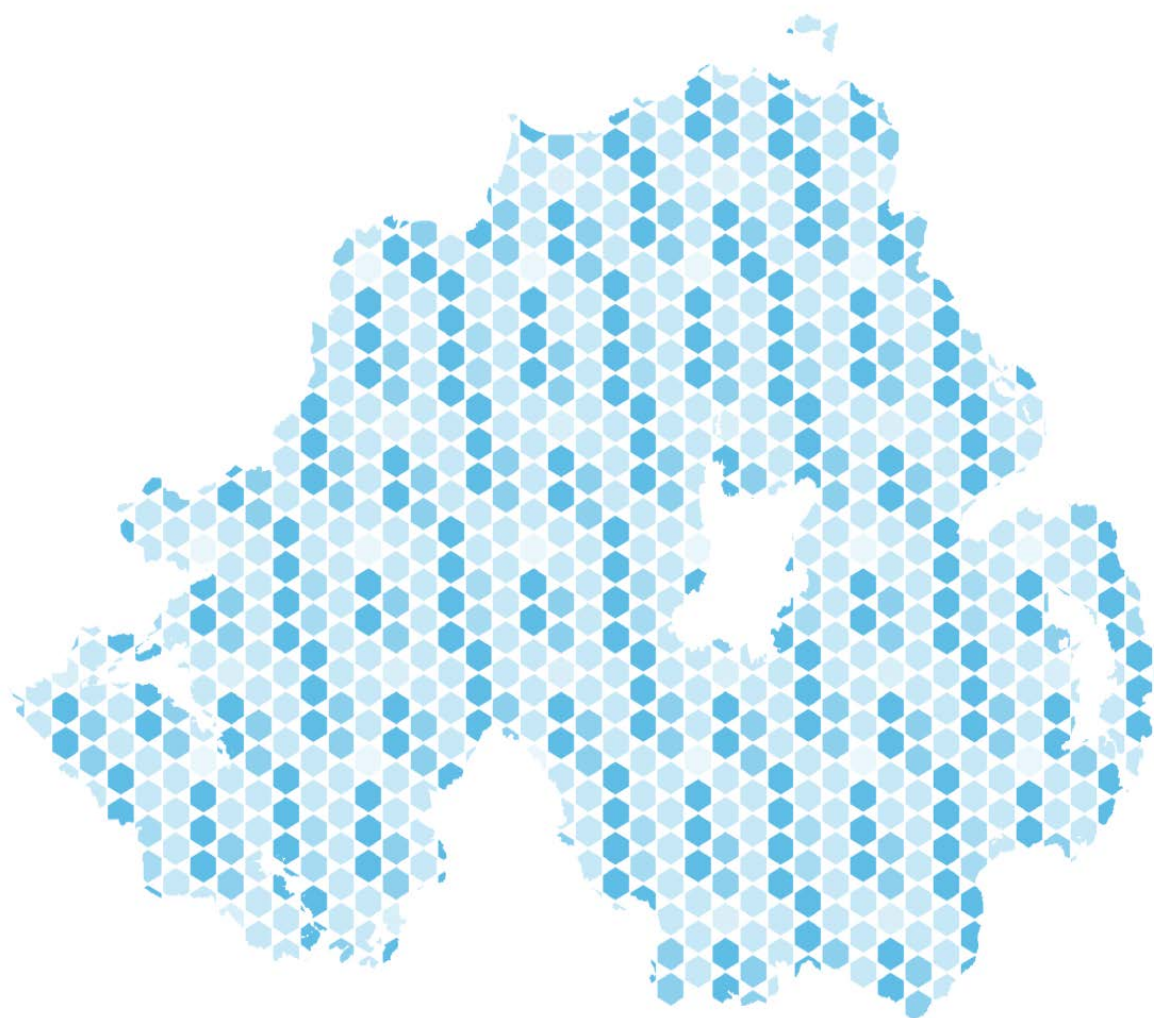


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Christian Brothers' Primary
School and Nursery Unit,
Armagh

Report of an Inspection
in February 2013

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Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from lesson observations, from scrutiny of the children's completed written work and from a range of documentation including the school's internal performance data. In addition, the inspection team held discussions with groups of the children, with teaching and non-teaching staff and with representatives from the Board of Governors.

