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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Short Inspection**

**St Patrick's Primary School  
Holywood**

**Inspected: November 2007**



**ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, HOLYWOOD, CO DOWN, BT18 9LN  
(403-1628)**

St Patrick's Primary School is situated in the town of Holywood. The majority of the children attending the school come from the town or the surrounding area. Although there is an element of the school's population that is transient, the enrolment has remained relatively stable in recent years. Currently 237 attend the school, which includes eight reception children. The school has identified that approximately 14% of the children require additional support with aspects of their learning; approximately five per cent of the children are entitled to free school meals.

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of children from year 6.

Of the 119 questionnaires which were issued to the parents, 23% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 15 contained additional written comments. In addition, 80% of the staff responded to the online questionnaire and five provided additional written comments.

The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's work; through their written responses the parents praised the work of the Principal and the teachers. The governors expressed their appreciation of the positive ethos within the school, the effective leadership of the Principal, the commitment shown by all of the staff and the school's good reputation within the local community. The staff acknowledged that the leadership and support provided by the pastoral care team for the children is a strength of the school.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is excellent. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school. Among the strengths are the high quality of the pastoral care provision and the policy and procedures for addressing bullying issues and encouraging good relations. The Education and Training Inspectorate reported the main issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions to the Principal and a representative of the governors.

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The strengths of the school include:

- the excellent ethos based on the good quality of the working relationships at all levels and the exemplary behaviour, courtesy and friendliness of the children;
- the hard-working and dedicated teaching staff and the valuable contribution made by the non-teaching staff to the work of the school;

- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection was always sound and on a few occasions it was good or very good;
- the appropriateness of the school development plan (SDP) and the continuous programme of development based on an effective self-evaluation of the provision, which is led effectively by the curriculum co-ordinators;
- the good use made of the analysis of assessment information to inform whole-school planning and enhance further the learning experiences and the high standards achieved by most of the children; and
- the good quality of the provision for those children with special educational needs (SEN).

The Principal is conscientious, provides effective leadership and management and a vision which guides the work of the school. The improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed SDP. There are very good opportunities for consultation about the SDP within the school community; effective target-setting, benchmarking and good quality staff development contribute to the effectiveness of the school's programme for improvement. All relevant policies and programmes are in place, which effectively support a culture of school improvement. The school gives excellent attention to, and meets fully, the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is very good. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents and local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

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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