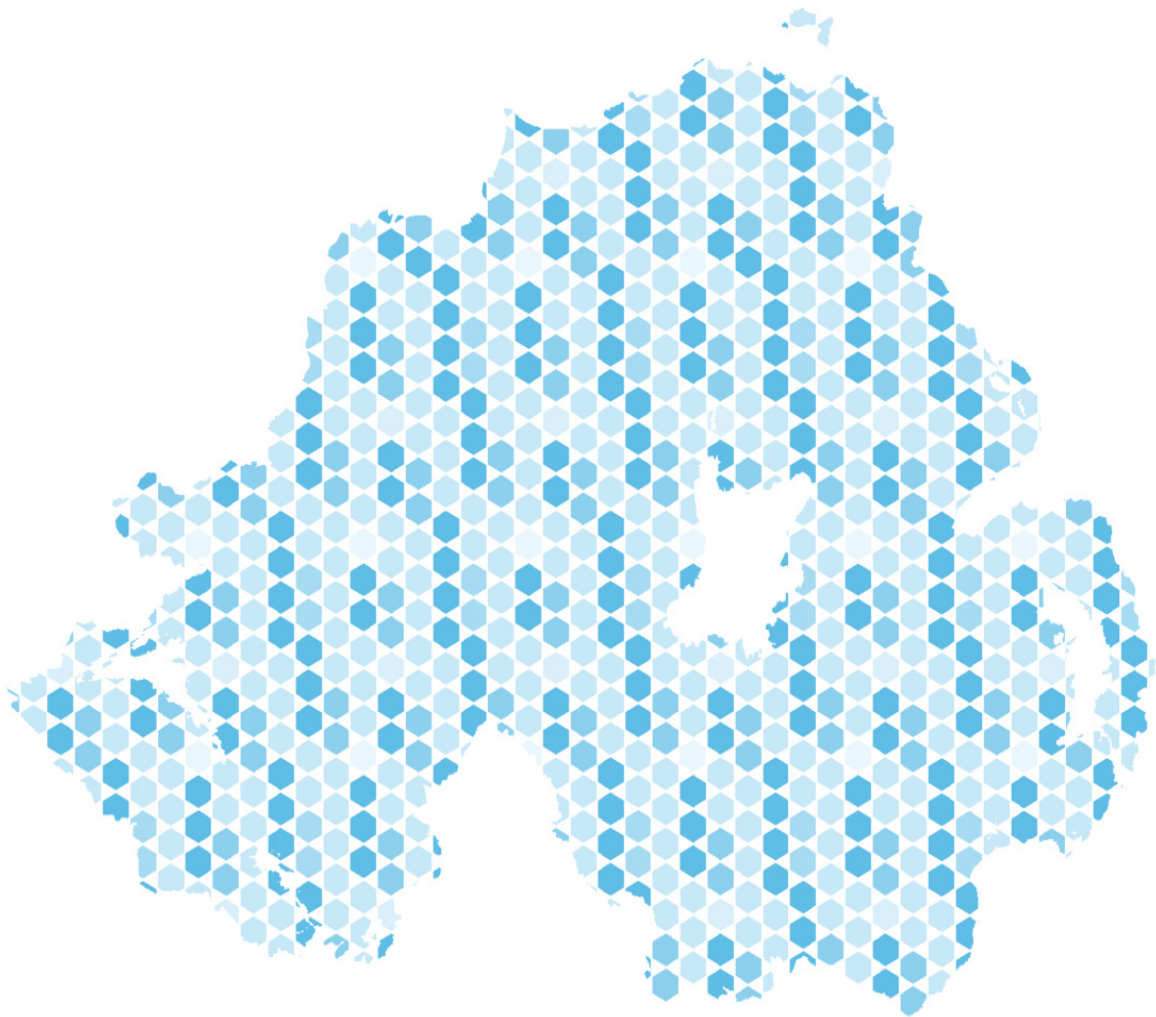


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Kilcooley Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Bangor

