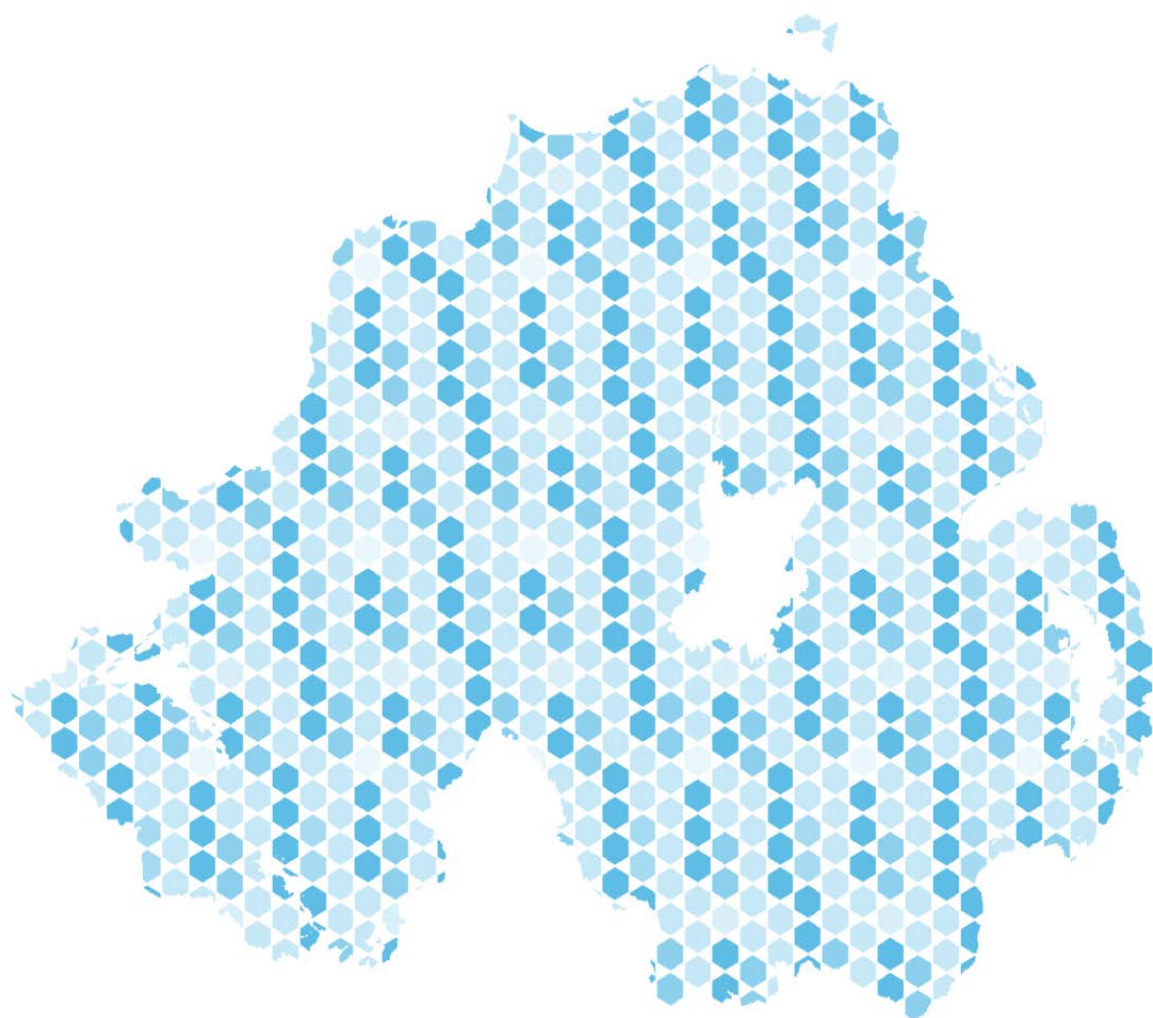


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

D H Christie Memorial Primary
School and Learning Support
Centres, Coleraine

Report of an Inspection
in March 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

D H Christie Memorial Primary School is situated on the Ballycairn Road in Coleraine. Of the 410 children enrolled at the school, 21 are in the two learning support centres, which are organised as key stage (KS) 1 and KS2 classes. At the time of the inspection, 17% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 34% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. In addition, five of the fourteen teachers employed in the primary school were substitutes, due to maternity leave, illness or staff leaving. This inspection completes the work that began in May 2012. The inspection was incomplete at that stage due to industrial action being taken by the staff not to co-operate with the Education and Training Inspectorate on advice from their teaching union.

