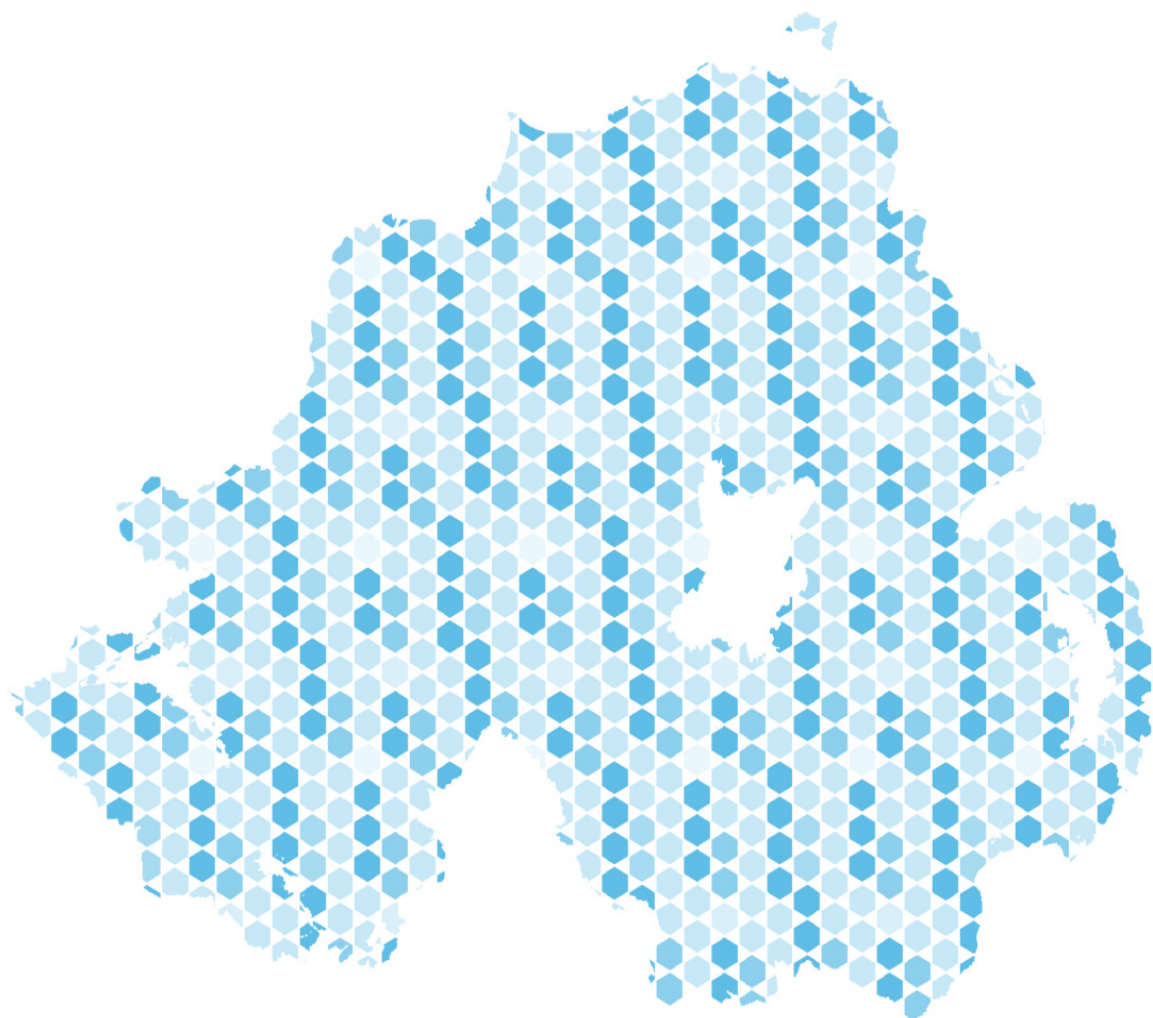


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,  
Aughnacloy

Report of an Inspection  
in September 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 the town of Aughnacloy in County Tyrone. The children attending the school come from the town and surrounding rural area. Over the last four years the enrolment has increased and currently there are 94 children in the school. Approximately one-quarter of the children have English as a second language; a significant proportion of the total enrolment. At the time of the inspection, approximately 14% of the children were entitled to free school meals, and the school had identified approximately 14% 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. 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**, most of the children attain **very good** standards in line with their ability. Over the past four years, the school's performance fluctuated but is in and around the Northern Ireland average for schools in the same Free School Meals category. By the end of key stage (KS) 2\*, almost all of the children are highly motivated, articulate, read competently, write for a range of purposes, and work with a high degree of independence and self-management. Most of the children use competently a very good range of numeracy skills and strategies to solve mathematical problems.
- The children identified with **special educational needs** make steady progress and achieve standards in line with their ability.

