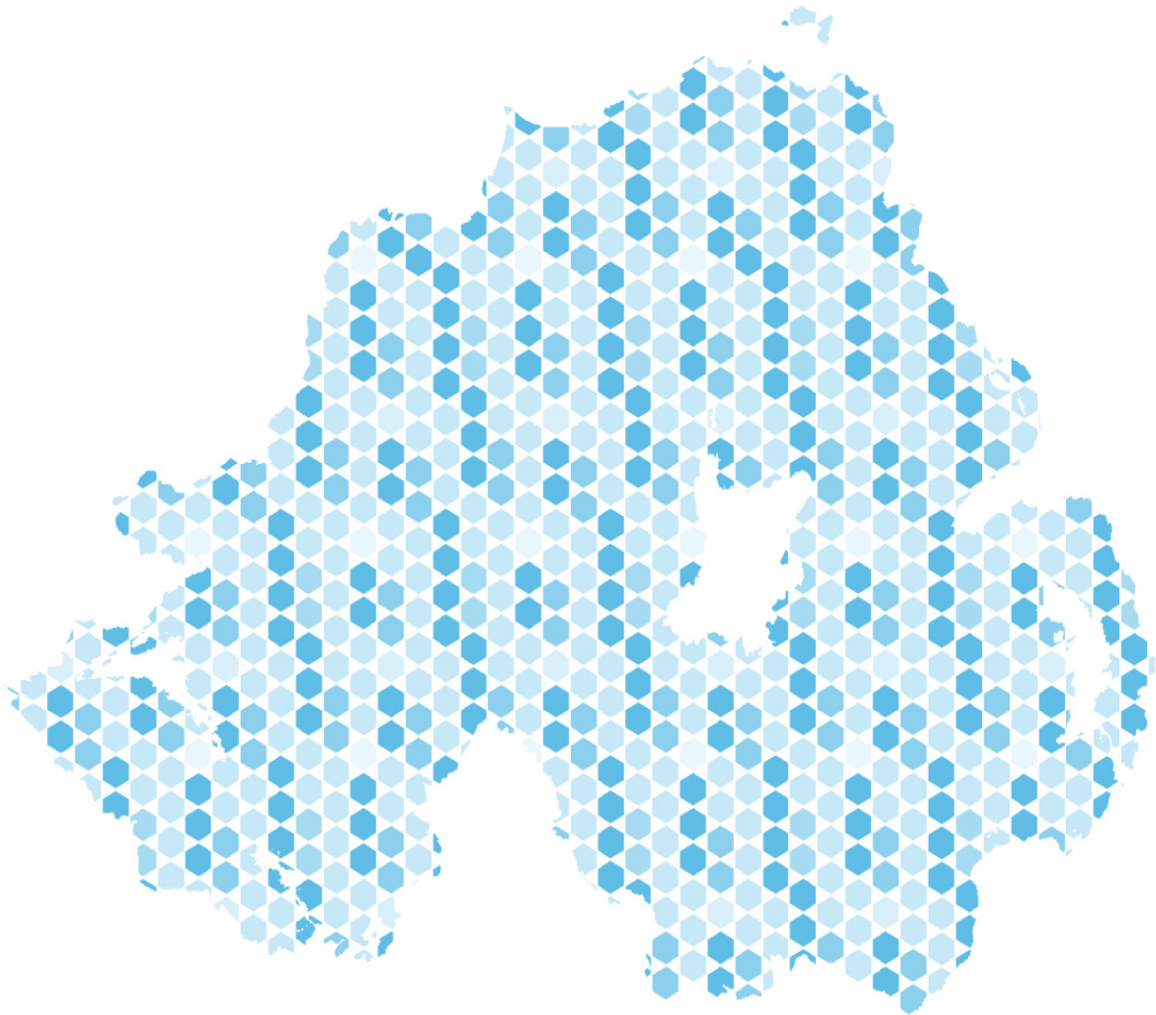


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,  
Newry

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2011

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 Mary's Primary School is situated in Lurganare about six miles from the centre of Newry. The enrolment has increased over the last four years from 108 children in 2007 to the current figure of 118. At the time of the inspection, approximately 8% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified almost 18% of the children as requiring additional support 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 this school is very good and the pastoral care 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.

