



*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**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Short Inspection

**St Joseph's Primary School
Stiles**

Inspected: April 2008

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** St Joseph's Primary Stiles
 ii. **School Reference Number:** 303-6050
 iii. **Date of Inspection:** W/B 14.04.08
 iv. **Nature of Inspection:** Short

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	32	44	34	25	26
Enrolments					
Primary	249	249	260	226	216
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	0	0	0	0	0
Special 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): 93.7%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 11.5 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.78 NI PTR: 20.8
- iii. Average Class Size: 24
- iv. Class Size (Range): 18 to 31
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support: | 37 |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support: | 15 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 85 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.38%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 36%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 30.09%

ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, STILES, ANTRIM, BT41 1JZ (303-6050)

St Joseph's Primary School is situated in the Stiles area of Antrim. The enrolment has decreased over recent years and currently sits at 216. The children come mainly from the surrounding area.

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Of the 107 questionnaires issued, 30% were returned to the Department of Education (DE), including 16 which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of school life. The few issues raised by some of the parents have been discussed with the Principal and the Board of Governors (governors). Almost all of the responses of the teaching staff were positive. During the inspection, two members of the governors met with the inspection team; they spoke very favourably about the work of the school and, in particular, the important role which the Principal and the staff have played in raising the profile of the school in the community. The governors also paid tribute to the level of support and commitment which the parents provide for the school.

The inspectors met with two groups of children; a group of the year 6 children reported that they feel happy and safe in school and know what to do in the event of a concern, and the year 7 children shared their views about issues relating to healthy lifestyles and general well-being.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is excellent. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school. The strengths in pastoral care include:

- the very caring and supportive ethos, and the very attractive learning environment, which promote good behaviour, a clear sense of mutual respect, and the inclusion of all children throughout the school;
- the creative ways in which the pupils' views are considered with regard to pastoral matters;
- the contribution made by the support staff, before, during and after school, to the pupils' well-being and their learning experiences; and
- the strong and effective leadership in the area of pastoral care provided by the Vice-principal.

The school gives excellent attention to promoting the children's health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are effective policies and programmes in place, for example healthy breaks and associated incentives to encourage participation, super learning days providing a healthy breakfast and break time snack, and a cooking club, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The strengths of the school include:

- the quality of the teaching observed, which was always very good, and often excellent; of particular note was the range of strategies used to promote the children's thinking skills and their understanding of their own learning and attainment;
- the early identification of those children who experience difficulties in aspects of their learning and development, and the quality of the support they receive;
- the culture of rigorous self-evaluation at all levels, including the detailed analysis of performance data which is used very effectively to inform and improve the quality of the learning and teaching;
- the standards of literacy and numeracy achieved by the children, which are in line with, or exceed, their ability;
- the key role exercised by the Vice-principal and the other teachers with special responsibilities in leading and supporting whole-school development and improvement; and
- the highly effective, visionary and innovative leadership provided by the Principal.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is outstanding. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being very well met. The parents and the local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

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