

*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**

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Short Inspection**

**St Columba's Primary School and Nursery Unit**  
**Kilrea, Coleraine**

**Inspected: September 2009**



## **ST COLUMBA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT, KILREA, COLERAINE, CO DERRY, BT51 5UT (303-6147)**

### **SCHOOL CONTEXT**

St Columba's Primary School is situated on the northern edge of Kilrea on the road to Coleraine. The school has a single nursery unit attached to it. Most of the children come from the town with a small number coming from a wide rural catchment. The current enrolment of the primary school is 164, a decrease from 189 in 2006/2007; 27 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. At the time of the inspection, approximately 8.5% of the children were entitled to free school meals; 18% of the children were on the special needs register; and seven children spoke English as an additional language.

### **THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS 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. Of the 115 questionnaires issued to the parents in the primary school, 60% were returned to the Department of Education (DE), including 26 which contained an additional written comment; half of the 24 questionnaires issued to parents of children in the nursery unit were returned and five contained additional comments. All of the teachers responded to the confidential online questionnaire. Almost all of the responses and written comments in the various questionnaires indicate very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of school life. The very few issues raised were discussed with the Principal.

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

Members of the inspection team also met with a group of year 6 children; the children talked enthusiastically about the many aspects of school life they enjoy, they reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do in the event that they have a concern.

### **PASTORAL CARE**

The quality of arrangements for pastoral care in the school and nursery is very good. The Principal and staff are dedicated to the children in their care; the children are well-behaved and friendly. There is a strong family ethos within the school and effective links are promoted with the parents and wider community to support and extend the children's learning. The classroom assistants contribute significantly to the work and life of the school. The children are given many opportunities to develop their sense of responsibility to others through, for example, the School Council and 'buddy' system.

### **CHILD PROTECTION**

The school and the nursery have very good arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect fully the guidance in the relevant DE circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures.

## HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school and the nursery give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the Healthy Breaks programme and the provision of additional playground resources, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## CONCLUSION

The strengths of the school include:

- the well-mannered children who engage enthusiastically in their learning;
- the quality of the teaching observed which was always good or better, and the majority of which was very good;
- the very good standards achieved by the children in both literacy and numeracy;
- the effective links with the parents, wider community and external agencies to support the children's learning;
- the good quality of the provision for children who require additional support with their learning; and
- the outstanding leadership of the Principal ably supported by the Vice-principal and the co-ordinators.

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 its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

## **THE NURSERY UNIT**

The main strengths within the nursery's educational and pastoral provision are as follows:

- the nursery has a very positive ethos based on excellent working relationships at all levels. There is a very happy, caring atmosphere; the children are very well settled, and their behaviour is excellent;
- the staff make good use of the children's own art work to create topical and stimulating displays;
- the broad and balanced curriculum offers very good opportunities for learning in all areas of the programme. The attention given to the promotion of the children's language, communication skills and outdoor learning experiences are key strengths of the nursery's provision;
- the teacher-in-charge is an excellent role model to the hard-working and dedicated staff; she is well organised and sets high standards for the work in the nursery; and
- the nursery's development plan identifies appropriate areas for further development. The Principal is very supportive and ensures that the work of the nursery is an integral part of the school. Good communication and links with the primary school help to ensure that the children make a smooth transition to year 1.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education and pastoral care provided by this nursery is very good. The nursery is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON THE NURSERY UNIT IN ST COLUMBA'S  
PRIMARY SCHOOL, KILREA, COLERAINE**

**1. Details of Children**

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	27	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	0	0
With English as an additional language	0	0

\* 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.	1%
Average attendance for the previous year.	91.8%

**2. Duration of Sessions**

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
-	2½ hours	-

**3. Details of Staff**

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Teachers	0	1
Nursery Assistants	0	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	0	1

<b>Number of: ****</b>	
Students	1
Trainees	1

\*\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

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

Number issued	24
Percentage returned	50%
Number of written comments	5

## **APPENDIX**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- There is a need to carry out a risk assessment of the fencing around the school and the nursery.
- The split level nature of the school has an adverse impact on the experiences of some children with additional physical needs.
- Water is getting into the nursery. There is a need to carry out an assessment of the fabric of the accommodation of the nursery.

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



© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2009

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](http://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.

