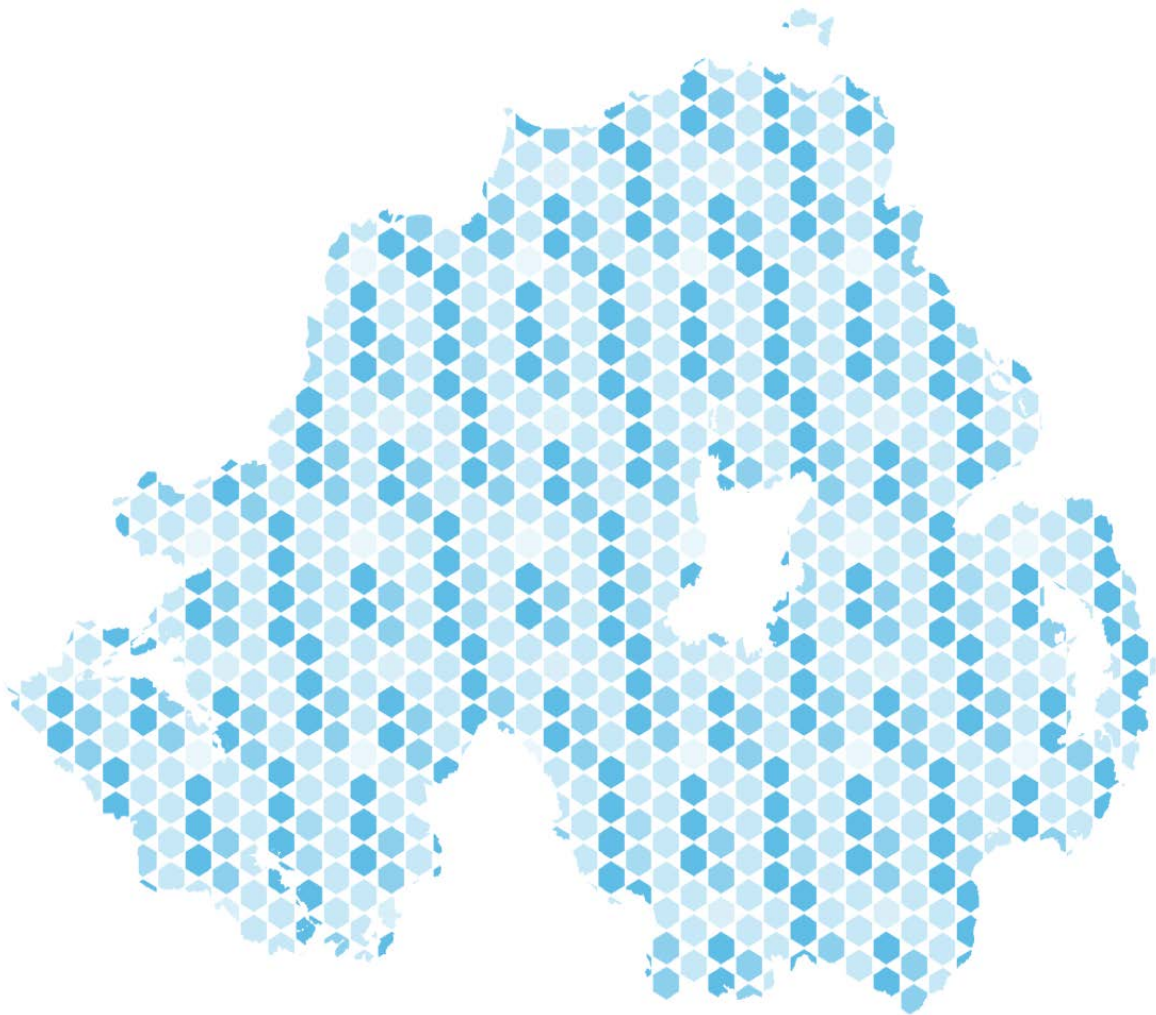


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St John the Baptist Primary  
School, Craigavon

Report of an Inspection  
in October 2012



Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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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

