links have been established with the parents and the adjoining naíscoil. The school website provides support for the parents to help the children with their learning.
- The quality of pastoral care is very good. The children are aware of the school rules and are rewarded for good behaviour.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The Principal is committed to the growth and the development of the school; she works well with the co-ordinators and they plan jointly in the interests of the learners.

- Whole-school self-evaluation and forward planning processes are good. The school development plan (SDP) has been devised in consultation with the parents, governors and teachers and suitable priorities have been developed.
- A good start has been made to using data effectively to track individual pupil performance. Although there is a systematic approach to collating data it will be important for the school to monitor more formally the information it has gathered in order to gain a better overview of the children's progress.
- The school has established strong links with the parents and with the local and wider community and has initiated a cultural exchange with a minority language school in the United States of America.
- The Board of governors is most supportive and plays an increasingly proactive role in promoting all aspects of the work of the school.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

CONCLUSION

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. This includes the need:

- to improve and formalise its processes for monitoring and evaluating the children's progress in order to gain a better overview of the children's strengths and areas for improvement.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Gaelscoil na Speiríní** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 05/11/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 304-6678** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	4	12	3	5	8
Enrolments					
Primary	24	24	26	27	33
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): 97.7% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 97.02%
- | | 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) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 1.11 | NI PTR: 20.2 | | |
| iii. Average Class Size: | 11 | | | |
| iv. Class Size (Range): | 6 to 14 | | | |
| v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | i. Clerical support: | | 22.5 | |
| | ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | 13.75 | |
| | iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | 8.75 | |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | | | 0% |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | | | 12% |
| viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | | | 0 |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | | | 15% |
| x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2010/11 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools): | English
100% | Mathematics
100% | Irish
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 and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection.

Twenty-six questionnaires were issued to the parents of the children in the primary school: 14 were returned to Inspection Services branch (ISB) and nine contained additional written comments. All of the responses from the questionnaires were affirmative of the work of the school. The parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents praised the teachers for their commitment and dedication to the children. They mentioned the strong community spirit and the children's abilities in speaking Irish. No issues were raised by the parents.

The teachers and support staff mentioned that they have high expectations for the pupils and that they support one another in their endeavours.

The inspectors met all of the children in years 5-7; they talked readily about the range of enjoyable learning experiences and clubs in the school. They value the support and care provided by all the staff. The children are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety and well-being.

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