The views of the parents, teaching and non-teaching staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the principal and the governors. A summary of the outcomes from the questionnaires is included in section 6 of the report.

Quantitative terms

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

1. School context

Christian Brothers' Primary School is situated on the main Keady Road in Armagh. The school is made up of a diverse range of inclusive provision which consists of mainstream, an Irish-medium unit, an Irish-medium nursery unit(naiscoil), an Autism Specific Learning Support Centre and a Learning Support Centre. The enrolment has increased steadily over the past five years, from 320 in 2008/09 to the current enrolment of 364 including 123 children who are enrolled in the Irish-medium unit (IMU),26 children in the IM nursery unit and 11 children in the Autism Specific Learning Support Centre and Learning Support Centre. At the time of the inspection 38.5% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 20% of the children in the school were identified as requiring additional help with aspects of their learning.

2. Focus of inspection and overall finding

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school and units; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection, were evaluated.

OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of all of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards	Very Good
Quality of provision	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good
Irish-medium unit	Outstanding
Irish-medium nursery unit	Very Good
Autism Specific Learning Support Centre	Good
Learning Support Centre	Very Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and standards

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

- Almost all of the children are highly motivated and engage fully in their learning. They respond positively to the behaviour strategies set by the staff, settle quickly in the lessons and are keen to contribute to discussions and present their ideas to the class. They work very effectively in pairs and collaboratively in groups expressing their own ideas confidently and showing respect for the opinions of others. The children have opportunities to self and peer evaluate the effectiveness of their contribution and learning, and by key stage (KS)2 they are developing high levels of independent learning skills.
- An analysis of the KS2 assessment data shows that the school's performance in English, Irish and mathematics has been above or in line with the Northern Ireland average for three out of the past four years. When compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the school's performance in English and mathematics is also above or in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for three out of the past four years. The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children make progress in English, Irish and mathematics in line with their ability.
- The children have a very good understanding of their work across the range of areas in mathematics; in the foundation stage (FS) the children have a sound knowledge of number, shape and problem solving and they can use mathematical language with confidence in their work and play. In KS1 and KS2 they are secure in their knowledge of number facts and can handle simple and more complex computation well. By year 7 the children have very good knowledge and understanding of important ideas and concepts across the mathematics curriculum. Across all key stages, the children achieve very good standards in literacy and develop very good skills in talking, listening, reading and writing in meaningful contexts. In the well structured plenary sessions almost all of the children can explain their thinking and give a clear account of their reasoning. A majority of the children in KS2 report that they read for pleasure, and they are able to talk articulately and confidently about their chosen texts.
- Most of the children who have been identified with special educational needs including those children in the learning support centre make very good progress in their learning and achieve standards in line with their ability.
- In the IMU, by the end of KS2, most of the children are achieving standards in Irish, English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. They are confident and competent in their use of both languages in a wide range of contexts. They are able to transfer skills and capabilities across all areas of the curriculum. They can answer questions using extended responses, and both their receptive and productive skills in Irish and English are highly developed. From year 3 the children become increasingly independent and have good levels of self-management taking responsibility for their own learning.

- The children in the IM nursery unit are making very good progress in all aspects of their learning and development; the achievements of the children in early experimental writing and representational drawing are a particular strength. The children show imagination and creativity in their use of materials at the art area and during role play, and show curiosity as they explore the properties of natural materials in the environment both indoors and outdoors.
- Throughout the whole school, the children attain good standards in ICT. They are confident in the use of programmable devices and a range of interactive software to support their learning. As they progress through the school most of the children can use their skills well to research, plan and present their work. All of the children who are entered in the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT Accreditation Scheme attain the expected level.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- Almost all of the teaching observed was good or better, two-thirds was very good or better and almost one-quarter was outstanding. In the best practice, the teachers share the learning intentions with the children, make very good cross-curricular links, set their teaching in real-life contexts, and consolidate and review the children's learning throughout the lesson and in the plenary session. The teachers know the children very well and use a variety of techniques and strategies to meet individual needs and to keep the children focused and on task. The teachers plan and work collaboratively to ensure consistency across year groups and progression in learning throughout the school. The lessons are enjoyable with a strong emphasis placed on engaging the children actively in their learning.
- The quality of the provision for literacy is very good. The teachers have high expectations of the children and communicate these to them in a supportive manner. The children's talking, listening, reading and writing skills are well developed through well-connected teaching of literacy throughout the school. A wide range of teaching strategies and resources is employed which are tailored appropriately to the children's various learning styles, and match well the ability, interests and motivations of the children. The teachers use a wide range of effective questioning techniques to develop the children's thinking skills and their capacity for independent learning. Constructive feedback is provided by the teachers during lessons and the children respond reflectively to this approach. The school has placed a strong emphasis on the development of reading and the teachers use a very good variety of approaches to stimulate interest and motivate the children in their reading. The teachers are ably supported in their work by the skill and commitment of the classroom assistants.
- Information and Communication Technology is well used across the school to support both literacy and numeracy, for example, through the use of programmable devices, photo-story packages, digital cameras, podcasts and audio files.

