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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Short Inspection

**St Ronan's Primary School
Newry**

Inspected: November 2009

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

ST RONAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT34 1PR (503-6409)

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Ronan's Primary School is situated in Newry, County Down. Over the past five years the enrolment of the school has remained constant and is currently 389. At the time of the inspection, approximately 7% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 13% of the children were identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Approximately 5% of the children have English as an additional language.

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.

The school's provision for pastoral care and its arrangements for child protection were also evaluated and are reported on.

THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF, GOVERNORS AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teachers and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 130 questionnaires issued to the parents, 77 (59%) were returned to the Education and Training Inspectorate, including 34 which contained an additional written comment. Most of the parental questionnaires and written comments indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular the parents referred to the high quality of teaching and leadership within the school, the quality of the arrangements for pastoral care provided for the children and the high standards achieved by them in many aspects of their work.

Almost all of the teachers completed the online questionnaire and five added written comments. Their responses indicate high levels of satisfaction with most aspects of life and work within the school. A minority of the teaching staff identified a number of processes within the school as problematic. These include issues relating to internal communication, decision making and leadership opportunities.

The returns from the support staff were wholly affirmative of the work of the school.

The inspection team met with the Board of Governors (governors). The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school commending, in particular, the dedication of all the staff and the Principal, and the attitude and motivation of the all the children.

The analysis of the questionnaires and the issues raised were shared and discussed with the governors and with the Principal.

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 and year 7 children; they talked enthusiastically about their experiences at school, referring in particular to the friendly and helpful teachers and the support provided by all the other staff. The children are fully aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well being.

PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. Among the strengths are the positive working relationships between the staff and children which foster an inclusive and supportive ethos throughout the school. All staff are committed to the care and welfare of the children and work together effectively to promote and maintain a well-organised, supportive and pleasant environment for learning.

CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect fully the child protection guidance in the relevant Department of Education circulars.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the links it has established with external agencies that deal with food and health-related issues and the range of sporting opportunities made available. All of these encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The strengths of the school include:

- the inclusive, welcoming and caring ethos in which the children's behaviour is exemplary and their attitude to learning is extremely positive;
- the quality of the teaching which was good or better in almost all of the lessons observed, and very good or outstanding in two thirds;
- the good to very good standards achieved by the children in English and mathematics;
- the very good leadership provided by the Principal and Vice-principal both of whom give the highest priority to enhancing the experiences of the children and the standards they attain; and
- the robust processes in place for self-evaluation, including the rigorous analysis of performance data, the outcomes of which are used to inform the well-designed School Development Plan and to guide further improvements in learning and teaching.

This inspection identified no significant areas for improvement in the provision for learning and teaching.

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 very clearly its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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