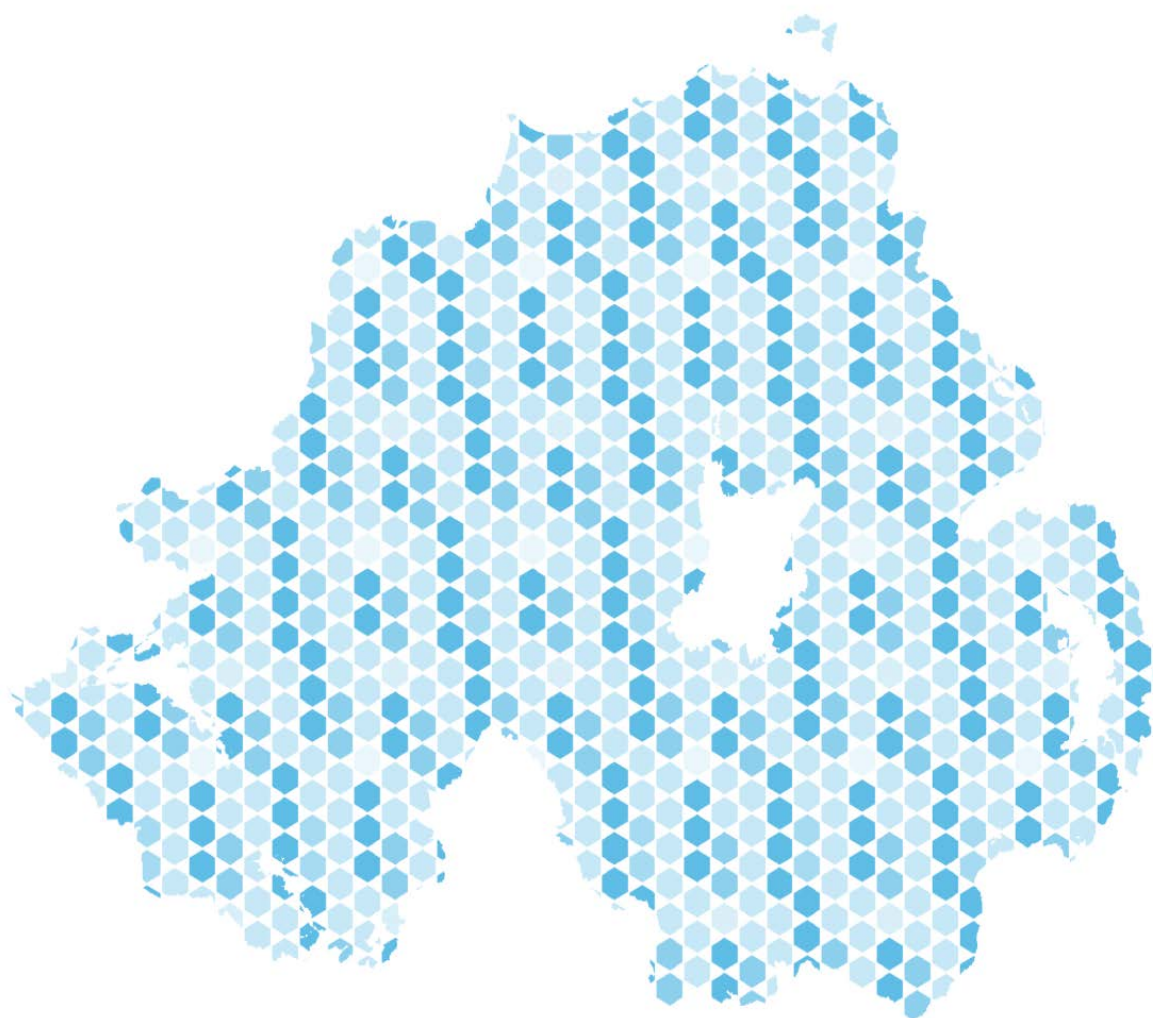


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Primate Dixon Primary School
and Nursery Unit, Coalisland

Report of an Inspection
in November 2012



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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

Primate Dixon Primary School is situated in Coalisland, County Tyrone. Of the 494 children enrolled at the school, 17 are in the learning support classes and 26 in the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection, 47% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 20% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning.

2. Focus of inspection and overall finding

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- 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 this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Learning support classes	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and standards

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

- The children are confident, motivated and interested in their learning. They are proud of their school and their behaviour is exemplary. Their high levels of self-esteem and well-developed thinking skills and personal capabilities are manifested in their ability to manage their own learning and work independently. They respect and respond sensitively to the contributions of others. The children experiencing barriers to their learning are fully involved in the life of the school and work confidently alongside their peers.

- An analysis of the key stage 2 assessment data over the past four years shows a significant and improving trend in English and mathematics. The school's performance in both areas is now in line with the Northern Ireland average and above the average for schools in the same free school meals category. Internal performance data held by the school indicates that, by the end of KS2, almost all children are achieving standards in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The children throughout the school attain excellent standards in talking and listening, reading and in writing. By year 7, the most able children read with fluency and expression and write to a very high standard. They produce extended pieces of high quality writing across a range of genre for a variety of audiences and purposes appropriate to their interests and stage of development.
- The children demonstrate a high level of understanding of all areas of the mathematics curriculum. They complete simple and more complex mental calculations quickly and accurately, explain confidently the processes they use and offer alternative strategies. They can apply their mathematical knowledge to challenging, real-life investigative activities and use mathematical language appropriately.
- Most of the children in the learning support classes and those with special educational needs achieve excellent standards in their academic and social skills in line with their abilities.
- The quality of the children's achievements in the nursery unit is good. The children enjoy outdoor play, creating pictures and models, and exploring and experimenting in the world around us activities. The children's levels of concentration, talking and listening skills are variable; a majority are communicating effectively with the adults and with one another.
- The children are very competent and at ease in using an excellent range of sophisticated software and digital media to support their learning. The children in years 4 and 7 participate in the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessments ICT Accreditation Scheme, with almost all achieving the expected levels of attainment.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding.