Report of an Inspection
in January 2012



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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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Kilcooley Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 30/01/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-6002** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	18	20	15	23	13
Enrolments					
Primary	101	106	106	118	117
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	26	26	26	26	26
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
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): 92% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 85.4%

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): 8.6 1 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 13.6 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 19.5
- iv. Class Size (Range): 13 to 25
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | | | |
|---|--|-------|--|
| i. Clerical support: | | 26.5 | |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | 30 | |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | 112.5 | |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0.7%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 34.9%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 78%
- 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 | Mathematics | Irish |
| | 58.82% | 52.94% | N/A |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Kilcooley Primary School and nursery unit is situated within the Kilcooley housing estate in Bangor. The enrolment of the school has increased over recent years and currently stands at 117 in the primary school and 26 in the nursery unit. The majority of the children come from the immediate area surrounding the school. At the time of the inspection approximately 78% of the children within the school were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 35% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

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.

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.

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

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

Eighty-two questionnaires were issued to the parents in the primary school; approximately 18% were returned to Inspection Services Branch (ISB) of which seven contained additional written comments. The parents commented positively on: the overall quality of education provided by the nursery unit; the opportunities for the children to gain in confidence and develop their social skills; the leadership of the school; and the approachable staff.

Twenty-six questionnaires were issued to the parents of children in the nursery unit, approximately 36% were returned to ISB including five of which contained additional written comments. The parental returns indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the nursery provision.

Nine of the teachers and five members of the support staff completed the confidential online questionnaires. The responses from all of the teachers and the support staff, were wholly supportive of the work of the school.

The governors expressed strong support for the work of the school. In particular, they drew attention to how well the school's inclusive ethos supports the children's diverse range of individual, social and educational needs. They commended the dedication of all of the staff and reported excellent working relationships at all levels.

In discussions, the children in year 6 reported that they feel very safe and secure and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being. They talked enthusiastically about many aspects of school life including their enjoyment of learning and the caring staff.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the views emerging from the parents', teachers' and support staff questionnaires, including a very small number of issues that were raised.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the primary school and the nursery unit is outstanding. There is an effective and dedicated team approach among those involved in managing pastoral care and safeguarding issues within the school.

The strengths of the pastoral care provision include the caring, supportive and inclusive ethos which promotes the children's confidence, and respect for others. The consistent and effective approaches being used to promote the children's behaviour are demonstrated in the friendly children who almost all displayed very good behaviour and good manners throughout the inspection. A key feature in the school is the holistic approach to helping children surmount a wide range of barriers to learning including their social, emotional and physical well being. The wide range of extra curricular experiences provided enhance the quality of the children's overall learning experiences and contribute significantly to their personal development.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

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

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school and nursery unit give very good attention to promoting healthy eating. The children are encouraged to have a healthy breakfast and eat nutritious foods at break, and lunch time. There is a good variety of after-school activities on offer which provides the children with important additional physical development opportunities.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

There are very good links within the local community through a range of partnerships with other schools and community groups. The school building accommodates a number of community services including a playgroup and woman's centre. Parents are kept informed about the life of the school and the nursery unit through newsletters and a range of relevant information and curricular meetings. They are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school through the recently introduced parenting programme and the 'parents and child' fun days. These links should be built upon further to involve more parents in their child's learning and development at the earliest stage.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

At the foundation stage (FS) the children enjoy a play-based curriculum which provides them with good opportunities to be imaginative and creative and for working collaboratively together. The teachers are aware of the need to develop further outdoor play activities for the children. Throughout the school many of the children demonstrate good attitudes to their learning and most complete the work tasks given to them. Most of the children are happy to engage in practical learning experiences, demonstrate good self management skills and take responsibility for aspects of their learning, working appropriately in pairs and in groups. They listen carefully to the teacher, however a minority of children have difficulties in retaining and using information for their learning; further classroom strategies should be developed to address this difficulty.

Within all of the classes at least half of the children are dependent on the adults for scaffolding and additional support to compensate for their complex learning needs.