- The quality of the provision for mathematics is very good. The learning and teaching is guided by a broad and balanced mathematics programme which provides suitable progression across all key stages. The teachers focus appropriately on the development of mental mathematics approaches and this has facilitated flexibility in the children's thinking and their ability to explain their strategies. Practical resources are used effectively to establish mathematical concepts and develop an appropriate understanding of number, measures, shape and space. The school has appropriately identified the need to develop the children's understanding of processes in mathematics further through problem solving and investigative activities. Appropriate strategies to promote improvement in mathematics have been put in place to identify and provide for those children who require additional support with aspects of mathematics. The school engages actively in supporting parents with their children's mathematical development.
- The quality of the provision in the IMU is outstanding. The children's literacy skills in both Irish and English are developed extensively by the teachers using a wide range of stimulating, cross-curricular contexts. The school's provision for bi-literacy is characterised by the immersion strategies used by the teachers which have a positive influence on broadening the children's understanding of the curriculum and extending their thinking skills in both languages. The children's ability to read and write in both languages is developed from early in year 3 through a rich and varied planned programme of activities. The children have a broad programme which covers all the key areas of numeracy. The mathematical experiences provided are linked well to work in other areas of the curriculum.
- The attractive and stimulating learning environment provided in the IM nursery unit promotes effectively the children's language development, decision making and self management skills. The very good quality of the staff interactions with the children ensure that the opportunities for learning through the play, daily routines and group story sessions are exploited fully. The staff work hard to create a strong immersion environment which supports effectively the children's acquisition of the Irish language. The quality of the staff's spoken Irish is very good.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. A caring, friendly and inclusive ethos permeates the school at all levels. The children are confident and mature, show respect for their school community and take pride in their work. The children benefit from a rich and varied range of learning experiences across the curriculum and beyond the school day. The staff's strong commitment to the welfare of the children is evident through the extra curricular support provided, their collegial approach to, and shared responsibility for pastoral care.
- The quality of the provision for special educational needs is very good. The children's learning needs are identified early by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and class teachers and a range of effective support strategies including in-class and withdrawal classes for numeracy and literacy are in place. The concise individual education plans are reviewed regularly and

contain appropriate targets and strategies to support and extend the children's learning. There are effective links established with a range of external support agencies and parents. The classroom assistants work closely with the teachers and support effectively the children in the classroom and in the playground.

- The quality of the provision in the learning support centre is very good. The planning, teaching and monitoring in the learning support centre are very thorough and enable the children to progress academically and socially. The children are encouraged to be confident independent learners and there are good opportunities for them to integrate and learn with their peers.
- The quality of the provision in the autism specific learning support centre is good. The caring and supportive environment encourages the children to respond positively to the range of learning experiences designed to develop their academic and social skills. The children benefit from the effective planning and teaching with careful monitoring and recording of their progress. There are effective individual education plans with realistic targets and strategies that are reviewed on a very regular basis. The children's achievements vary, but overall the children make good progress in their literacy and numeracy. The children work well for the majority of the time and as their concentration and level of interest allow. In a few instances, more discussion and planning is required to identify strategies needed to re-engage some of the children when they are not on task.
- The school places a high priority on promoting healthy eating and physical activity and uses a range of strategies and initiatives to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles, including the promotion of healthy snacks and lunches and a wide range of physical and sporting activities.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The Principal manages very effectively a diverse range of inclusive provision across the school which consists of mainstream, an IM unit, an IM nursery unit, an Autism Specific Learning Support Centre and a Learning Support Centre. He is very well supported by the Vice-principal, the school leadership team and co-ordinators. A notable feature of the school and IMU is the high level of collaboration and joint planning that exists. An effective learning community has been established with the SENCO, World Around Us and ICT co-ordinators from the IMU having a whole school responsibility and leading effectively developments in these specific areas. The strong sense of collegiality amongst the staff ensures they all contribute to the self-evaluation process to inform the identification of appropriate priorities for development through the school development planning (SDP) process. There are clear and effective procedures in place to assess the children's progress. The assessment co-ordinator makes full use of a suitable range of standardised tests combined with the teachers' professional judgement to monitor the children's progress and to identify children who have the potential for greater success in order to provide additional support for their learning. This information contributes well to the improvement planning within the school.

