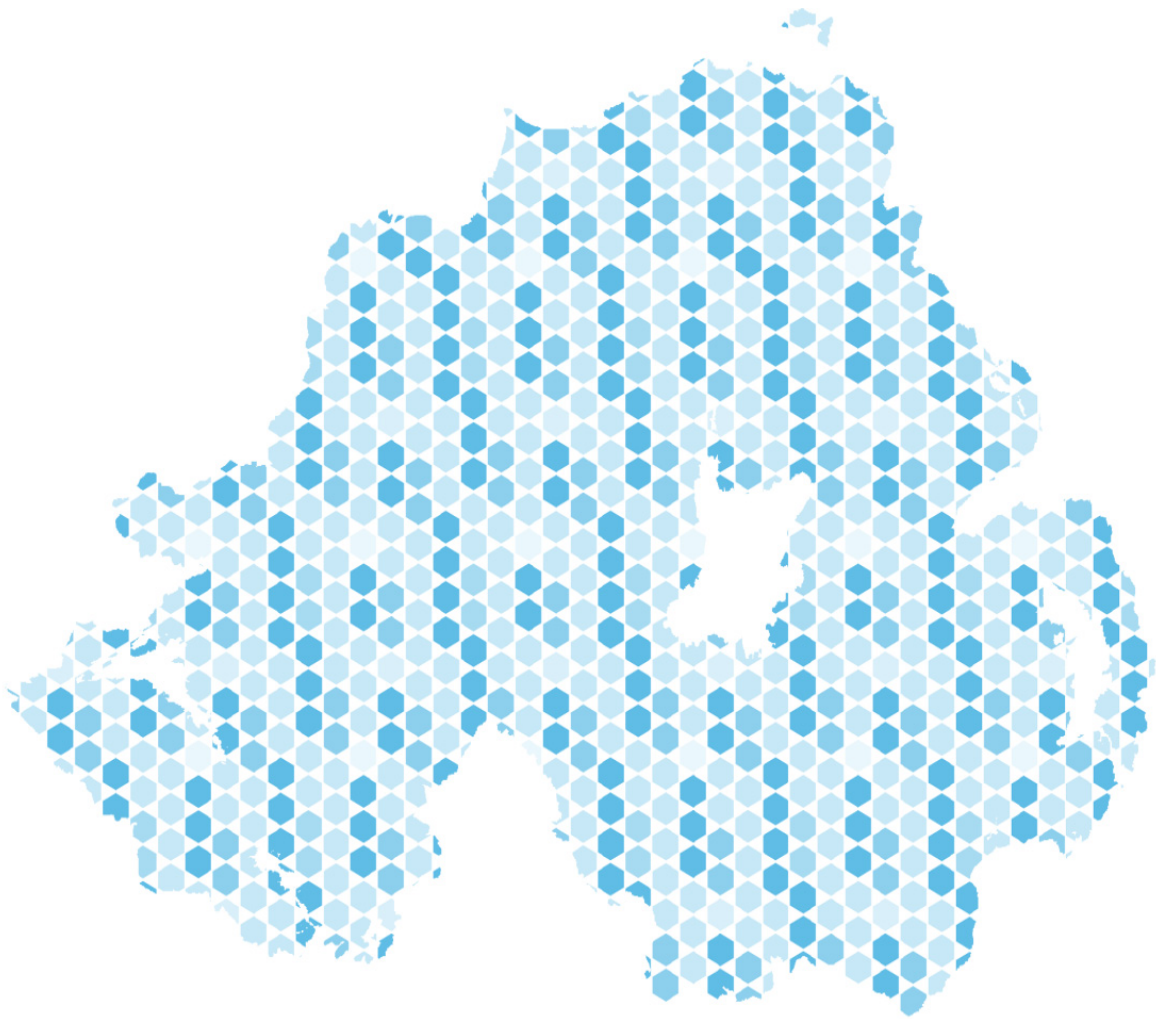


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Knocknagor Primary School,
Trillick, Omagh

Report of an Inspection
in May 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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Knocknagor Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 09/05/11**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-2628** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	9	6	5	7	9
Enrolments					
Primary	59	58	53	52	52
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
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): 96.9% **NI Avg Att: 94.9%**
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 17.3 | NI PTR: 20.7 | | |
| iii. Average Class Size: | 7.43 | | | |
| iv. Class Size (Range): | 6 to 9 | | | |
| v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | | | | |
| i. Clerical support: | | | 12 | |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | | 20 | |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | | 35 | |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | | 1.9% | |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | | 26.9% | |
| viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | | 0 | |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | | 15.4% | |
| x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2009/10 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics: | English
100% | Mathematics
100% | | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Knocknagor Primary School is situated on Moorfield Road, in the parish of Kilskeery, three miles from Irvinestown, County Tyrone. The majority of the children come from within a five mile radius of the school. The enrolment of the school has reduced slightly over the past five years, from 59 in 2006 to the current enrolment of 52 children. Approximately 15% of the children are entitled to free school meals. At the time of the inspection, 27% of the children were identified as having difficulty with aspects of their learning and 2% had a statement of educational need.