Those who require additional support are showing increasing engagement in their learning with appropriate individual support from the adults. They make good progress in meeting the targets outlined in their individual education plans (IEP) but many find transferring their skills to wider contexts particularly difficult. The school's data indicates that many of the children regress significantly over the period of the summer holiday.

An analysis of the KS2 assessment data over the past four years shows that, overall, in English and mathematics the school's performance has dropped below the average for Northern Ireland (NI) at level 4. Compared with similar schools in the same free school meals category, the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics at level 4 are also below average. All of the children attain level 4 and above in the CCEA ICT Accreditation scheme.

The Principal has identified appropriately the need to improve standards further and has implemented a range of effective strategies to raise levels of attainment. The school's wide-ranging internal data demonstrates that the majority of the children achieve standards commensurate with their ability.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The overall quality of the provision for English and literacy is good.

The literacy co-ordinator has developed a useful policy and action plans for literacy, associated with the school development plan (SDP), focusing appropriately on reading and spelling to guide the development of reading and writing throughout the school. There is extensive evidence of the thorough gathering and analysis of data related to literacy.

In the FS the teachers use a range of effective learning and teaching approaches to promote talking and listening skills. The children have good opportunities to talk about their experiences. They continue to develop appropriate skills for talking and listening in KS1 and KS2, working in pairs and groups to contribute to discussions.

The children learn to read through a well-structured programme which utilises a broad range of teaching methods and good quality reading materials including fiction and non-fiction books, and reading corners in each room. Throughout the school the children benefit from good shared reading experiences and the Reading Partnership and Time to Read programmes are operating well for those children who require additional literacy support.

Improvements for the standards of boys reading in particular have been prioritised appropriately by the teachers. Most of the children make steady progress throughout KS1 and by the end of KS2 the majority read at a level commensurate with their ability. The school has identified appropriately the need to improve the children's reading comprehension.

The development and quality of the children's writing in the FS and KS1 is mostly good; the children are encouraged to develop writing skills through sentence and sequencing activities and shared writing sessions leading increasingly to independent writing. The quality of the children's writing could be improved further by making optimum use of all opportunities to draw, form letters and write throughout their early years in school. In KS1 and KS2 the children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to practice their writing skills. By the end of KS2 the quality of the majority of the children's written work is appropriate for their ability and they use a range of writing forms. The children take pride in their written work which is displayed extensively throughout the school. The teachers have identified appropriately the need to improve the children's spelling and a structured phonic approach has recently been introduced for consistent use throughout the school.

Across the curriculum, at a level appropriate to their ability, the children are enabled to develop ICT skills to explore different forms of writing, express opinions, exchange information, and exhibit their work. Further use of information and communication technology for literacy, particularly the use of the interactive whiteboard, would stimulate interest and improve the learning experiences of the children.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of the provision for mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory.

The numeracy team demonstrate a commitment to action planning to improve aspects of the provision. As a result of the teachers' ongoing evaluations of the mathematics programme, a wider range of flexible problem-solving strategies has been introduced to promote mathematical thinking and understanding in the school. The school is currently reviewing its provision in number, and continues; through action planning associated with the SDP to appropriately focus on improving the children's standards and achievements.

In the FS, the children experience a range of well-planned activities through which they are developing early mathematical language, concepts and understanding appropriate to their age and ability. They are beginning to develop their skills in mental mathematics and have opportunities during guided mathematical activities to sort, match, count, compare and make patterns and sequences in a variety of contexts. They have good opportunities to apply their knowledge to meaningful contexts across the curriculum which the teachers need to promote at every opportunity. Early mathematical language is modelled well by the teachers and the majority of the children are using mathematical language more naturally.

At KS1, the children use practical resources effectively to establish mathematical concepts and are able to demonstrate a developing understanding of number, measures and shape and space. Importantly, the teachers need to extend the range of opportunities for the children to reinforce and develop their numeracy skills through activity-based learning experiences.