- Through their own processes of self-evaluation, and in preparation for new SDP cycle, the Principal and senior staff have appropriately identified the need to review how the school's qualitative and quantitative data can be best used in action planning to set targets and to monitor learning and teaching across the curriculum.
- There are excellent pastoral and curricular links with the IM Nursery Unit. The staff are very reflective in their work; the processes for self-evaluation and continuous improvement are developing well.
- The parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and the work of the school. They are encouraged to play an active role in the education of their children and the life of the school through, for example, curriculum support meetings and attendance at various school events. Their views are sought on a range of issues. The children's educational and social experiences are enhanced by trips to places of educational interest and by the strong connections with the local community and links with other relevant professional organisations. The school has developed a very comprehensive school website that is used very well by the children, staff and parents as an aid to learning and teaching and as a channel to celebrate the children's achievements and the life and work of the school.
- The Board of governors (governors) support the work of the school very well. They are involved in setting the priorities for improvement through the SDP process and they are kept informed fully by the Principal about the outworking of the actions to address the development priorities.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school, the IMU, IM nursery unit and support centres have comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of all of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued to the school and nursery unit (Based on 09/10 Enrolment)	144
Number of Questionnaires Returned	77
Percentage of Returns	53.4%
Number of Comments	42

Almost all of the responses from the parental questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school and in particular, the parents commented on the caring and supportive ethos, the commitment of all of the staff and their appreciation of the wide range of learning experiences provided for the children. The concerns raised by a small number of the parents were shared with the Principal and governors.

The governors highlighted the leadership of the Principal, the dedication and commitment of all of the staff, the positive working relationships at all levels and their pride in the children. In addition, they spoke about accommodation issues and the urgent need for refurbishment in almost all areas of the school.

The year 6 children spoke enthusiastically and articulately about their learning experiences and the many extra-curricular activities provided for them. They report that they feel safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have worries concerns about their safety or well-being.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	20
Number of Comments	17

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	15
Number of Comments	12

Twenty of the teachers and fifteen of the support staff completed the questionnaire. The responses from the staff highlighted the strong sense of team spirit and their enjoyment of the work and life of the school.

ACCOMMODATION

- At the time of the inspection the school was in the process of having new security devices installed to entrance doors. The school building is outdated and in need of refurbishment.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** Christian Brothers' Primary iii. **Date of Inspection:** W/B 25/02/13
 ii. **School Reference Number:** 503-1110 iv. **Nature of Inspection:** Focused

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	56	55	63	54	
Enrolments					
Primary	320	330	348	353	364
Reception	0	5	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	26	26	26	26
Special Unit	4	8	7	0	11
Irish Medium Unit	110	109	0	0	123

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): 96.1% **NI Avg Att:** 94.7%

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 92.9%

**Primary &
Reception Nursery
Unit Special
Unit Irish Medium
Unit**

- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 13 1 2 6
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 17.93 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 21
- iv. Class Size (Range): 16 to 34
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- i. Clerical support: 1
 - ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: 90
 - iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 160
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 5.4%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 20%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 38.5%
- 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): **English** 85.1% **Mathematics** 85.1% **Irish** 84.6%
- xi. If there is a composite class with reception children in it, please indicate the numbers of children in the other year groups: **Year 1 Year 2 Year 3**

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' PRIMARY SCHOOL
NURSERY UNIT, ARMAGH**

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	0
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	2	0
With English as an additional language	0	0

* On 1 July.

** 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.	38.5%
Average attendance for the previous year.	92.6%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours	-	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	1	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	1	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	61.5%
Number of written comments	13

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