

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

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Short Inspection

Harmony Hill Primary School
Lisburn

Inspected: March 2007

**HARMONY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, LISBURN, CO ANTRIM, BT27 4ES
(401-3305)**

Harmony Hill Primary School is situated in the city of Lisburn. Most of the children attending the school come from the town and the surrounding area, with a minority from further afield. The enrolment has remained stable over the past number of years and is currently 569. The school has identified approximately 11% of the children who require support with their learning. Just over 2% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for a sample of the parents to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with a group of children from year 6. The inspectors also met with members of the Board of Governors (governors). Approximately 60% of the questionnaires were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 27 contained written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires and the comments from the governors indicated a high level of satisfaction with the school's provision and highlighted, in particular, the hard-working teachers, the high quality of pastoral care, the standards reached by the children, and the excellent leadership of the Principal. During discussions with year 6 children, they talked openly about what they enjoyed in the school and the range of activities available to them. They indicated that while they feel safe and happy they are aware also of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being. The inspection findings endorse the favourable comments made by the governors, parents and children.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is excellent. The school has procedures in place, which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures, and have had the opportunity to contribute to helpful policies which guide the work of the school. Among the strengths are:

- the effective links with the parents and the governors; and
- the work undertaken to establish positive discipline.

The school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has many strengths. Attention is given to the development and implementation of programmes which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. There is a developing commitment to promoting healthy eating, and opportunities are provided for all the children to participate in a wide range of physical activities

The strengths of the school include:

- the positive, caring ethos and clear sense of mutual respect;
- the hard-working and committed staff;
- the very good working relationships at all levels;
- the well-motivated children whose behaviour is exemplary;
- the very high quality of pastoral care;

- the very good to excellent standards attained by nearly all of the children, in line with their abilities;
- the well-presented children's work, regularly marked by the teachers;
- the range of extra-curricular activities provided, particularly that in music and sport, and the children's success in associated competitions;
- the excellent links with the local community;
- the strong parental support, including that of the Parents' Group;
- the effective whole-school approach to promoting the children's understanding of international, cultural and ethnic diversity, through a project with local schools, funded by the International Fund for Ireland and DE;
- the excellent leadership of the Principal who provides a clear insightful vision for the school's future development which is shared effectively with the staff;
- the quality of teaching observed, which ranged from satisfactory to excellent, with the majority of lessons evaluated as good or better, and a small number as excellent;
- the welcoming environment, including the attractive displays of the children's own work;
- the very good quality school development plan; and
- the good use of a range of information to support monitoring and evaluation of the provision.

In the areas inspected, the school has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents and the local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

THE NURSERY UNIT

1. The nursery unit is situated in the grounds of Harmony Hill Primary School, Lisburn.
2. The parents and staff were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery unit through the inspection questionnaires. The responses indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the provision. Many parents included written comments praising the work of the staff. A small number of parents commented on the lack of space in the entrance area.
3. The nursery has an excellent ethos, and comprehensive policies and procedures for child protection that comply fully with Department of Education Circulars and guidance. The inspection evidence indicates that these policies and procedures are implemented effectively by all of the staff who show a very high level of concern for the children's welfare.
4. The nursery demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. Regular opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a range of physical activities.
5. **The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows:**

- there is a very positive ethos based on good relationships at all levels. The children are very well behaved; they display high levels of concentrated and purposeful play throughout the session;
- the staff work hard to prepare a very stimulating and attractive learning environment both outdoors and throughout the nursery building;
- the daily routine is organised effectively to make the best use of all time to promote learning;
- the staff demonstrate a high level of skill in extending the children's language and learning through the play. They are sensitive in their support and build effectively on the children's own ideas;
- the children are provided with a wide range of interesting activities which promote good or very good opportunities to learn in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. On the day of the inspection particular strengths of the programme included, the effective promotion of the children's oral language and listening skills, the many examples of sustained co-operative and imaginative play, the well-developed art work, and the very effective use made of a previous outing as a starting point to promote a range of learning;
- the staff are fully aware of some children's additional needs. They liaise effectively with parents and other agencies and give the children appropriate care and support. The children are well integrated and there is evidence of progress in their development;
- there are good links with the parents and the adjoining primary school;

- the detailed written planning is broad and balanced, guides the staff effectively in their day-to-day work with the children, and makes some useful links with the observation records to outline specific support for individual children; and
- the nursery staff are very hard-working and dedicated. The teacher gives effective leadership within the unit and fosters a strong sense of team-work.

6. The nursery unit has an appropriate development plan which identifies some key priorities for further improvement. The teacher is reflective in her approach, and there is clear evidence of the significant developmental work she has promoted which has brought about continuous improvement in the provision.

7. The nursery unit has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being well met. The parents and the local community can have confidence in the nursery's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON HARMONY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL
NURSERY UNIT**

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time		
Attending part-time	26	26
Under 3 years of age*		
With statement of SEN**		1
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	1	2
At CoP stages 1 or 2***		
With English as an additional language	3	

* 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.	4
Average attendance for the previous year.	93.2%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
	2½ hours	2½ hours

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	1	
Nursery Assistants	1	
General Assistant		1

Number of: ****	
Students	5
Trainees	

**** Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	57%
Number of written comments	15

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2007

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.