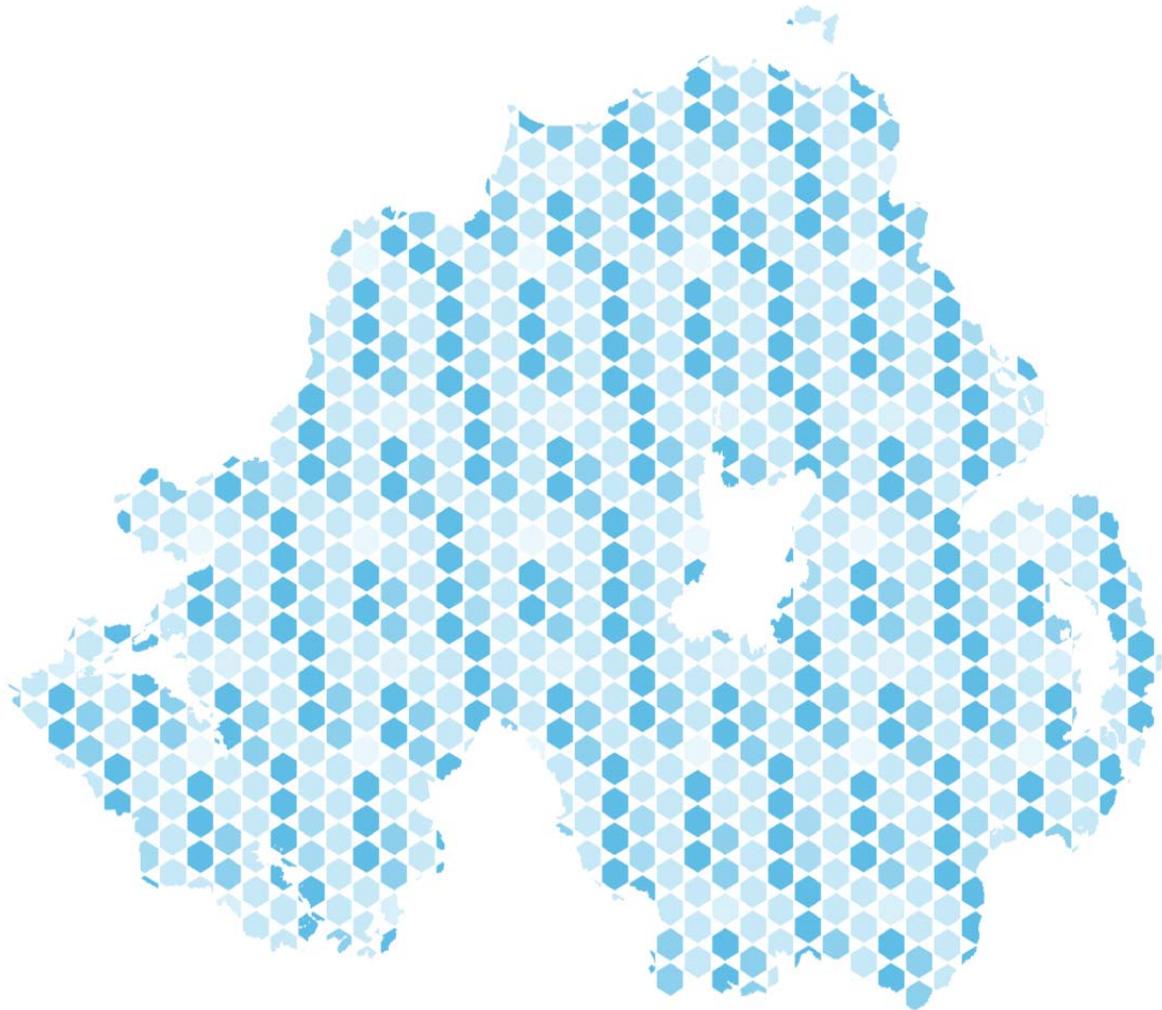


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Newtownhamilton Primary  
School, Co Armagh

Report of an Inspection  
in 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



## NEWTOWNHAMILTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT35 0DQ (501-1137)

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Newtownhamilton Primary School is situated on the edge of the village of Newtownhamilton in County Armagh. All of the children attending the school come from the village and surrounding rural areas. The enrolment has remained steady in recent years and currently stands at 64 including three children of reception age. At the time of the inspection, approximately 13% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 19 children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. At the time of the inspection the Principal was absent on sick leave.

### 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.

The school's arrangements for pastoral care and child protection were also evaluated.

### 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

- The children's behaviour is very good, they are well-motivated and work well both individually and collaboratively on group activities.
- In English and mathematics, most of the children attain **standards** in line with their ability. To raise the standards of attainment further, teachers need to set clearer target for the children based on their diagnosis of the needs of each child.
- The teachers are very hard-working and committed to the education and care of the children, and are very well supported by the classroom assistants. The quality of the **teaching** observed ranged from satisfactory to very good, it was good or better in almost all of the lessons observed.
- The provision for **special educational needs** is very good. The children's needs are identified early and a variety of good programmes of support are put in place which ensure that the children make progress and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Under the very good leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), good processes have been developed to assess and track all of the children's progress in learning.

- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** is very good. This is evident through the excellent working relationships at all levels and the supportive and inclusive ethos developed in the school.
- The school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the **child protection** guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).
- The school gives good attention to promoting **healthy eating** and physical activity, for example, through the provision of nutritious school meals and the promotion of healthy breaks. There is a need to consult with the whole-school community in further developing the healthy eating programme.
- The **Acting-principal** ensures that the school performs well and continues with its programme of development during periods when the Principal is absent. In this role, she receives very good support from all other members of the staff.
- The whole-school **self evaluation** and **school development planning (SDP)** processes are satisfactory. Within the School Development Plan, there needs to be a stronger focus on the provision for literacy and numeracy, in particular how these two important areas of the curriculum are to be developed further and improved.

## 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 areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. These include the need to:

- ensure that the school development plan has a stronger focus on the further development and improvement of the provision for literacy and numeracy; and
- raise further the attainments of the children in literacy and numeracy.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

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 including the present provision for reception children, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

**THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, 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. Of the 41 questionnaires issued to the parents, 19 (46%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE), including three which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the parental questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents expressed their pleasure with the children's progress, the approachability and friendliness of the staff and added that the school would benefit from having a principal who is there full-time.

A small number of the parents met with the inspection team on the first day of the inspection and expressed strong support for the work of the school.

All of the teachers and three members of the support staff responded very positively to the staff questionnaires.

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 and 7 children; they talked happily and enthusiastically about their experiences at school, and the support and encouragement they receive from all of the staff. The children are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety and well-being.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- The access to the school is not as secure as it needs to be.

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