- The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding; most was good or better and one-quarter was outstanding. Key strengths of the planning and teaching are the skilful and creative integration of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, and the meaningful use made of ICT to support and extend the children's learning. The teachers provide the children with carefully planned opportunities for active and shared learning through paired and group work, which are supported by high quality resources which motivate and engage the children with the learning. The teachers enable the children to talk about and reflect on their learning through effective plenary sessions. They mark the children's work regularly and supportively with a focus on how the children can improve further the quality and standard of their work.

- Play-based learning is used very effectively to develop the children's personal and social skills and their learning in literacy and numeracy. The adults' interaction with the children is of a high quality and enables the children to extend their thinking and responses.
- The planning, teaching, monitoring and assessment in the learning support classes are thorough and highly effective ensuring that the children progress in academic and social skills through an enjoyable range of activities throughout the school. The support is flexible and sensitive to the needs of each individual child and the children benefit from learning with their peer groups throughout the school.
- The children with special educational needs benefit from the well-planned collaborative support provided both in the classroom and through withdrawal sessions for literacy and numeracy. The concise and carefully targeted individual education plans are reviewed regularly with the parents. The classroom assistants support the children skilfully and thoughtfully in the classroom and the playground.
- The quality of the provision for learning in the nursery unit is good. The staff has worked hard to create a bright, and stimulating learning environment; the children's work is celebrated and presented attractively in the playroom. In the most effective practice, the staff engages well with the children in their play activities by extending the children's language and learning. A good start has been made to record the children's progress and varying stages of development and to plan for a broad and balanced range of learning.
- The school and nursery unit give excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through a range of strategies and initiatives to raise the children's awareness of, and encourage them to adopt, healthy lifestyles.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The children show respect for their school community and interact politely with their peers and adults. Their views are sought and acted upon and they are aware of their responsibility in ensuring their school is welcoming, friendly and inclusive. Working relationships at all levels are excellent and there is a common drive to reflect and embed the school's ethos, with the child at the centre, in all aspects of the life and work of the school.

5. Leadership and management

The overall quality of leadership and management in this school is outstanding.

- The Principal, supported well by the Board of Governors and the whole school community, provides excellent strategic direction for the school. He has a clear vision for the future development of the school which is understood and shared by all of the staff who work collegially to ensure that the provision is accessible to all of the children regardless of their identity and background. The school development planning process includes regular and effective consultation with all stakeholders and focuses appropriately on achieving the highest possible standards for all of the children, while recognising the importance of making the school a key resource for community development.

- Led effectively by the two recently appointed Vice-principals, the subject co-ordinators make effective use of data from standardised tests and the teachers' evaluations of the children's performance in literacy and numeracy to set appropriate targets for the whole-school, each class and individual children. The leadership and management of the learning support classes is very effective ensuring a consistently high standard of provision for all of the children.
- The staff in the nursery unit is developing well as a new team. The teacher and classroom assistants have appropriately begun to evaluate the quality of their planning and to focus on the assessment of the children's needs.
- The governors carry out their associated challenge function very effectively, adopt a proactive role in the school development planning process, and support the Principal and teachers well in raising further the educational performance for all of the children.
- The school works hard to develop its links with the parents and the community. The school's participation in a number of initiatives through the project group 'Business in the Community' has extended and enhanced the children's learning experiences. The innovative 'Parent Discussion Group' provides an important forum for the parents and guardians to support the school in achieving the priorities agreed in the school development plan. There are highly effective procedures in place to keep parents well informed about their children's progress. The parents receive regular newsletters and information about school events as well as planning documents which outline each term's work and indicate how parents can support the learning.
- 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. In discussions with the children, they stated that they feel safe and happy in school and that they know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their well-being.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	114
Number of Questionnaires Returned	40
Percentage of Returns	35.1%
Number of Comments	18

NURSERY UNIT	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	26
Number of Questionnaires Returned	7
Percentage of Returns	25.9%
Number of Comments	5
LEARNING SUPPORT CLASSES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	6
Number of Comments	6

The parents highlighted the inclusive, welcoming ethos, the strong home-school links, the hardworking and approachable Principal and staff and the opportunities for parents to be involved in the life and work of the school. They expressed their appreciation of the school facilities and the many additional learning and extra-curricular experiences provided for their children.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	22
Number of Comments	13

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	18
Number of Comments	7

The teachers and support staff expressed their enjoyment of working in the school. They highlighted the work of the Principal and management team, the supportive environment in which they feel valued, and the school's engagement with the community.

The children spoke of their pride in their school and expressed their appreciation for the help given to them by the adults in the school and the resources available to them.

The governors expressed their confidence in the Principal and all of the staff in providing the best for all of the children. They highlighted the strong sense of community within the school and the many links established with the parents and outside agencies which contribute to the children's learning experiences.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PRIMATE DIXON PRIMARY SCHOOL, NURSERY UNIT, COALISLAND

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	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	3	0
With English as an additional language	4	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%
Average attendance for the previous year.	85.6%

2. Duration of Sessions

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

3. Details of Staff

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

Number of: ***	
Students	
Trainees	

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	
Percentage returned	%
Number of written comments	

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