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*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

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Short Inspection

**Kells and Connor Primary School
Ballymena**

Inspected: November 2009

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

KELLS AND CONNOR PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT42 3LS (301-0835)

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Kells and Connor Primary School is situated in the village of Kells, County Antrim. The enrolment has remained steady over recent years and is currently 181. At the time of the inspection, approximately 12% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 28% were identified 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.

THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection 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.

One hundred and thirty-seven questionnaires were issued to the parents; 29% (40) were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 18 contained additional written comments. Nearly all of the parents' responses indicated strong support for, and appreciation of, the school and its staff. The parents highlighted in particular, the caring ethos, the leadership of the Principal, the friendly and approachable staff, and the range of extra-curricular activities.

All of the teachers responded to the online questionnaire with four providing additional written comments. All of the responses were supportive of the work of the school.

The children talked positively and enthusiastically about their learning experiences and the many aspects of school life that they enjoyed, including the wide range of extra-curricular activities, for example, involving their frequent involvement in environmental work, and musical and sporting activities. They are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the strong sense of community throughout the school;
- the very caring and inclusive ethos;

- the opportunities provided to enhance and extend the children's learning experiences beyond the classroom; and
- the effective monitoring and evaluation of the pastoral provision which has led to the identification of appropriate areas for further development.

CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by DE.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The healthy eating programmes, supported by appropriate external links, and the very good use of the school's website to inform parents and children about healthy eating, encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

CONCLUSION

The strengths of the school include:

- the high quality of pastoral care;
- the exemplary behaviour of the children and their positive attitudes to learning;
- the good standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy by the end of key stage 2;
- the overall quality of the teaching, which in a significant minority of the lessons observed was outstanding;
- the very good leadership of the Principal, well supported by the Vice-principal, who promote well the very good working relationships at all levels, and who set appropriate high expectations for further improvements in learning and teaching; and
- the arrangements for self-evaluation which include the very good use of standardised test scores to identify appropriate priorities for action, both within the school's development planning and in the individual classes.

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 children and has demonstrated the capacity for sustained self-improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The school entrance is situated on a busy road used by cars and lorries, often travelling at high speed; the school maintains a constant vigilance at this potentially dangerous access. Any possibility of reducing this hazard, to slow the speed of traffic passing the school entrance, should be investigated in the interest of the children's safety.

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