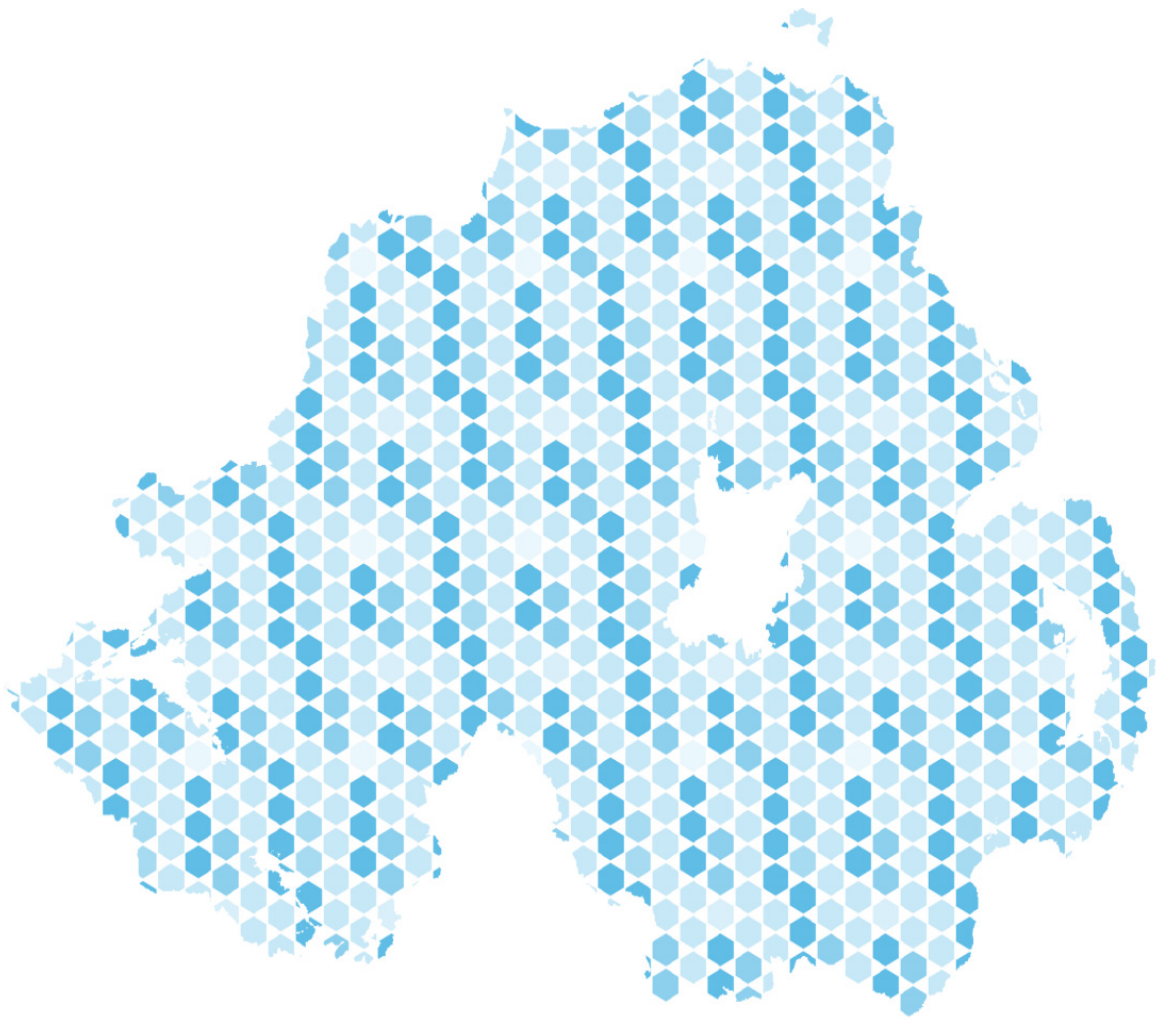


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Glendermott Primary School  
and Nursery Unit, Derry

Report of an Inspection  
in March 2011



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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. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Glendermott Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated in a spacious rural setting on the Ardmore Road, approximately four miles south-east of the city of Derry. The enrolment has fluctuated in recent years and currently stands at 126. Almost all the children who attend the school come from the local and surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, approximately 31% of the children were entitled to free school meals (FSM) and approximately 22% of the children were identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. A very small number have statements of special educational need (SEN).

The nursery unit is situated within the school and offers 26 full-time places; currently, eight of the children attending are in their penultimate pre-school year.