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### Achievements and Standards

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

In English and mathematics, by the end of key stage (KS) 2, most of the children attain standards which are in line with their ability. To raise the standards of attainment further, in a minority of classes the teachers need to ensure there is sufficient challenge in all aspects of the children's learning, and that the work provided is sufficiently matched to their varying needs and abilities.

The **children** show a positive attitude to learning. They demonstrate a good ability to work collaboratively as a whole class and in smaller groups. They have high levels of self esteem and exhibit a clear sense pride in their work.

The children achieve satisfactory to good standards in their use of **information and communication technology (ICT)**. The school has plans to introduce the CCEA KS2 ICT accreditation and the inspection endorses this as an appropriate area for development.

### Provision for Learning

The provision for learning is very good.

The quality of the **teaching** ranged from satisfactory to outstanding, with most of the lessons being good or better. The outstanding or very good practice included the provision of a wide range of tasks in English and mathematics which were very well matched to the varying

needs and abilities of the children. In contrast, in the less effective practice there was insufficient well-focused support for individuals or groups of children, and, as a direct result, a minority did not reach sufficiently the standards of which they were capable.

The quality of the **pastoral care** is very good. Key strengths observed during the inspection included the supportive working relationships between the staff and the children, and the children's exemplary behaviour. They are provided with good quality opportunities to care both for the environment, and for one another, through their participation in the "Eco Council" and in the "Playground Buddy" system.

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for **safeguarding** children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE). To improve the arrangements further, there is now a need to review and update the written policies on discipline, anti-bullying and intimate care, in consultation and engagement with the staff, parents and children.

The school gives good attention to **promoting healthy lifestyles** through the curriculum and healthy breaks.

The provision for **special educational needs** is good. The children's needs are identified early, appropriate targets are set, and a wide range of data is used to assess the children's progress.

### **Leadership and Management**

The overall quality of leadership and management is good.

The **Principal** is committed to the life and work of the school and, under his direction, the school has identified a range of relevant priorities for the medium and longer term. These are summarised well in the school development plan (SDP) and are supported by action plans. He is supported very well by the recently appointed Vice-principal who provides very good leadership for the staff in her various roles. The Principal and Vice-principal have collated and analysed well the results from standardised tests and key stage results to inform the targets set out in the SDP. The use of other forms of first-hand evidence, such as a scrutiny of the quality and standard of the children's written, mathematical and ICT work, or lesson observation, is less well developed. Accordingly, the Principal now needs to lead further improvements in the self-evaluation work within the school, focusing more sharply on evaluation through the use of a wider range of first-hand evidence, and on disseminating the very good or outstanding practice already existing in most of the classes.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good and the pastoral care 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.

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Mary's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 23/11/11**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 503-1695** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	19	20	18	17	22
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	108	108	116	115	118
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): 95% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 95.88%
- |  | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 7.2 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 16.38 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 19.66
- iv. Class Size (Range): 18 to 22
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 15 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 35 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 15 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 17.8%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 7.6%
- 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):
- |                |                    |              |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Irish</b> |
| 100%           | 89.47%             |              |

**THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, 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 74 questionnaires issued to parents, 44 were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including ten which contained additional written comments. A small number of parents also met with the Inspectors to convey their views of the school. All of the parental responses indicated agreement that their child was well cared for and that the children are encouraged to behave well. Most of the parents indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of school life. In particular, they commented on the happy, friendly atmosphere, and the dedicated and caring staff. There was less satisfaction from a small number of parents regarding a range of issues, including the need for more effective communication and engagement with parents, and a request for a wider range of extra curricular activities. All of the issues raised through the questionnaires were discussed with the Principal and the chair of the Board of Governors.

The questionnaire returns from the teaching staff and the returns from the support staff were wholly positive; they made particular reference to the happy staff, the approachable Principal and the close links with the parents.

The inspectors also met with a group of year 6 children; they talked in an articulate manner about meeting their friends in school, and their enjoyment of practical mathematics sessions and writing stories. They reported that they were happy in school and valued greatly their role in the formulation of their class rules. They indicated that they felt safe and secure in school, and were aware of whom to talk to if they had any concerns.

**ACCOMMODATION**

- The hole in the boundary fence to the rear of the school requires a permanent repair.
- The facilities for changing children with specific changing and toileting needs require improvement.

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