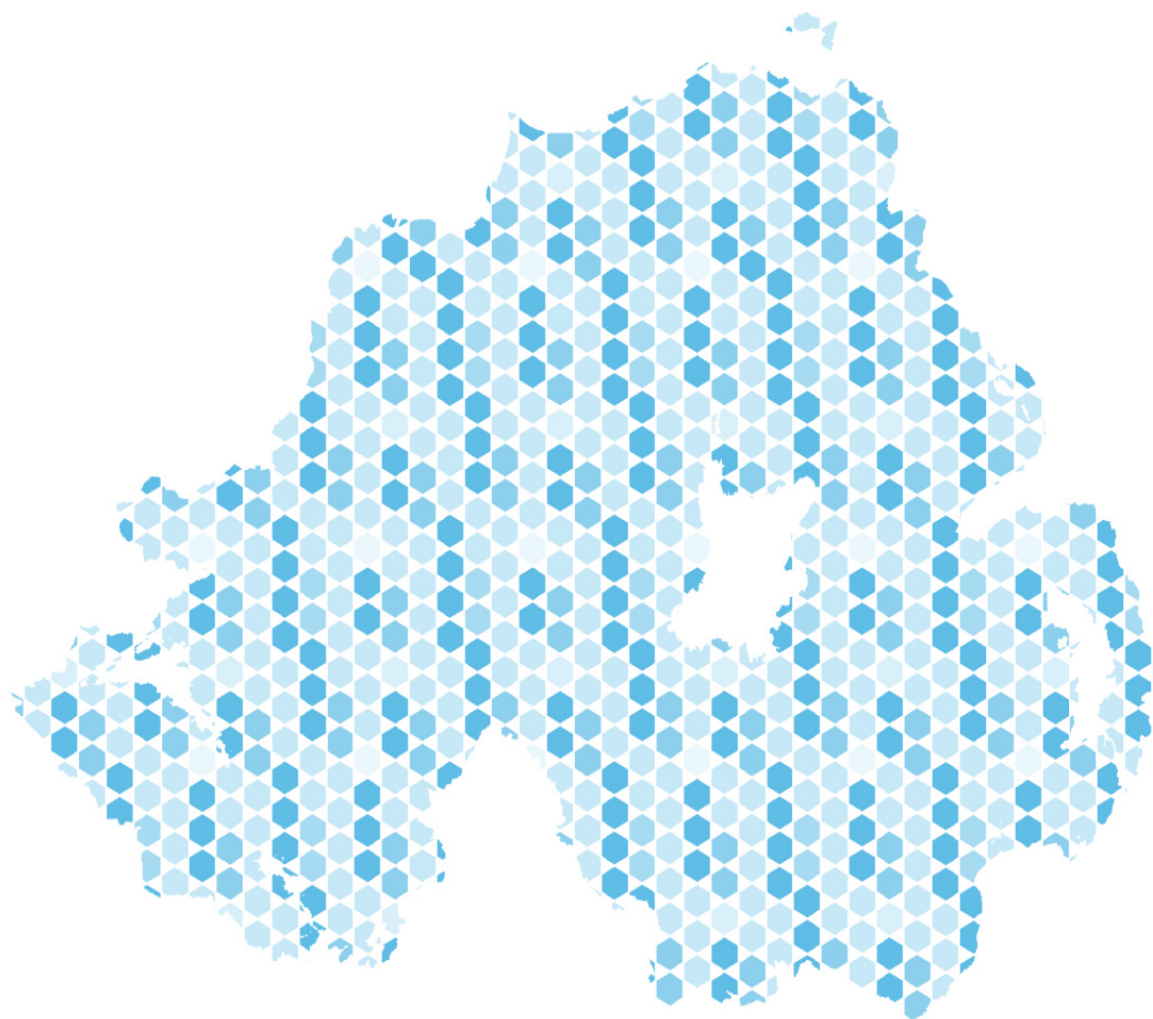


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Oliver Plunkett Primary  
School, Forkhill

Report of an Inspection  
in October 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:

<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Oliver Plunkett Primary School is situated in Forkhill, County Armagh. All of the children come from the local area within a five mile radius of the school. Over the past five years, the enrolment has remained steady and currently stands at 112 children. The Principal has been in post for one year. At the time of the inspection, three of the teachers were employed on temporary contracts. Approximately 31% of the children are entitled to receive free school meals. The school has identified approximately 21 % of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. A new school build is in progress, with a completion date set for March 2012.

## FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of the provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management, including the school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

## OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### Achievements and Standards

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

In English and mathematics, the **children** attain good **standards** in line with their ability; they are well motivated and enthusiastic about their learning; they contribute confidently to group and whole class discussions. They are successful in applying their range of knowledge and skills in a variety of different learning contexts.

The children identified with **special educational needs** (SEN) respond well in the classes and in the withdrawal sessions designed to support their needs. They are making good progress in line with their abilities.

### Provision for Learning

**The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

- During the inspection, the quality of the **teaching** observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory; the majority was very good or outstanding. There is a developing sense of teamwork among the hard-working and dedicated teachers and classroom assistants; they are all fully committed to the children's welfare. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support the children's learning.

- The children are courteous, very well-behaved and demonstrate confidence in talking and listening as they participate in paired and small group work. In the lessons where the teaching was very good or better, the children demonstrated very good levels of interest, perseverance, motivation and enjoyment in their learning.
- The provision for **SEN** is good. The school identifies, at an early stage, those children who require additional support in literacy and /or numeracy. The support provided through the withdrawal sessions is well-planned and effective. The school has identified the need to ensure that the targets contained in the children's individual education plans (IEPs) are specific enough to enable the teachers to track adequately the children's progress.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** in the school is outstanding. This is evident through the warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos and the extent to which the parents and the wider community are involved in the life and work of the school. The staff take very good cognizance of the health and emotional well-being of the children.
- 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 good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity**, for example, through the provision of health breaks and the range of extra-curricular activities provided.

### **Leadership and Management**

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

- The **Principal** provides very effective **leadership**. She is fully committed to the life and work of the school. In the short time she has been in her position, she has made a very good start in reviewing important aspects of the work of the school to bring about necessary improvements. The Principal has made a very good start to the collation and analysis of available assessment data in order to further guide improvements in the standards the children attain.
- The whole-school self-evaluation and **school development planning** (SDP) is at an early stage of development. The current SDP outlines broad areas for improvement. It is now timely for the staff to make adjustments to the SDP to take account of inspection findings to ensure a clearer focus on key priorities.
- The school is currently in the process of developing the roles and responsibilities of the curriculum **co-ordinators** in order to develop effective processes to monitor and evaluate learning and teaching. The inspection endorses this action.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues 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.

The following area requires further development:

- develop further the role of the co-ordinators in monitoring the children's progress in literacy and numeracy and in promoting greater consistency in the quality of the teaching.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues 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.

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Oliver Plunkett Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 17/10/11**  
ii. **School Reference Number: 503-0972** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	18	16	15	16	20
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	120	114	111	104	112
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<br>(expressed as a percentage): | 97.6% | <b>NI Avg Att: 94.7%</b> |
|----|---|-------|--------------------------|

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 97.14%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- |    |    |   |     |   |   |   |
|----|----|---|-----|---|---|---|
| D. | i. | Number of Teachers<br>(including the principal and part-time teachers):<br>(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 5.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|----|----|---|-----|---|---|---|

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.3 NI PTR: 20.2

- iii. Average Class Size: 22.4

- iv. Class Size (Range): 17 to 29

- |                                  |  |   |      |
|----------------------------------|--|---|------|
| v. Ancillary Support:            |  |   |      |
| Number of Hours <b>Per Week:</b> |  | i. Clerical support:  | 25   |
|                                  |  | ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:           | 45   |
|                                  |  | iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 32.5 |

- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.7%

- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 21.4%

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

- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 31.2%

- |    |  |                         |                             |                     |
|----|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 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><br>83.3% | <b>Mathematics</b><br>83.3% | <b>Irish</b><br>N/A |
|----|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|

### 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.

Seventy-nine questionnaires were issued to the parents of the children in the primary school; 21 (23%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch and seven contained additional written comments. Most of the responses from the questionnaires returned were highly affirmative. The parents commented positively on the approachable, caring staff, the good standing of the school in the local community and indicated that their children feel safe and enjoy school.

Four of the teachers and four support staff completed confidential online questionnaires. Most of these responses were wholly positive indicating very strong support for the work and life of the school.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the findings from the questionnaires.

The year 6 children feel happy and secure in school, and are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety and well-being.

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