During the inspection, a number of sessions that focused on mental mathematics were observed. In the most effective practice, the teacher encouraged the children to explain how they obtained the answer, gave appropriate thinking time for each child to consider, respond and discussed carefully with the children any incorrect answers. As observed in the English and literacy lessons a minority of children have difficulties in retaining and using the information they have heard for their learning.

At KS2 the children enjoy their learning of mathematics. There is currently an over emphasis on the use of the text book exercises and repetitive routine calculations. In discussions with the year 7 children, the most able children demonstrated their knowledge of important ideas and concepts, such as, place value, multiplication and the properties of three-dimensional solids. They were less competent in demonstrating flexibility in their mathematical thinking.

The children have opportunities to use ICT, for example, in representing data graphically, interactive whiteboards are in all classrooms, and the children have access to an appropriate range of computer software packages. The teachers need to develop further the use of ICT to enhance the teaching and learning in mathematics.

Overall, at KS1 and KS2, the teachers need to provide the children with greater opportunities to extend their mathematical thinking through practical, investigative and problem-solving activities, match the tasks to the ability, needs and experiences of the children, and increase the level of challenge for the more able children.

A very 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 newly appointed numeracy co-ordinator recognises the need to develop further the whole school development in mathematics.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The Principal and the teachers have worked very hard to develop planning which is thorough and consistent to guide the day to day work of the school including giving effective guidance to support staff. The planning for both English and mathematics facilitates a consistent approach to preparation and a very good structure for lessons, enabling coherence, and progression in the children's experiences. The curriculum planning includes long term planning, detailed and effective medium term planning and daily teaching plans giving differentiated activities for the children. The most effective planning details the extensive differentiation required for learning in each class.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed in the school ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. The majority of the lessons were very good or outstanding.

There is a clear ethos of respect between the members of staff and the children which permeates the teaching throughout the school. The key features of the effective practice include the priority given to practical, meaningful learning situations and the positive culture for learning within the classrooms. The effective classroom management leads to the children's settled behaviour and informed risk taking. A wide range of strategies and provision is used well to support the children with barriers to their learning. The teachers use good individual and well focused support consistently, ensuring that the children are clear about their learning tasks.

In the less effective practice, learning intentions are not clear; there are missed opportunities to promote language and thinking, and differentiation needs to ensure that the planned activities match the children's abilities and interest.

The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all the children and provide an inclusive school environment. They are patient, supportive and set clear boundaries for appropriate behaviour with appropriate and consistently applied sanctions. The teachers are calm and empathetic in handling challenging behaviour and situations. The school has instigated appropriately a series of additional support structures to promote the development of the children's social, emotional and independent needs alongside work appropriate to their key stage. The collaborative and well planned working practices between the teachers, the classroom assistants, the nurture room staff and the Principal is largely successful in meeting the holistic needs of the children.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The Principal leads and co-ordinates assessment very effectively throughout the school and uses a wide range of standardised tests and performance data to analyse and track the children's progress in detail. The record keeping of assessments is meticulous and enables thorough scrutiny and interrogation of the data gathered throughout each child's school career. Low achievement and underachievement is appropriately identified by non verbal assessments in years 1, 3 and 5 plotted against Progress in English and Progress in Maths standardised scores and by the comparison of each child's previous and current standardised scores, noting significant negative differences. Diagnostic assessment is carried out where there is a concern to identify the specific areas for improvement. The teachers receive useful feedback enabling them to focus on, and plan for, individual children's needs and on common areas for improvement in each class.

The teachers mark the children's work promptly and provide guidance for improvement, encouragement and praise through their oral and written comments.

There are appropriate procedures for keeping the parents informed about their children's progress, with parent and teacher consultation meetings held twice a year.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the provision for children identified as requiring additional support with their learning is very good.

The children who require additional support with their learning are identified at an early stage by a series of appropriate standardised tests and teacher observation. The learning support teacher, class teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) write collaboratively to produce concise and well targeted IEPs for the children with special educational needs (SEN). The learning support teacher is highly skilled and has put in place an effective system for teaching, monitoring and tracking the children's progress; the resulting data is analysed and used effectively to inform further target setting. A little over one third of the children are on the school SEN register however the expertise of the staff ensures that only a small minority of children proceed to the statementing process for SEN.