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 the children from year 6.

Thirty-three questionnaires were issued to the parents prior to the inspection: approximately 61% were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which seven contained additional written comments. All of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the school. In particular, the parents paid tribute to the dedicated, hardworking staff and their attention to the well-being and development of all the children.

Five teachers and three members of the support staff completed the online questionnaire. The responses were wholly positive.

The governors highlighted the school's caring, family ethos and expressed their appreciation of the work of all of the staff. They reported that they were kept well informed of the school's developments, programmes and child protection arrangements.

In discussions held with the year 6 children, they talked enthusiastically about the school's friendly atmosphere, about the help and support of their teachers and about the wide range of after school activities available to them. They also demonstrated that they know what to do if they have any concerns regarding their learning or their safety and well-being.

An analysis of the questionnaires and the written comments was shared with the Principal and the governors.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good.

Among the strengths are the welcoming and inclusive family ethos, the very good working relationships and the wide range of after-school activities provided for the children through the Extended-Schools programme. In addition, the older children are encouraged to contribute to decision-making about aspects of the life and work of the school through, for example, the recently established class councils.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education and other relevant departments.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. This is encouraged through the Smart Snacks and Healthy Munchbox initiatives. Across the school the children have regular opportunities for energetic outdoor play and sports, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school has developed effective working partnerships with a range of organisations within and beyond the local community. These include links with the local primary school cluster group, participation in a cultural identity and writing programme with a neighbouring primary school and involvement in the University of Ulster Sport for All programme. They also host an extensive range of visitors who enrich aspects of the children's learning experiences. The school supports regularly a range of charities through various fundraising activities. The school and community recently worked together very successfully in preparing for the school's 75th anniversary celebrations.

A key characteristic of the school's provision is the importance which is placed on assisting parents to support their children's learning.

2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 LEARNING

The children are very well-mannered; they co-operate enthusiastically in all aspects of school life and their behaviour is very good. They have a keen interest in their learning and can work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. During lunchtime routines, they show a mature sense of care and responsibility for one another and for their school environment.

In most of the classes the children's learning is supported effectively by the dedicated team of classroom assistants who understand the planned learning activities and are successful in keeping the children on task.

The children with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. The good quality early intervention nurtures their confidence and self esteem and helps them to work more independently as they progress through key stage (KS) 1. Across the school, children with additional learning needs are integrated fully into classroom activities.

An analysis of the KS2* assessment data over the past four years shows inconsistency in the school's performance in English and mathematics. For two of the four years the school's attainment in English and mathematics was above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and above that of schools in the same free school meals category. In the remaining two years the school's performance in English and mathematics was significantly below the Northern Ireland (NI) average and below that of schools in the same free school meals category. The school's records indicate that, in each of these years, the cohort of children was small and there was a high proportion of children with special educational needs.

Throughout the school, the children have opportunities to use ICT to extend their learning and to communicate their ideas. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and the teachers are becoming skilled in using them.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The literacy co-ordinator and staff have recently introduced guided reading and structured phonics programmes aimed at improving the children's levels of attainment. These have been highlighted in the literacy action plan together with the need to make more effective use of the school's internal assessment data to inform more closely the planning for learning. It will be important for the school to monitor and evaluate systematically the impact which these initiatives have on the standards the children attain.

The children have good oral communication skills. Talking and listening is developed well through effective teacher questioning, frequent paired and group tasks, the good use of a range of drama strategies and regular opportunities for the children to present their work to others. The children are able to communicate their ideas and feelings competently and with increasing confidence using an expanding vocabulary as they progress through the school. Through the Extended Schools programme, the parents of children in year 1 to year 5 have been provided with training in the Eiklan Language Programme to support further their children's speech and language development. By the end of KS2, most of the children can give articulate and extended responses to open-ended questions and listen carefully to the contributions of others when they discuss their work.

