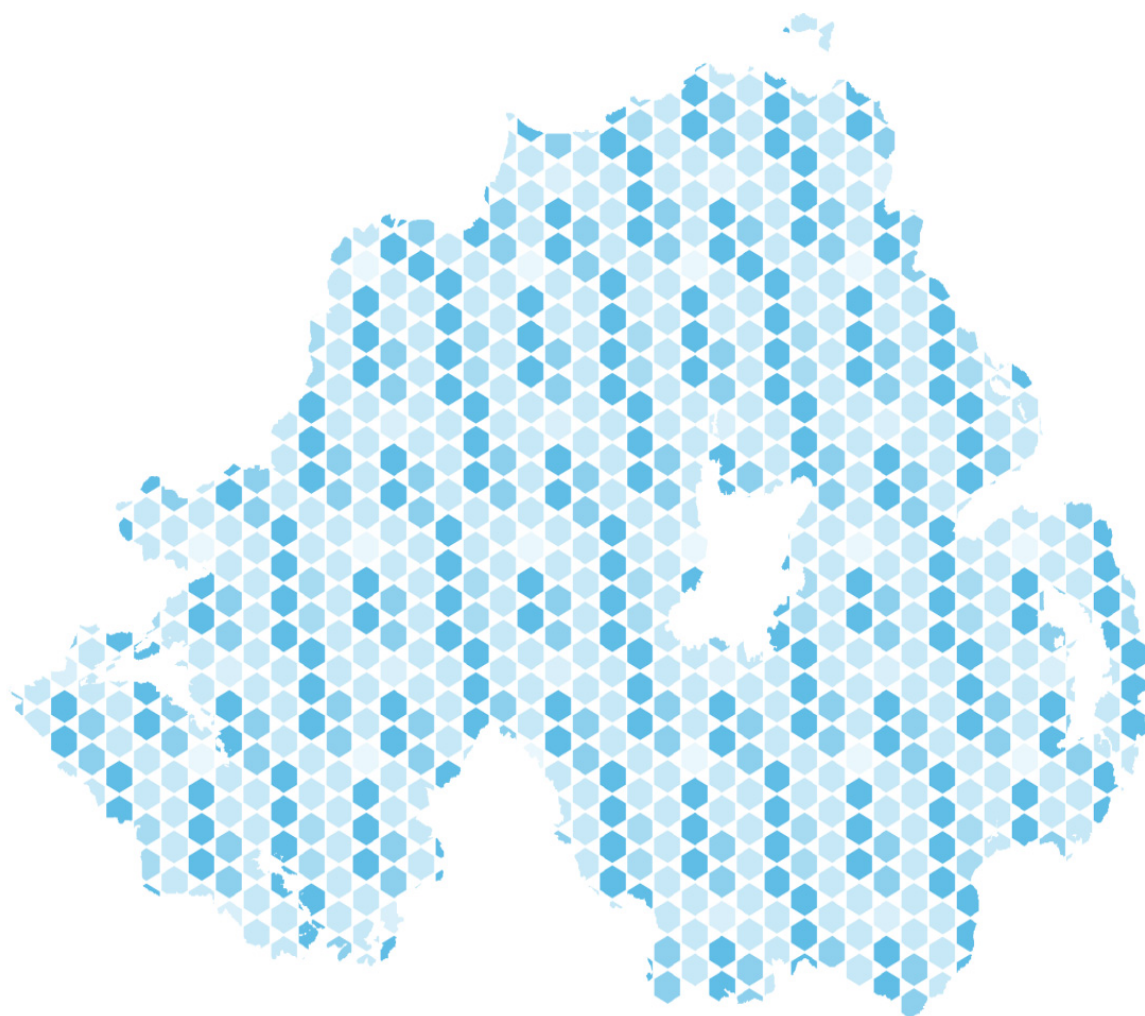


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Columb's Primary School,
Cullion

Report of an Inspection
in March 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

St Columb's Primary School is situated on the Iniscarn Road, approximately two miles from Desertmartin, County Derry. Almost all of the children come from within a five mile radius of the school. The enrolment has fluctuated within the past five years; more recently, it shows an upward trend rising from 84 in 2007/08 to the current enrolment of 93.