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 learning support centres; 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 the children; 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	Good
Learning support centres	Very Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and standards

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

- The children are confident, motivated and engage well in their learning. When given the opportunity, the children work 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 contributions and learning, and by the end of KS2 they are developing good thinking skills and high levels of independence and inter-personal skills.

- An analysis of the KS2 assessment data shows that the school's performance in English and mathematics has been above the Northern Ireland average in each 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 has been in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for two of the past four years.
- An analysis of the school's internal performance data shows that most of the children make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- By year 7, most of the children achieve very good standards in literacy. They read fluently and with expression and can talk with enthusiasm and understanding about their favourite authors and characters. The children write to a high standard in a range of genre across the curriculum and for a range of audiences; the standard of presentation, in most of the books, is very good. The children listen very well in class and contribute confidently to group and class discussions. They can explain their thinking clearly and discuss their learning articulately during the well-focused plenary sessions.
- Most of the children attain good standards in numeracy; they have a sound knowledge of facts about key concepts such as, number, shape, angles and measures, which they can recall with ease. However, they have difficulty applying the taught facts and mathematical strategies outside of classroom tasks. Most of the children can articulate their thinking confidently using accurate mathematical language. The school has appropriately identified a minority of children at KS 2, who are not attaining in line with their ability.
- The children who have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN), including those children in the learning support classes, make very good progress in their learning and achieve standards in line with their ability. They work confidently and most can work independently by the end of KS 2.
- Throughout the school, the children attain good standards in ICT. As they progress through the school, most of the children can use their ICT skills to research, manage information and present their work effectively. Over the last two years, most of the children who were entered in the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT Accreditation Scheme attained the expected level at KS 1 and KS 2.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The quality of the planning, teaching and learning throughout the school is very good; the planning in Learning Support Centre 1 is exemplary. The quality of the assessment is good; a more consistent approach now needs to be adopted to ensure that the most effective assessment practices are shared and implemented across the school. Almost all of the teaching observed was good or better; a majority being very good and a small proportion being outstanding. Key strengths of the teaching include: the skilful integration of literacy and

numeracy across the curriculum; the consolidation of learning through well structured lessons; the use made by teachers of setting learning in meaningful contexts; and the care taken by teachers to secure an appropriately pastoral tone where the children's learning difficulties are swiftly turned into learning opportunities.

- In literacy, the planning for all aspects is thorough and rigorous. There is a clear focus on the development of the children's language through the development of appropriate vocabulary. The teachers encourage the children to use and extend their skills in talking, listening, reading and writing in meaningful contexts, which are linked purposefully across the curriculum.
- In mathematics, there is very good planning and provision for the development of the children's mental skills; the mental mathematics sessions are well-focused, appropriately paced and skilfully differentiated to ensure challenge and success for all of the children. The teachers need to ensure that the learning activities which follow on from these sessions are differentiated sufficiently to meet the needs of all of the children, particularly the more able. They also need to review the whole school programme to ensure progression and the re-visiting of key concepts throughout the year.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. Key strengths include: the inclusive, caring and welcoming ethos and the well-considered procedures which are in place to encourage and reward the children's positive behaviour. The staff know the children well and respond positively to, and build on, their interests and experiences during lessons. The opportunities available through the school council and eco-club enable the children to express ideas for improvements and developments within the school.
- The quality of the provision for SEN is very good. The children's learning needs are identified early by the SEN co-ordinator and class teachers and a range of effective, well-planned support strategies are in place. The 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 external support agencies and the parents. The highly-skilled classroom assistants are very effective in supporting the children in their learning.
- The quality of the provision in the learning support centres is very good. The teachers and learning support assistants work as a very effective team to provide for individual needs and support the children well in all aspects of their learning. The children are encouraged to be confident independent learners and there are good opportunities for them to integrate and learn with their peers. The teachers work hard to develop the children's social skills and to provide learning experiences beyond the classroom, such as the KS2 children availing of the opportunity to go on the recent ski trip and the KS1 children's regular participation in sporting and social activities in school or in the local community.
- The school and Learning Support Centres give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through: the healthy breakfast event for family and friends; the opportunities available to the children to learn how to swim and to participate in creative aspects of the physical education programme; and the links established with external agencies, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

