



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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*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 Michael's Primary School  
Newtownhamilton**

**Inspected: March 2009**

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** St Michael's Primary Newtownhamilton  
 ii. **School Reference Number:** 503-1070  
 iii. **Date of Inspection:** W/B 30.03.09  
 iv. **Nature of Inspection:** Short

B.

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 1 Intake	9	6	9	3	1
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	64	61	62	51	46
Reception	1	1	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): 94.3%

<b>Primary &amp; Reception</b>	<b>Nursery Unit</b>	<b>Special Unit</b>
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- D. i. Number of Teachers  
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 4 0 0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 15% NI PTR: 20.8
- iii. Average Class Size: 15
- iv. Class Size (Range): 12 to 19
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week:**
- |   |    |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support:  | 20 |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support:                   | 10 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 43 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 4.3%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 30%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 47.8%

**ST MICHAEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNHAMILTON, CO DOWN,  
BT35 0PB (503-1070)**

St Michael's Primary School is situated in the town of Newtownhamilton. The enrolment has been declining in recent years; it is currently 46 and is projected to fall to 43 in September 2009. It will be important that the employing authority, school Board of Governors (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 staff. In addition to the teaching Principal there are two full-time teachers and one principal-release teacher; at the time of the inspection one teacher was absent on long term sick leave.

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 37 questionnaires issued to the parents; 15 (41%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE), including seven which contained an additional written comment. Most of the responses from the parental questionnaires and the majority of written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with aspects of school life; reference was made to the dedicated and caring Principal, the hard-working, professional and caring staff and the high quality education provided for the children. The issues raised by a small number of parents concerned the adverse impact of teacher absence on their children's learning, the falling enrolment and the lack of opportunities for their children to engage in extra-curricular activities. An analysis of the questionnaires and the written comments made by the parents were shared with the Principal.

The inspectors also met with a group of year 6 children; the children talked very happily and enthusiastically about their learning, the range of extra-curricular activities, and the care, support and encouragement they receive from the staff. The children indicated clearly that they are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety and well-being.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in this school is excellent. The school has excellent arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect fully the guidance in the relevant DE circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures. Among the strengths are the high priority given to the health and well-being of the staff and children.

The Principal has been in post for five years, during that time she has led the staff effectively in the development of the curriculum in order to bring about improvement in the children's learning experiences and the standards which they attain. The Principal has advised the employing authority that in the best interests of the children and the community, there is a need for them to reflect upon the declining trend in enrolment and to consider the sustainability of the school.

The strengths of the school include:

- the high quality of the teaching, which was good or better in most of the lessons observed, and excellent on a few occasions;

- the excellent leadership of the Principal, the high expectations she sets for the children and the staff and her unwavering commitment to making the best possible provision for the children and their families;
- the very good standards achieved in literacy and numeracy by most of the children;
- the children's exemplary behaviour and their enthusiasm for learning;
- the excellent working relationships at all levels and the very positive contribution of the non-teaching staff to the life and work of the school; and
- the well organised, stimulating learning environment and the effective use made of the accommodation.

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.

Throughout the report a number of quantitative terms are used which may be interpreted as indicated below:

- 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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