### 1.2 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 use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and the school's arrangements for pastoral care including child protection were evaluated. In addition the school was selected as part of a sample to monitor the implementation of the healthy food in schools initiative.

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

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, and the teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors), and a group of the children from years 6 and 7

One hundred and ten questionnaires were issued to the parents; 36% of these were returned to Inspection Services Branch with ten containing additional written comments. Most of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision in the school. In particular, the parents acknowledged the happy and well-settled children, the work of the teachers in creating and promoting a caring learning environment and the high regard that the local community has for the school. A small number of responses identified issues relating to the school's communication with the parents and opportunities for the parents to discuss and support their children's progress. These issues will be addressed in the body of the report.

In the nursery unit, 38% of the parents responded to the questionnaires and two included additional written comments. The responses indicate that the parents regard the nursery highly; they appreciate the work of the staff in creating a welcoming and nurturing learning environment and in developing the children's confidence.

All of the teachers and five members of the support staff responded to the online questionnaires. Three of the teachers supplied additional comments. Almost all of the responses affirmed highly the work of the school and the leadership of the Principal. The governors spoke positively about the welcoming ethos within the school and the vision, commitment and initiative shown by the Principal to help promote school improvement.

The children in year 6 talked enthusiastically about the many aspects of school life they enjoyed, including the opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities such as sport, dancing and the summer-scheme. From the discussions, the children are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their care and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) reported to the Principal and the governors the main messages emerging from the questionnaires and discussions.

#### 1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in both the school and the nursery unit is very good. The strengths include: the caring and supportive ethos within all the classrooms, the good working relationships evident among the whole school community; the very well-behaved and courteous children; the celebration of the children's efforts and achievements throughout the school; and the valuable contribution made by the staff to help extend the range of learning experiences for the children. The school has recognised the need to involve the children more fully in contributing to discussions and decisions about aspects of school life that directly affect them.

#### 1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school and the nursery unit have very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

#### 1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school and the nursery unit give good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example there is a well-attended breakfast club and the quality and prominence of the healthy eating displays throughout the school encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

#### 1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school and the nursery unit are working hard to develop further, positive links with the parents and the local community. The parents are encouraged to become involved in school events and in supporting their children's learning and social development, through, for example, regular parent-teacher meetings, sacramental programmes, literacy initiatives, and fund raising activities. A popular parent and child gardening club has been organised as part of the Extended Schools provision and there are advanced plans in place for introducing practical parenting workshops. The inspection team endorses the school's continued commitment to developing methods to involve all parents in school life and their children's learning. The school has well-established and valued links with other local schools and businesses which help extend the children's experiences. The children in year 7 link with a nearby post-primary school for a business and enterprise initiative. These arrangements enhance the school's curriculum provision and support well the children's transition to the next stage of their education.

## 2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

### 2.1 LEARNING

The children have positive attitudes towards their learning; they are well-motivated and engage in and enjoy their work. The children work well independently and collaboratively and are able to support one another in their learning. They are confident and communicate very effectively with their peers and adults. In the nursery unit the children have good levels of interest in the indoor and outdoor learning environments. They participate well in group activities and role-play where they are able to act out different character roles. As the children progress through the school, they use ICT confidently and independently to support their learning and engage actively in all the tasks they are presented with.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data years shows that in English the school's performance has been above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in three of the past four years. In mathematics the school's performance has been above the NI average in two of the past four years. Compared with schools in the same FSM category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are mostly above the average.

Most of the children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning make progress in line with their ability and a majority achieve the expected levels in literacy and numeracy at the end of KS1 and KS 2.

### 2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of provision for English and literacy is satisfactory.

There is generally a good emphasis placed on the development of the children's oral skills. In the nursery unit, the development of the children's language, communication and creative skills are particular strengths. Many of the children can talk confidently about their experiences and listen attentively during group story sessions where they join in a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes. In the school, the children listen attentively to one another and their teachers. The children are confident and keen to answer questions. They work well in pairs and take part in class discussions. In the best practice observed, skilful questioning by the teachers was used to extend the children's language and understanding. In these lessons the questions required more than a one-word answer and on many occasions the children responded in a mature and articulate manner. Throughout KS2, the children discuss a wide range of contemporary issues; many are able to make sustained and informed contributions.

The school is aware of the need to help the KS1 teachers provide a more systematic and consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Recent staff training has taken place to help the teachers develop their skills in this area. Reading is currently taught through the use of a wide range of appropriate support materials. The children enjoy reading, and talk with enthusiasm about what they have read. At the end of KS1 novels are introduced and good use is made of them throughout KS2 to develop an enjoyment of reading. The teachers use well, a range of non-fiction materials across the curriculum which help promote knowledge and understanding. By the end of KS2, the majority of the children achieve standards in reading in line with their abilities.