St John the Baptist Primary School is situated on the Garvaghy Road in Portadown, Craigavon. The enrolment has increased steadily over the past five years, from 375 in 2007 to the current enrolment of 405 including 42 children who are enrolled in the Irish-medium unit (IMU). At the time of the inspection 35% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 16% of the children in the school were identified as requiring additional 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 the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

#### Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Irish-medium unit	Good

### KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

## 3. Achievements and Standards

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

- Almost of all the children in the school have a positive attitude to their learning. The children are well settled, attentive and eager to learn as a result of the effective positive behaviour strategies employed in the classrooms. They work and play collaboratively and develop their self-confidence through taking responsibility for their own learning as they progress across the key stages (KS).

- An analysis of the KS 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that the school's performance in mathematics has been above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. It has been in line with or above the NI average in English in three of the four years. During the same four year period, the school's performance in mathematics has remained above the average when compared to schools in the same free school meals category. In two of the four years, the school's performance in English has been in line with or above the average when compared with schools in the same free school meals category<sup>1</sup>.
- The school's internal data indicates that by the end of KS2 most of the children are achieving standards in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. By year 7, the majority of the children achieve very good standards in mathematics. The children have a very good understanding of their work across the range of areas in mathematics; they are secure in their knowledge of number facts and handle simple and more complex computation well. By year 7, the children attain good standards in their reading. The children can write to a good standard for an increasing range of audiences; they are able to plan, draft and edit their work; and they make effective use of research to inform their writing.
- The children in the school who have been identified with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning in line with their ability.
- In the IMU, most of the children are achieving standards in Irish, English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. They are confident, competent and flexible in their use of both languages in a wide range of contexts. They are able to transfer skills and capabilities across all areas of the curriculum.
- Throughout the school, the children, through participation in external accreditation attain good standards in ICT. They are confident in the use of programmable devices and a range of interactive software to support their learning.

#### 4. **Provision for Learning**

##### **The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

- The quality of the planning, teaching and assessment for learning is good. During the inspection, almost one-half of the teaching observed was very good or better. In the most effective practice, the teachers have high expectations of the children's attainment. They plan and deploy challenging learning activities using skilful questioning to meet appropriately the needs of the children. They use success criteria which the children create to guide the learning process and they consolidate the learning effectively at the end of lessons. The teachers work collaboratively to develop their medium-term planning with a strong emphasis on engaging the children actively in their learning. The quality of this planning, however, needs further development. The teachers need to plan for a greater range of differentiated tasks to meet the increasingly diverse needs of the children. In particular, the teachers need to evaluate the learning of individual children and to use these evaluations to inform better the future planning.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2011-12, the school piloted the new assessment arrangements.

- The quality of the provision for literacy is good. The children's reading and writing skills are developed through the well-connected teaching of the aspects of literacy throughout the school. In the most effective practice, the guided reading lessons have a clear focus on learning and match well the children's needs. The children are provided with effective opportunities, through for example play-based learning and circle time, to develop their self-esteem, confidence and talking and listening skills. The whole-school approach to the planning of literacy, however, needs reviewed to ensure greater consistency in the quality of the provision across the school. In particular, the teachers need to plan more specifically for the development of talking and listening skills in KS1 and 2, with a sharper focus on strategies to help the children speak audibly, clearly and use appropriate speech, modelled by the staff.
- The quality of the provision for mathematics is good. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced with an appropriate emphasis on developing the children's understanding of processes in mathematics through problem-solving and investigative activities. In the best practice, the mathematical experiences provided by the teachers are linked well to other areas of the curriculum. There is very good provision, through well-planned withdrawal sessions, to extend the mathematical thinking of the more able children and to support the children who are experiencing difficulty with learning in mathematics. It is appropriate that the school has identified the need to review the mathematics policy in order to provide more consistency in the provision across all the key stages.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. The children benefit from the positive working relationships; the mutual respect between all of the staff and the children; and the caring and supportive ethos. The children from years 4 to 7 have good opportunities through the school council to make decisions about issues that affect them in school. The older children display very good levels of responsibility when helping the younger children through the playground and study buddies. The children's emotional health and well-being is given a high priority by the school through a range of strategies to help the children develop their resilience in dealing with challenges in their learning.
- The quality of the provision for those children with special educational needs is very good. These children are supported effectively by a well-informed staff who use a wide range of tests and teachers' observations to provide appropriate intervention strategies through in-class support or high-quality withdrawal sessions. The teachers have drawn up appropriate and succinct targets in the individual education plans for the children who require additional support with their learning in literacy or numeracy. These education plans are of very good quality and outline appropriate strategies to further improvement. Furthermore, the children benefit from the excellent work of the classroom assistants.
- The quality of the provision in the IMU is good. The children's literacy skills in both Irish and English are developed well by the teachers through their planning for, and the facilitation of, opportunities for the children to work collaboratively. In both literacy and mathematics lessons, the staff's interactions with the children are of a high quality through the use of open-ended questioning and the teachers employ skilfully a range of immersion strategies to create and maintain a rich and vibrant linguistic environment.

- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through the healthy eating initiative and the children's involvement in a varied range of sporting and enrichment activities. It is important, however, that the school monitors the uptake on healthier options in the canteen in order to encourage the children further in their adoption of healthier lifestyles.

## 5. Leadership and Management

### **The quality of leadership and management is good.**

- The strategic vision of the leadership team is child-centred and there is distributed leadership throughout the school. The strong sense of collegiality amongst the staff across the school has enabled an open and frank self-evaluation process to inform the identification of appropriate priorities for development through the school development planning (SDP) process. This process is informed further by the effective use by the Principal and staff of a wide range of performance data to monitor the children's progress over time and to identify children in need of additional support with their learning or those who are underachieving. The SDP process is supported by a range of detailed action plans and there is a systematic monitoring programme which includes the Principal and co-ordinators monitoring the teachers' planning and the children's work. The SDP process, however, needs to include the more rigorous evaluation of the children's learning by the staff to inform better the whole-school planning process, including the construction of action plans with precise measurable targets focused on outcomes for the children's learning.
- The parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and the work of the school. The parents are becoming increasingly more involved in their children's learning through curriculum evenings, the use of questionnaires and the ICT Cluster group for parents. The Parent Teacher Association is active in supporting the work of the school through its involvement in the reading partnerships and raising significant funds to purchase resources such as interactive whiteboards. The children's educational and social experiences are enhanced by the strong connections with the local community through the appropriate partnerships and links with other relevant professional and community-based organisations.
- The Board of governors (governors) support the work of the school well. They are involved in setting the priorities for improvement through the SDP process and they are kept informed fully by the Principal and the co-ordinators about the outworking of the actions to address the development priorities.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school, including the IMU have satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children; these arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education but the following minor areas need to be addressed: the school needs to ensure that there is written confirmation by the governors of the presentation of the annual report on all safeguarding activity and that all members of the governors receive updated safeguarding training.

## CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The area for improvement for the school is:

- to review and develop the whole-school procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the children's learning in order to inform better the whole-school planning for improvement process.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

### 6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued to the school (Based on 09/10 Enrolment)	132
Number of Questionnaires Returned	42
Percentage of Returns	31.8%
Number of Comments	21

Almost all of the responses from the parental questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school and IMU. In particular, the parents commented on the approachability of the Principal and the staff; the caring, supportive and friendly ethos; and their appreciation of the learning experiences that their children enjoy.

The governors praised the work of the Principal and staff in raising the standards attained by the children. They highlighted the leadership of the Principal, the positive working relationships throughout the school and the high reputation of the school in the community.

In discussions with the children from year 6, the children reported that they feel safe and secure in school and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being. They talked enthusiastically about their experiences in school and spoke with confidence about the friendly, helpful staff and the consistent approaches by teachers in promoting positive behaviour.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	11
Number of Comments	*

\* Denotes fewer than five



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

Eleven of the teachers and seven of the support staff completed the questionnaire. All of the responses from the staff indicated their strong support of the leadership of the Principal and their enjoyment of the work and life of the school.



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