- Information and Communication Technology is used well across the school to enhance teaching and support learning. The children make regular use of the school's computer suite and portable ICT devices. The school has an informative website that provides parents with useful information and celebrates the life and work of the school.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- At the time of inspection, the Principal was in post for eight weeks and the Vice-principal's post was vacant.
- A culture of self-evaluation and associated action to effect improvement has been established well throughout the school in recent years. The school development plan (SDP) is appropriately evaluative, informed by effective self-evaluation and guides well the strategic direction of the school. It is now appropriate, given the recent staffing changes and the significant improvements made to planning, that a more judicious prioritising of the improvement agenda takes place.
- The middle management of the school, including the co-ordination of literacy and numeracy and the Learning Support Centres, is very effective and the staff presented as a group of impassioned, pro-active and empathetic post-holders who are very good role models. They have introduced a range of initiatives that have led to significant improvements which include: the effective use of staff development to improve the teachers' understanding of mathematical processes; the improvements made to the writing scheme; the support given to children who require one-to-one assistance with reading; and the year-on-year development of ICT, including the acquisition of an externally validated ICT quality assurance award. The school has identified appropriately the need to introduce more robust and strategic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching in order to raise further the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy, particularly for those children who are under-achieving.
- The school works hard to develop and improve its links with the parents, other local and international schools and with local business partners, through for example: parental curriculum support meetings; participation in the 'Dissolving Boundaries' initiative; and providing charitable support and links for those in need.
- The Board of Governors (governors) is very supportive of the work of the school. They are involved in prioritising key areas for improvement through the SDP process and they are kept informed regularly and effectively 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 has 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	
PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Number of Questionnaires Issued (Based on 09/10 Enrolment)	130
Number of Questionnaires Returned	47
Percentage of Returns (Based on Actual Issue)	36.15%
Number of Comments	29
LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	21
Number of Questionnaires Returned	3
Percentage of Returns	14.28%
Number of Comments	2

Almost all of the responses from the parental questionnaires indicated good levels of satisfaction with the provision in the school and in particular, the parents commented on the caring ethos, and expressed an appreciation of the work of the staff and the welcoming nature of the school. The concerns raised by a small number of the parents were shared with the Principal and governors.

The governors highlighted their satisfaction with the life and work of the school. They commended the commitment of all of the staff, the positive working relationships and received the findings of the questionnaires with appropriate levels of interest and concern.

In discussions with the children from Year 6, they reported that they feel safe and secure in school and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being. They talked enthusiastically about the support of the staff and spoke confidently about the current reward systems in place for promoting positive behaviour, the interesting school trips and the enjoyable wide-ranging after-school activities which are available to them.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	16
Number of Comments	9

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	9
Number of Comments	5

Sixteen of the teachers and nine of the support staff completed the questionnaire. The responses from the staff were supportive of the work and life of the school and the small number of issues raised was shared with the Principal and governors.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: D H Christie Memorial Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 11/03/13**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 301-2284** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	41	55	62	52	52
Enrolments					
Primary	403	394	403	391	390
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	18	19	21	22	20
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 (expressed as a percentage): 96.3% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 94.96%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 17.8 0 2 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 21.91 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 25.6
- iv. Class Size (Range): 9 to 32
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support: | 43.5 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 60 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 182 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 5.86%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 23.42%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 17.08%
- 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 | 91.7% | Mathematics | 87.5% | Irish | N/A |
|----------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------|-----|

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