In the foundation stage, the children learn quickly, through a variety of activities, to develop letter formation, to write words and to express ideas in simple sentences. As the children progress through the school, they get good opportunities to write and respond to different forms of literature, for example, poetry, plays and non-fiction writing. They are encouraged

to think and respond about the writer's style and purpose. By year 7, the examples of the children's personal writing include poetry, letter writing, book reviews, descriptions, stories, play scripts and reports. There is evidence in the children's books of unnecessary transcription and decontextualised grammar and punctuation exercises. These skills need to be taught and developed within a context which allows the children to transfer the skills successfully when necessary.

The acting Literacy co-ordinator is aware of the priorities in literacy. He holds a clear vision of the extent and nature of the work to be done, starting with an up-date of all materials which support the learning and teaching within and across all areas of literacy. Much work has been done using ICT to help develop literacy across the school. This helps to keep the work current and interesting.

## 2.2 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory.

In the nursery unit the staff provides valuable opportunities to develop the children's early mathematical language. In the school, the programme for mathematics presents the children with a suitable range of experiences in number, shape and space, measures and data-handling. The children are able to collect and analyse data in a variety of meaningful contexts and they develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding through a range of experiences, including the use of practical equipment and opportunities to work in pairs and groups. The teachers need to ensure that the work is appropriately challenging for all the children; there is currently an over-emphasis on the use of worksheets and repetitive, routine calculations.

Mental mathematics sessions were observed in most classes. In the most effective practice, the pace was good and the activities engaged and motivated the children. In the majority of the lessons observed, however, the teacher's expectations of what the children can achieve were insufficiently high, the pace was slow and there were limited opportunities for the children to explain the processes used.

The teachers use ICT very effectively to support learning and teaching in mathematics. They make good use of interactive whiteboards to motivate the children and consolidate mathematical concepts. In a minority of classes the children have good opportunities to apply their mathematics in real life contexts and within other areas of the curriculum. This good practice needs to be developed more consistently across the school.

The standards achieved by the children in mathematics are satisfactory. The highest attaining children demonstrated a good knowledge of important ideas and concepts, for example, place value and measures; they were, however, unsure of the most effective mental mathematics strategies and were less flexible in their mathematical thinking.

A good start has been made to monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the planning, learning and teaching of mathematics across the school. The acting numeracy co-ordinator recognises the need to develop this further and to plan more systematically for whole school development in mathematics



### **3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

#### **3.1 PLANNING**

The quality of the whole-school planning for aspects of the curriculum is inconsistent. The teachers have identified, through the school's self-evaluation processes, the need to develop more coherent planning which will help develop continuity and progression in the children's learning for all areas of the curriculum. The inspection team endorses this as an immediate priority in order to guide more effectively the work of individual teachers.

There is variation in the quality of the medium term planning across the school. In the best practice, it is focused on well-defined learning intentions, there are suitably detailed strategies to direct the learning, and the evaluations help inform the subsequent teaching. For a majority of classes, the planning needs to take greater cognisance of the children's previous learning and the different ability groups within the classes.

#### **3.2 TEACHING**

All of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better and in just over one-half of the lessons it was good. In the most effective practice the lessons were well-structured and resourced, a good range of teaching strategies were used to engage the children actively and purposefully, the teachers made very good use of ICT including the interactive white boards to support the teaching and the learning, and the lessons were effectively linked to the children's prior learning and other curricular areas.

In the less effective practice there was an over-emphasis on the completion of discrete tasks that were not explicitly linked to clearly defined learning goals; there were limited opportunities for the children to develop their responses and explain their thinking; and the work was insufficiently matched to the needs and abilities of the children, and lacked the necessary challenge to extend them, especially the more-able.

The school has identified appropriately the need to develop a structured approach to extending the range of teaching strategies and approaches to enhance the learning experiences for all the children and improve the standards they achieve.

The children who require additional support with their learning in both the nursery unit and the school are identified at an early stage through the teachers' observations, and the use of a range of assessment data. The individual education plans are drawn up by the class teacher with the support of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and they outline appropriate targets for the children's learning. The current provision is through in-class, withdrawal and peripatetic support. The management needs to develop further, the capacity of the class teachers to provide more effective in-class support for those children who require additional help.