The quality of the children's reading is good; they learn to read systematically through the use of commercial reading schemes and a wide range of appropriate materials including novels, reference and 'real life' texts. The younger children are involved in a good range of reading activities including those presented through story-telling sessions and shared reading with the teacher. They are developing an enjoyment of reading along with a good range of problem solving strategies to help them read and understand unfamiliar text. They are well supported by the adults who interact with them effectively during their reading activities. The children in year 4 and year 5 participate in the Paired Reading scheme with their parents, which consolidates further their reading progress and enjoyment. The older children are able to discuss and evaluate aspects of textual information such as how vocabulary, structure and ideas are used to convey meaning. The children's reading skills progress steadily as they move through the school and by the end of year 7 the majority read with confidence, fluency and enthusiasm.

* The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

The quality of the children's written work is good; their writing is celebrated and shared through attractive displays and class anthologies. In the foundation stage (FS), the children become familiar with different forms of print and experiment with informal mark making. The children's letter formation, word building skills and knowledge of the basic conventions such as simple sentence structure are developed through shared writing activities. As their skills develop, the children's independent writing is promoted appropriately; by the end of KS1, the majority of children can express their ideas with a length and quality of content appropriate to their stage of development. As they progress through KS2, the children extend further their range of writing styles and are able to write for a variety of purposes and audiences; for the majority the standard of writing is good.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of the provision in mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory.

The mathematics action plan provides a broad outline of the areas for development. In recent years these have included the further development of problem solving techniques and the integration of assessment for learning strategies. Two important developments have been the introduction of a 'Parents in Number' programme to assist the parents in supporting their children's learning and the provision of in-class support for a small number of children who have been identified as underachieving.

The quality of the children's learning experiences and the development of their mathematical language, skills and understanding of key mathematical concepts are inconsistent as they progress through the school. Whilst all areas of the mathematics curriculum are taught in each class, there is an over-emphasis on number work and on the completion of routine pencil and paper exercises.

In the best practice observed during the inspection, the teachers incorporated stimulating mental mathematics activities into their lessons; they set the learning within meaningful contexts for the children, used open ended questioning effectively to challenge the children's thinking and built skilfully on the children's responses to further their learning. In the less effective lessons, there was over-direction by the teacher, the learning activities were not matched adequately to the children's needs and there were insufficient opportunities for the children to use accurate mathematical language and to talk about their learning.

In year 4, most of the children are able to draw on a range of mental strategies to answer questions. Similarly in year 7, the children, are able to express their enjoyment of mathematics but are less flexible in their working with number and show more reliance on pencil and paper methods.

The school has, appropriately, identified the need to review the whole-school programme for mathematics in order to ensure more effective balance, continuity and progression in the children's learning. It will also be important for the teachers to analyse and make more strategic use of all of the information available to them to identify the key priorities which will bring about improvement in learning and teaching.

By the end of KS2, a majority of the children achieve a sound understanding of most areas of the mathematics curriculum.

Information and communication technology is being used effectively in most of the classes to support learning and teaching in numeracy; for example, the children collate, record and express a variety of data in a range of graph formats using appropriate data handling software programmes. However, this good practice needs to be more consistent and to be extended further to include more frequent use of interactive resources.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The school has identified appropriately the need to review and develop further the whole school planning for literacy, numeracy and play-based learning in order to ensure appropriate progression in the children's learning, to inform the medium term planning and, in turn, to guide the teachers in their day-to-day work with the children.

Whilst there are well-planned programmes and individual education plans (IEPs) for the children with special educational needs, there is insufficient planning at class level to meet the needs of all of the children, particularly the more able. In the best practice, the teachers have begun to evaluate the effectiveness of their planning and to use these evaluations to inform future learning programmes. This good practice needs to be implemented more consistently across the school.

3.2 TEACHING

The teachers are dedicated and very hard working; they create bright and inviting classrooms and corridors using display areas to good effect to celebrate the children's achievements.

The quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good; in most of the lessons it was good or better and in almost one third of the lessons, it was very good. In the most effective practice, the learning intentions were explained clearly to the children, the lessons were well-paced and the teachers used effective questioning to extend the children's thinking. Where there was less effective practice, the activities lacked focus on learning and there was insufficient challenge to meet the needs of all of the children. In a small number of lessons the teachers did not make the best use of the time available for learning.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers make effective use of a range of strategies to assess the children's learning and to encourage the children to reflect on their understanding of the work completed. In most of the lessons they share the planned learning intentions and success criteria with the children, revisit these appropriately during and at the end of the lesson and, in the most effective practice, provide the children with the opportunity to talk about what they have learned and what they need to revisit. The children also complete end of topic self evaluation records to indicate their level of achievement.

