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*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**

**Steelstown Voluntary Maintained Primary School  
and Nursery Unit, Derry**

**Inspected: January 2007**

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Steelstown Voluntary Maintained Primary, Derry**      iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 30.01.07**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-6084**      iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Year 1 Intake	70	73	70	68	46
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	561	543	543	543	482
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	26	26	26	26	26
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):

92.8%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
------------------------	-----------------	-----------------

- D. i. Number of Teachers  
 (including the principal and part-time teachers):      25      1      0  
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):      19.28      NI PTR: 20.5
- iii. Average Class Size:      24
- iv. Class Size (Range):      21 to 27
- v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| i. Clerical support:  | 66    |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support:                   | 40    |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 172.5 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs:      2.28%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register:      36.7%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age:      0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals:      46.05%

**STEELSTOWN VOLUNTARY MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOL, DERRY,  
BT48 8EX (203-6084)**

Steelstown Voluntary Maintained Primary School serves the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in the Shantallow area of Derry. The enrolment has fallen from 561 in 2002/03 to its current figure of 482. Just over 46% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

The high quality of pastoral care is a significant strength of the school. A secure and supportive environment is provided for the children in which they are valued, and feel very much at ease. The school has procedures in place for pastoral care and child protection, which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant Department of Education Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the procedures; they have had the opportunity to feed into a range of helpful policies which guide the work of the school. These policies and the effective pastoral care systems underpin the good working relationships and the effective learning and teaching which take place both within and outside the classroom. The school has identified further areas for development within its pastoral programme.

The strengths of the school include:

- the happy, caring ethos that permeates the life of the school;
- the motivated, well-behaved children;
- the strong commitment of all teaching and non-teaching staff, to the children's education, development and well-being;
- the attention given by the school to encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles;
- the well-maintained, attractive and stimulating learning environment;
- the excellent working relationships at all levels throughout the school;
- the commitment of the hard-working teachers;
- the quality of the teaching which was always satisfactory, often very good and at times excellent;
- the high quality of the provision for children with special educational needs;
- the standards attained by the children which are generally in line with their ability;
- the quality of the school's self-evaluation report and the tradition of self-evaluation in the school;
- the high quality and effectiveness of the contribution made by the school's senior management team and curriculum co-ordinators;

- the drive, energy and enthusiasm of the Principal, and her commitment to the children and to the whole school community; and
- the strong support of parents, governors and the wider community for the work of the school.

In the areas inspected, the school has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being well met. The parents and the local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

## **THE NURSERY UNIT IN STEELSTOWN VOLUNTARY MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOL, DERRY**

1. The nursery unit is accommodated in a purpose-built mobile situated in the grounds of Steelstown Voluntary Maintained Primary School. The children come mainly from the surrounding area.

2. The parents were given opportunities to express their views about the nursery unit through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection. In their response, the parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the nursery unit provision.

3. The nursery unit has in place appropriate procedures for pastoral care and child protection, which are in line with guidance given by the Department of Education.

4. The nursery unit has an appropriate healthy eating policy which is implemented by the staff and shared with the parents. Currently, the children are participating in a community health promotion scheme and they avail of free fruit and bottled water. Very good opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a wide range of energetic physical activities.

5. The main strengths within the nursery unit's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- There is a supportive ethos based on the very good working relationships at all levels. The staff provide a safe and secure learning environment, which promotes the children's self-esteem and confidence.
- The stimulating and well-organised environment helps to foster curiosity and autonomy in the children's learning and as a result their play in the indoor and outdoors is purposeful and productive. The children respond well to the staff's expectations and their behaviour is very good.
- There are effective communication and links established with the parents who are encouraged to play a full role in the education of their children.
- The organisation of the daily timetable is carefully planned and provides a good balance of freely chosen play and activities organised by the staff. Effective snack and dinner routines provide appropriate opportunities for the children to take responsibility and to develop independence.
- The staff provide a broad and balanced programme which offers good to very good learning opportunities in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The development of the children's language and physical skills is a particular strength of the programme.
- The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is often of a high standard and promotes the children's concentrated, co-operative and purposeful play.

- The children with special educational needs are identified early and are well integrated within the nursery class.
- The staff have developed detailed planning and are continuing to develop the assessment methods. The staff regularly evaluate the children's responses to the activities and effectively plan the play provision.
- The teacher-in-charge of the nursery unit is an effective manager and a good role-model who brings a high level of skill and enthusiasm to her work. She demonstrates a strong commitment to the welfare of the children and to the ongoing development of the nursery unit. There is a strong sense of team-spirit among the hard-working and dedicated staff. The nursery unit is an integral part of the primary school and receives a high level of support from the Principal.

6. There is a culture of reflection and review developing within the nursery unit. The staff contribute to the whole-school development plan which highlights relevant aspects of the nursery unit's work for further development. The staff are gaining skills that will assist them in the further development of the self-evaluation process leading to improvement.

7. The nursery unit has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The educational and pastoral needs of the children are being well met. The parents can have confidence in the nursery unit's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON STEELSTOWN VOLUNTARY MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, DERRY**

**1. Details of Children**

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>
Attending full-time	26
Attending part-time	N/A
Under 3 years of age*	0
With statement of SEN**	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	2
With English as an additional language	0

\* On 1 July.

\*\* Special Educational Needs.

\*\*\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	11%
Average attendance for the previous year.	91%

**2. Duration of Sessions**

<b>Full-time</b>
4½ hours

**3. Details of Staff**

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>
Teachers	1
Nursery Assistants	0
Qualified Nursery Assistants	1

<b>Number of: ****</b>	
Students	1
Trainees	2

\*\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

**4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)**

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	46%
Number of written comments	4

**HEALTH AND SAFETY (NURSERY UNIT)**

- There is a need to ensure that the area immediately beyond the fencing of the outdoor area is kept free of debris that might attract vermin.



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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