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\* The Key Stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

## **Provision for Learning**

The provision for learning is **very good**.

- The **children's behaviour** is exemplary; they are friendly, courteous and have positive attitudes to their learning. Through the existing culture of mutual respect they are encouraged to work collaboratively, to express their own ideas confidently and to show respect for the opinions of others. Effective links are established with other schools to extend the children's experiences, and a wide range of after-school activities, including music, drama, environmental topics and sport, enhance well the breadth of the provision for learning.
- The teaching and support staff are hard-working and fully committed to the well-being of the children. Most **of the teaching** observed was very good or better, and, on a few occasions it was outstanding. In the foundation stage (FS) and KS1, the planned activities are matched well to the children's varying needs and abilities, and the teachers' marking gives good support and clear advice on how to correct errors and improve work. This good practice needs to be disseminated more widely in KS2.
- The provision for **special educational needs** is outstanding. The school identifies at an early stage the children who require support in literacy and/or numeracy. Additional provision, either through in-class support or withdrawal sessions, is matched well to the children's needs, and provided in a sensitive and effective manner. Significant features of the provision include the effective work of the classroom assistants, the strong links with external agencies, and the effective partnership with parents all of which support well the children's learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** in the school is outstanding. There is a welcoming and strong inclusive ethos in the school where every child is valued greatly, and effective steps are taken when needed to support their needs where pastoral or academic difficulties arise.
- The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for **safeguarding** children. These arrangements reflect the child protection guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- The school gives excellent attention to promoting **healthy eating**, and there is an appropriate emphasis on healthy lunches and the provision of physical activity for the children.

## **Leadership and Management**

The quality of leadership and management is **very good**.

- The Principal sets a very positive tone for the work of the school, and has developed excellent professional relationships with the children, parents and staff. She is held in high esteem by the parents and local community, and is committed to providing the highest standards of education for all the children. She provides clear guidance and advice for the teachers on the quality of the teaching and learning she expects the children to receive. She has developed a strong team-spirit and collegiality amongst the staff, utilising their expertise and interests to very good effect.

- The **Board of Governors** plays a supportive role that is underpinned by their sound knowledge and understanding of the life and work of the school. The school accommodation is well maintained and the grounds attractively presented. The provision of resources for the children to use is excellent.
- The **co-ordinators** provide effective curricular leadership; in particular, they use well a range of quantitative information, including a comparison with benchmarked data, to measure the performance of the children.
- The whole-school **self-evaluation and school development planning** (SDP) processes are very good. The SDP has been informed well through consultation with the parents, the staff and the school governors and, led by the Principal, is focused appropriately on the dissemination of the very good or outstanding practice to all of the classes, and raising further the very good standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school 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, Aughnacloy** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 26/09/11**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 503-6363** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	14	13	12	12	18
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	88	94	91	93	94
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): 93.7% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the  
 Special Educational Needs Register: 94%

**Primary & Reception    Nursery Unit    Special Unit    Irish Medium Unit**

- D. i. Number of Teachers  
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 6 0 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 18.8 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 23
- iv. Class Size (Range): 18 to 30
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:  
 i. Clerical support: 17  
 ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: 16  
 iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 26
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 5.32%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 13.82%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age:
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 13.98%
- 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 85.71%    Mathematics 78.57%    Irish N/A**

### 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, and for a group of children from year 6 to meet the Inspectors.

Sixty nine questionnaires were issued to the parents: 35 were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 17 contained additional written comments. Nearly all of the responses from the questionnaire were highly affirmative of the school. The written comments were very positive, and praised the Principal and the staff for their dedication and professionalism. The comments made were shared with the Principal and the chair of the governors.

Three members of the **governors** met with members of the inspection team. They praised the leadership of the Principal, and the commitment of the staff and the parents to ensuring that the provision in the primary school was of the highest standard.

Five of the **teachers** and seven of the **support staff** completed confidential questionnaires. All of the teachers and the support staff were highly positive about all aspects of the school. In addition, five of the teachers and six of the support staff included written comments indicating high levels of satisfaction in their work.

The inspectors met with the **year 6 children**; they talked readily about their enjoyable educational experiences, and about the support and care provided by the teachers and the support staff. The children are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety and well-being.

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