



*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 Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit
Portglenone**

Inspected: March 2009

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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|----|-----|--|------|---|
| A. | i. | School: St Mary's Primary Portglenone | iii. | Date of Inspection: W/B 02.03.09 |
| | ii. | School Reference Number: 303-0621 | iv. | Nature of Inspection: Short |

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School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 1 Intake	24	19	27	30	23
Enrolments					
Primary	193	174	175	190	184
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	26	26	26	27	26
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):

95.9%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)

9.5

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- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.4% NI PTR: 20.8

- iii. Average Class Size: 23.1%

- iv. Class Size (Range): 16 to 28

- ### v. Ancillary Support:

- ### Number of Hours Per Week:

- | | | |
|------|--|----|
| i. | Clerical support: | 32 |
| ii. | Official Making A Good Start Support: | 15 |
| iii. | Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 55 |

- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1%

- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 25%

- viii. Number of children who are
- not**
- of statutory school age: 0

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 10%

**ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, PORTGLENONE, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM,
BT44 8BL (303-0621)**

St Mary's Primary School is situated within the village of Portglenone in County Antrim. Almost all of the children come from Portglenone and the surrounding rural area; the enrolment has remained consistent over recent years and is currently 184. Ten per cent of the children are entitled to receive free school meals. The school has identified 25% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

At the time of the inspection approximately one-third of the teaching staff were substitute teachers covering the absence of permanent members of staff.

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and teachers to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as a meeting with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of children from years 6 and 7. One hundred and twenty-seven families were issued with questionnaires; 36% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) of which 17 contained additional written comments. The majority of responses from the parental questionnaires highlighted the caring and happy atmosphere within the school. The responses from the teachers were very affirmative of the work of the school. The representatives from the governors expressed their support for the hard-working staff. The children reported that they feel safe, enjoy school and know what to do in the event of a concern. The issues raised by a small number of the parents through the questionnaires and the written comments were shared with the Principal and a representative from the governors.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good. This is displayed through the involvement of the children in the extra-curricular activities and educational visits organised to support and enhance their learning.

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance of DE. An area for improvement is:

- the need to ensure that all policies relating to child protection are applied consistently throughout the school.

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. Effective policies are in place to guide and support whole-school healthy eating programmes and healthy breaks, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The strengths of the school include:

- the very good behaviour of the majority of the children;
- the quality of the teaching observed which was good or better in the majority of lessons;
- the majority of the children achieve above the expected levels in numeracy and literacy;

- the development of the involvement of parents and the local community in the life and work of the school;
- the collaborative approach to school development planning in both the Primary School and the Nursery Unit; and
- the developing culture of self-evaluation and reflective practice throughout the school which is led effectively by the Principal for continued improvement.

The main area for improvement is:

- the need to raise the level of expectation and challenge for the children in order to meet their needs more effectively.

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 an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

THE NURSERY UNIT

The nursery is situated in a mobile classroom within the grounds of the primary school. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes and the teacher-in-charge has been in post for one year.

The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery through the inspection questionnaires. Twenty-three per cent of the parents responded to the questionnaire and four made additional comments. The responses indicate that the parents regard the nursery highly and appreciate the approachable, caring and encouraging staff and the varied and interesting programme provided for the children.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare of the children. There is a strong sense of team-spirit and there are close links with the parents.

The nursery has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by DE. An area for improvement is:

- the need to ensure all procedures relating to child protection are reviewed regularly.

The nursery gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, which encourage the children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

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

- The very attractive and stimulating learning environment within the playroom.
- The quality of the staff's interactions with the children which is of a high standard.
- The appropriate methods of planning the programme and assessing the children's development and achievement.
- The very well organised daily session which provides a lengthy period of uninterrupted play, balanced with activities led by the staff.
- The good learning opportunities in most aspects of the pre-school curriculum.
- The effective leadership provided by the teacher-in-charge of the nursery who promotes a strong sense of team-spirit among the hard-working staff.

The staff have developed an appropriate approach to self-evaluation and there is some evidence that the process has led to improvements in the children's learning experiences. The school development plan is detailed and identifies important, appropriate action plans which have been drawn up to address each priority.

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	26	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.	0%
Average attendance for the previous year.	92.7%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
-	2½ hours	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	0	1
Nursery Assistants	0	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	0	1

Number of: ****	
Students	0
Trainees	1

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	23%
Number of written comments	4

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There is a lack of parking facilities.
- The security of the classrooms, corridors and access areas around the school needs to be reviewed as a priority.

ACCOMMODATION

- There is a lack of storage within the school.
- Disability access to the majority of the school buildings should be reviewed.

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:-

More than 90%	- almost/nearly all
75%-90%	- most
50%-74%	- a majority
30%-49%	- a significant minority
10%-29%	- a minority
Less than 10%	- very few/a small number.

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