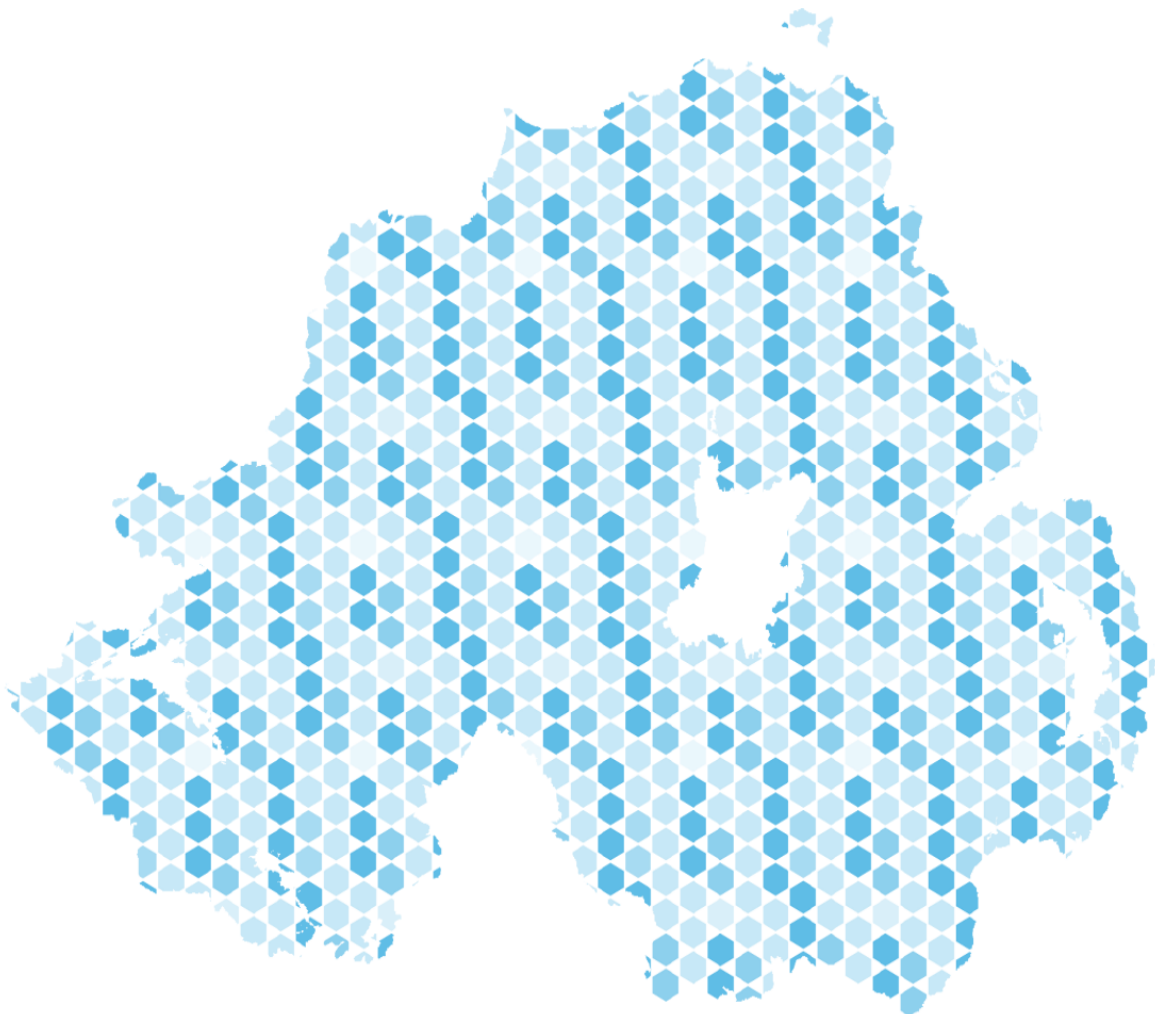


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Oliver Plunkett Primary  
School, Ballyhegan

Report of an Inspection  
in September 2012

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 Oliver Plunkett Primary School is situated in the townland of Ballyhegan, County Armagh. Almost all of the 93 children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The enrolment has increased slightly in recent years. At the time of the inspection, 13% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals. The school has registered 10% of the children as having special educational needs.

## 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 quality of pastoral care is **outstanding**. 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.**

- The children attain very good **standards** in English and mathematics. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, they apply well their literacy, numeracy and information and communication (ICT) skills across the curriculum, and in a variety of contexts.
- The children identified with **special educational needs** reach very good standards by the end of year 7.

### Provision for Learning

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

- All of the children engage in their learning with an evident sense of motivation and enjoyment. They work well in groups, and actively take the initiative and responsibility to complete their assigned tasks to a very good standard, integrating their use of ICT when appropriate. Through their 'student council' the children make well-considered decisions about changes they would like to make to routines affecting their school life .
- The teachers and support staff are hard-working. They know the children well, provide effective individual support; and, this contributes greatly to the strongly evident , inclusive ethos in which each child is respected and valued.

- The quality of the **teaching observed** during the inspection ranged from good to outstanding, with a majority of the lessons very good and a few outstanding. Skilful questioning allowed the children to organise and clarify their thinking and to contribute extended oral responses of a high quality. The teachers have realistically high expectations of what the children can achieve and provide work matched well to their differing needs and abilities. In most lessons seen, success criteria to judge the effectiveness of lessons were explained clearly by the teacher, and subsequently used well by the children themselves to assess their learning.
- The provision for **special educational needs** is very good. The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early, and a range of well-targeted support strategies meets their needs effectively. Almost all of the children make very good progress and achieve very good standards in literacy and numeracy, in line with ability. A noteworthy feature of the work of the school is the important and effective focus placed on the teaching of reading, supported skilfully by the classroom assistants, for all children including those with special educational needs.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** in the school is outstanding. All of the teachers promote well the evident strong inclusive ethos in their individual teaching. The well-conceived and varied positive reward systems contribute to this ethos. The children develop further their confidence and self-esteem through the many extra-curricular activities they engage in.
- On the basis of the evidence at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for **safeguarding** children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- The school gives excellent attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity**. There is a strong emphasis on sport, and on the children being active during morning break and lunch times.

### **Leadership and Management**

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

- The **Principal** is highly supportive of his staff and promotes effectively a collaborative approach to whole-school improvement. He leads the school well, for example, on the use of qualitative and quantitative data to assess the standards the children are reaching, and on developing effective links with parents and the community. All of the staff have worked well as a team on recent school development priorities focusing on guided writing, processes in mathematics and the World Around Us.
- The teachers have made a good start to using performance data to inform their planning and to effect further improvement in the children's learning and the standards attained. As part of the strengthening self-evaluation culture and the **school development planning process**, more frequent use is now made of other first-hand evidence to augment the analysis of performance data.

- 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 quality of pastoral care is **outstanding**. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.



## APPENDIX 2

### THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, 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.

63 questionnaires were issued to the **parents**: 19 (30%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch (ISB) and nine contained additional written comments. All of the responses from the questionnaire and almost all of the written comments were extremely positive, and praised highly the work of the teachers in making the children's learning enjoyable and in helping them to feel safe and secure when at school.

All of the teachers and the support staff completed confidential questionnaires, the responses were highly positive about all aspects of the school.

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

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