In the FS, the adults have recorded a few key observations and assessments of the children's progress and needs. This practice needs to be developed further to build up a record of individual children's progress across the curriculum.

The teachers mark the children's written work regularly and frequently. In the best practice they indicate clearly what the children need to do to improve the accuracy of their work. There is a need for this good practice to be shared, developed further and implemented consistently in all the classes. In addition, the teachers need to set consistently high expectations in relation to the presentation of the children's written work.

The school makes conscientious use of a wide range of standardised and non-standardised testing to assess the children's levels of achievement, to identify those children with additional learning needs and those who would benefit from short-term support with aspects of their learning. They also use the outcomes from these tests well to set whole-school targets for achievement in literacy and numeracy. The staff has acknowledged the need to refine the test arrangements and to broaden the analysis and use of the test outcomes to identify more strategically the areas for improvement at individual and whole-school level.

The parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through one parental interview per year for Primary 1-6 parents and two per year, including the transfer report meeting for Primary 7 parents, and an annual written report, as well as through ongoing informal contact with the staff.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of provision for special educational needs (SEN) is good.

The school places a high priority on supporting those children who are experiencing difficulty with aspects of their learning. They make effective use of the targeted resources for SEN to provide withdrawal and in-class support for identified children on two days each week.

There is good co-operation and communication between the learning support teacher (LST), class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator. The LST has, in consultation with the class teachers, developed well-targeted IEPs and programmes to meet the children's needs; the records of the IEP reviews, together with the LST's evaluations and samples of the children's work show that the children are benefiting from the withdrawal support and are making good progress.

The school has developed very good working relationships with a range of external support agencies, including the Western Education and Library Board's educational psychology and peripatetic services, and has made effective use of the guidance provided to support children with specific learning and behaviour needs. The parents are consulted meaningfully about their children's needs and support programmes and are kept well-informed about the progress they make.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of leadership and management is good.

The Principal has been in post for 21 years. In addition to his leadership role, he has responsibility for teaching a composite KS2 class three days per week. He knows the children and their families very well and is totally committed to the continued development of the school to meet the needs of the children, the parish and the wider community. Together with the teaching and support staff, he fosters an inclusive whole-school ethos based on mutual respect.

The staff works well as a team, under the direction of the Principal. This has helped to promote a collegial approach to school development and decision-making. However, the Principal currently has lead responsibility for most of the key pastoral and curricular areas within the school. There is a need to review all staff roles and responsibilities for pastoral and curricular leadership and management to meet the changing needs of the school and to ensure a more equitable distribution of accountability for curriculum and school development.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school's shared approach to identifying its priorities and increasing use of self-evaluation leading to improvement is becoming established. However, there is a need for the school to place a stronger emphasis on using all of the information available to identify more effectively the key priorities which will lead to further improvement in learning and teaching.

In the current school development plan (SDP) the actions prioritised are too numerous and lack sufficient specific information about how their outcomes will be evaluated. It will be important for the school to take into account the inspection findings and recommendations to inform the new cycle of development planning.

The SDP is compliant with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The school governors make a very positive contribution to the life and work of the school. The school has a wide range of appropriate resources to support the children's learning across the curriculum.

4.4 ACCOMMODATION

The staff has worked hard to create and maintain a bright, stimulating learning environment and have made optimum use of all the available accommodation.

The school's external learning and play environment is very attractive and stimulating; it includes colourful planting and thoughtful displays of a range of the children's artwork. In keeping with the school's family ethos, all of the adults and children collaborate in maintaining their outdoor spaces to a very high standard. Recent developments which enhance further the children's outdoor learning opportunities include the newly constructed sensory garden which the children helped to design and create.

The school is cleaned and maintained to a high standard.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very well-behaved children who have a keen interest in their learning and a sense of care and responsibility for one another and for their school environment;
- the very good quality of the arrangements for pastoral care including the strong family ethos, the very good working relationships and very good range of extended learning experiences provided for the children;
- the good standards the children attain in English and literacy;
- the good or better quality of the teaching in most of the lessons observed;

- the good quality of provision for children who have additional learning needs and the progress they make; and
- the dedicated, hard-working Principal, teaching and support staff who work effectively as a team.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop further the whole school planning for literacy, numeracy and play-based learning to ensure the children make more appropriate progression in their learning; and
- use all of the information available to identify more effectively the key priorities for the SDP which will lead to further improvement in learning and teaching.

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 and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified two areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

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