The children with difficulties in literacy are withdrawn for carefully targeted support from a selection of well thought out and progressive interventions including small group teaching from the learning support teacher, small group and individual support from a skilled classroom assistant on Rapid Reading programmes and Reading Partnership support by volunteers.

The children assessed as needing support in the school nurture room attend this provision for between two and five mornings a week. The SENCO provides a calm and welcoming environment for children experiencing considerable difficulties in settling to learn. The staff in the nurture room provide very good support and strategies to develop the children's social, emotional and independence skills alongside work appropriate to their key stage. The children benefit from the additional support provided from the nurture provision and most are able to return gradually to a full-time basis in their classrooms.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The Principal provides outstanding strategic leadership and has a clear and broad vision for the work of the school. She has established a well-embedded culture of self-evaluation across the school. She maintains an overview of development work to bring about whole-school improvement, and is supporting and building the capacity of all the teachers, including the nursery teacher, as effective co-ordinators. The senior management team use their wide range of individual skills effectively to ensure a strong collaborative approach to whole school development, monitoring and evaluation. The Principal gives high priority to the pastoral care, welfare and holistic development of all of the children and the school staff. There is very good internal communication and a strong sense of collegiality within the school.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school improvement process is linked closely to an effective SDP, which is underpinned by effective self-evaluation, such as good quality termly reviews of the associated action plans. There is honest and accurate analysis of performance data, which is used to inform the action plans and there are good processes for consultation about the SDP within the school community.

The SDP meets the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

The school staff work hard to create a bright, attractive and welcoming educational environment for the children and their parents. An attractive reading area in the entrance hall is used well throughout the day. A pleasant nurture centre has been developed to meet the needs of the children unable to engage fully in their classes. There are large playing fields and a vibrant courtyard area has been established to engage the children in flower and vegetable cultivation and the fostering of pond life. The school makes very good use of the accommodation which is well maintained.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and challenges. They support whole-heartedly the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP. The school makes effective use of all resources, in order to benefit the provision for the children.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the friendly children who almost all displayed good behaviour and good manners, enthusiasm and engagement with learning during the period of the inspection;
- the quality of the teaching observed in the school, which ranged from outstanding to satisfactory with the majority of the lessons being very good or outstanding;
- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care for the children including the very good support for children who have special educational needs;
- the effective holistic and innovative approaches to providing support focused on helping the children surmount a wide range of barriers to learning;
- the comprehensive assessment systems in place which demonstrate a clear profile of the children's progress and enable clear targets to be set for further educational progress;
- the highly effective, strategic leadership provided by the Principal and the hard working, dedicated team of staff committed to the future development of the school.

5.2 The areas for improvement include:

- the need to raise further the levels of the children's attainment in English, literacy, mathematics and numeracy by the end of KS2; and
- the continued development of ICT to support teaching and learning within lessons.

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

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 The single nursery unit is accommodated in Kilcooley Primary School and offers 26 full-time places. The children come from a wide catchment area. The children are all in their immediate pre-school year.

6.2 The main strengths within the nursery unit's educational provision include:

- the caring, warm and supportive ethos based on very good working relationships between the children and the staff;
- the skill of the staff in promoting settled and purposeful play and exploiting the learning potential within many of the play activities;
- the very effective use of the daily routines to develop the children's independence and learning;
- the broad range of experiences provided which promote learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and in particular, the children's personal and social development, oral language and physical skills;
- the very good pastoral links with the primary school; and
- the hard working staff team and the progress made in developing their practice.

6.2 The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention:

- continue to develop the planning and assessment to ensure there is sufficient challenge in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and there is a closer match to the children's interests and stages of development; and
- develop the approaches for engaging parents more fully in their child's learning and development.

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON KILCOOLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, BANGOR

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		0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	1	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	1	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.	42.3%
Average attendance for the previous year.	89%

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	36%
Number of written comments	5

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