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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

St Joseph's Primary School
Meigh

Inspected: September 2009

**ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, MEIGH, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT35 8LA
(503-1188)**

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Joseph's Primary School is situated on the edge of Meigh village at the foot of Slieve Gullion. The enrolment has remained steady over recent years and is currently 177. At the time of the inspection, approximately 29% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 11% of the children were on the special educational needs register.

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, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching staff and the support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection.

Of the 112 questionnaires issued to the parents; 100 (89%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE) of which 32 contained additional written comments. Most of the parents acknowledged the caring ethos, the hard-working staff and the support provided for the children. However, approximately half of the parents who submitted a written response raised concerns about the information they receive on the children's progress, the lack of challenge for the most able children and the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying.

All of the teachers and a minority of the support staff completed the online questionnaire. Their responses were wholly positive about the work of the school.

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

The Inspectorate has reported to the Principal and the chairperson of the governors the main issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. Among the strengths are the positive relationships at all levels, the inclusive and caring ethos throughout the school, the involvement of the children in the creation of the school rules and the design

of a new school uniform. The children respond well in class and their behaviour is excellent. The support staff work hard and make a valuable contribution to promoting a happy school environment for the children.

CHILD PROTECTION

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

CONCLUSION

The strengths of the school include:

- the very happy ethos throughout the school, and the children's excellent behaviour;
- the hard work and commitment of the teachers, and the very good teaching in almost half of the lessons observed;
- the wide range of creative activities and enriching school outings which the children participate in;
- the innovative use of multimedia communication to develop the children's skills in Information and Communication Technology; and
- the caring and supportive leadership provided by the Principal and vice-principal and their commitment to school improvement.

Areas for improvement include the need:

- to develop a culture of self-evaluation leading to improved school-development planning;
- for management at all levels to put in place effective strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching across the school; and
- for management at all levels to make more effective use of quantitative and qualitative data to track the children's progress and set targets in order to raise the standards they attain.

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management and standards which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

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

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