The withdrawal support for numeracy is having a positive impact on the children's learning and as a result they gain in confidence and self-esteem. Recently, the withdrawal provision has been extended to support the children in years 4 and 5 who have been identified as requiring additional help with literacy. The classroom assistants are deployed effectively and make a positive contribution to supporting the children's learning. The school maintains very good links with various external support agencies and these provide valuable assistance to individual children requiring specialist help.

### 3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers mark the children's work regularly and supportively and, in the best practice provide the children with appropriate comments on how their learning can be improved. The teachers need to ensure that the children have opportunities to respond to these comments in order to improve the quality of their work. The outcomes of all assessments need to be used more effectively by the teachers to inform future planning to ensure that the learning opportunities are more closely matched to the needs and abilities of the children.

The school has raised considerably its awareness and use of performance data to help inform and improve the children's learning. The teachers analyse in detail, a range of standardised tests and Department of Education benchmarking information to identify those children who are either under-achieving or are having difficulty with aspects of their learning. The teachers need to extend this and identify the individual children's strengths and areas for development, in order to inform and improve the quality of their teaching and the children's learning.

The children's achievements and standards are reported to the parents regularly through an annual written report, a formal parent-teacher meeting and informal contacts between teachers and parents as the need arises. The annual written reports provide the parents with helpful information on the children's strengths and areas for improvement.

## 4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of the leadership and management is good.

At the time of the inspection four teachers were employed on a temporary basis and the permanent literacy and numeracy co-ordinators were absent. The Principal, who has been in post for just over one year, has shown very good leadership, particularly with regard to establishing and promoting a sense of collegiality and team work among all the staff. She has a clear and realistic vision for the school and has identified priorities and targets that are clearly focused on bringing about improvements in the educational and pastoral provision. She has set in place appropriate procedures, processes and practices which will help all staff work towards this. The Vice-principal and teachers are supportive of her leadership and have embraced these developments willingly. A high priority has been placed on providing curriculum development opportunities for the teaching staff to help them contribute to, and, fulfil the clear vision which the Principal holds for the future of the school.

The Principal has rightly identified the need to review existing management arrangements and it is timely to do so. There is a need for all staff, and particularly the co-ordinators, to ensure more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the planning, provision and standards achieved across the curricular areas.

The special needs provision is guided effectively by the SENCO, who also has responsibilities for a number of key areas of the work of the school. He supports the teachers in both the school and the nursery well and maintains good links with external agencies. He has identified appropriately the need to review the provision and to track systematically the progress of individual children in order to inform more accurately SEN priorities and actions for improvement.

## 4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school development plan (SDP) sets out appropriate priorities for the medium and longer term which are based on the outcomes of a range of self-evaluation processes. While the accompanying action plans have an emphasis on raising standards, they need to focus more sharply on the actions which will impact directly and positively on the quality of learning and teaching. The SDP meets fully, the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

## 4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and challenges.

They supported whole-heartedly the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP.

## 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the pastoral care provision;
- the well-behaved children who have a positive disposition towards their learning;
- the hard-working teachers and support staff who collectively, are committed to the well-being of the children and the future development of the school;
- the good range of experiences provided through ICT which helps to enhance the learning experiences of the children;
- the very good leadership provided by the Principal in the short time she has been in post; and;
- the good start made to developing a culture of self evaluation throughout the school, particularly with regard to using quantitative data to develop monitoring, evaluating and target setting.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop and disseminate those aspects of the good teaching identified to enhance the learning experiences for all the children and raise further the standards they attain; and
- establish and develop the role of the co-ordinators in planning, monitoring and evaluating the provision and outcomes.

5.3 In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

## 6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 The main strengths within the nursery unit are as follows:-

- the settled atmosphere in the nursery unit and the exemplary behaviour of the children;
- the good learning opportunities provided in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the skilful interactions of the staff which help to promote the children's self-confidence and independence;
- the good support provided for the children who require additional help with aspects of their learning; and
- the good teamwork among the teaching and support staff.

6.2 The inspection identified areas for improvement. The priorities for further development include the need to:

- align the planning of the programme more closely to the pre-school curricular guidance and outline progression in the planned activities, and develop a more concise, systematic and manageable system of assessment.

6.3 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery unit is good. The nursery unit has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the nursery has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the nursery's progress on the areas for improvement.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON GLENDERMOTT PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Number of children:</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>
Attending full-time	26	0
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	6	0
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	5	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	0	0
With English as an additional language	0	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.	
Average attendance for the previous year.	

### 2. Duration of Sessions

<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time: am</b>	<b>Part-time: pm</b>
4¼ hours	-	-

### 3. Details of Staff

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

<b>Number of: ****</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	0

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

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

Number issued	24
Percentage returned	38%
Number of written comments	2

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