At the time of the inspection, 12% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 17% of the children were identified as requiring help 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 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 two areas for improvement in leadership and management which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Achievements and Standards

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

- By the end of key stage (KS) 2, most of the children attain good standards in literacy and numeracy. By year 7 the children express themselves confidently and articulately; they read with fluency and good understanding and can write extended responses to a range of stimuli. In mathematics, the children have a sound understanding of concepts such as number, place value, data handling and aspects of measures; they complete written exercises accurately but are less secure in choosing mental strategies and in applying their mathematical knowledge within real-life contexts.
- The children identified with **special educational needs** make good progress in their learning.
- The children attain satisfactory standards in **information and communication technology** (ICT).

Provision for Learning

The provision for learning is good.

- The **children** are welcoming, well-motivated and their behaviour is exemplary; they work collaboratively in pairs and small groups, demonstrating independence and good organisational skills. In all classes, the children contribute purposefully to the thematic planning.
- During the inspection, the quality of the **teaching** observed ranged from satisfactory to very good; in most of the lessons observed, it was good or very good. In the most effective practice, the teachers had high expectations of what the children could achieve; they built effectively on the children's prior knowledge and experience and provided clear instructions about the planned learning activities. In the less effective practice, the lessons lacked pace and appropriate challenge, particularly for the more able children. Throughout the school, there is a need for the teachers to provide the children with more opportunities to articulate their thinking in mathematics, to edit and redraft their written work and to present it to a wider audience.
- The provision for **special educational needs** (SEN) is good. The learning support teacher (LST) was not present at the time of the inspection. The class teachers and special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) identify at an early stage those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning; they develop well-focused education plans (IEPs) for the children which take account of the advice from a range of educational and medical professionals. The IEPs are shared appropriately with the children and their parents and are reviewed effectively on a regular basis.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** is very good. This is evidenced through the inclusive, welcoming ethos and the cognisance taken of the children's voice through for example the use of class listening boxes which provide the opportunity for the children to express their concerns and opinions.
- The school has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the **child protection** guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- The school gives good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity** through, for example, the healthy break options which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The **Principal**, who has been in post for twelve years, was not present at the time of the inspection. In addition to her teaching commitment and overall school leadership role, she holds responsibility for leading developments in mathematics, assessment and ICT.

- The school is at an early stage of developing the process of **self evaluation** to bring about improvement. Whilst reflection, discussion and the completion of detailed evaluations, form an integral and effective part of the teachers' day-to-day work, there is a need for the Principal, governors and staff to develop further the procedures for whole-school self-evaluation in order to inform better the **school development planning** (SDP) processes, to improve further the quality of the learning and teaching and to continue to raise the standards which the children attain. It will also be important to build the confidence and the capacity of the staff and to provide them with the necessary support to fulfil their leadership roles within the school.
- The Literacy and special needs **co-ordinators** provide useful guidance and support for the teachers within their respective areas of the curriculum.

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 two areas for improvement in leadership and management which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- build the confidence and the capacity of the staff and to provide them with the necessary support to fulfil their leadership roles within the school; and
- develop further the procedures for whole-school self-evaluation in order to inform better the **school development planning** (SDP) processes, to improve further the quality of the learning and teaching and to continue to raise the standards which the children attain.

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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Columb's Primary School** iii. **Date of Inspection: 21/03/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 303-2205** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	6	14	13	11	17
Enrolments					
Primary	84	94	88	84	93
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): 97.6% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the
 Special Educational Needs Register: 97.8%
- | | Primary &
Reception | Nursery
Unit | Special
Unit | Irish Medium
Unit |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
|--|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 5 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.6 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 18.6
- iv. Class Size (Range): 11 to 25
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support: | 15 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 25 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 25 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.2%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 17.2%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 11.8%
- 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 | Mathematics | Irish |
| 100% | 100% | N/A |

THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 63 questionnaires issued to parents, 31 (49%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 23 which contained additional written comments.

Almost all of the parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision in the school. In particular the parents valued the caring, family ethos, the helpful teaching and support staff and the school's commitment to meeting the needs of all of the children.

Almost all of the teachers and all of the support staff completed the questionnaire. All of the responses were very positive and highlighted the support of the staff for the work of the school.

During discussions with a group of children from year 6, they spoke enthusiastically about the school and about the support they receive from their teachers. They also indicated that they feel safe in school and that they know what to do and who to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their work or their safety.

The inspection team also met with governors on the first day of the inspection. They are fully supportive of the work of the Principal and the school.

The few issues raised through the questionnaires were discussed with the governors and the teaching staff.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The traffic congestion at drop off and pick up times poses a potential danger to the children. There is a need for a risk assessment to be carried out with regard to parking and traffic flow at peak times of the day; and
- There is no vision access from the corridor into one of the classrooms

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