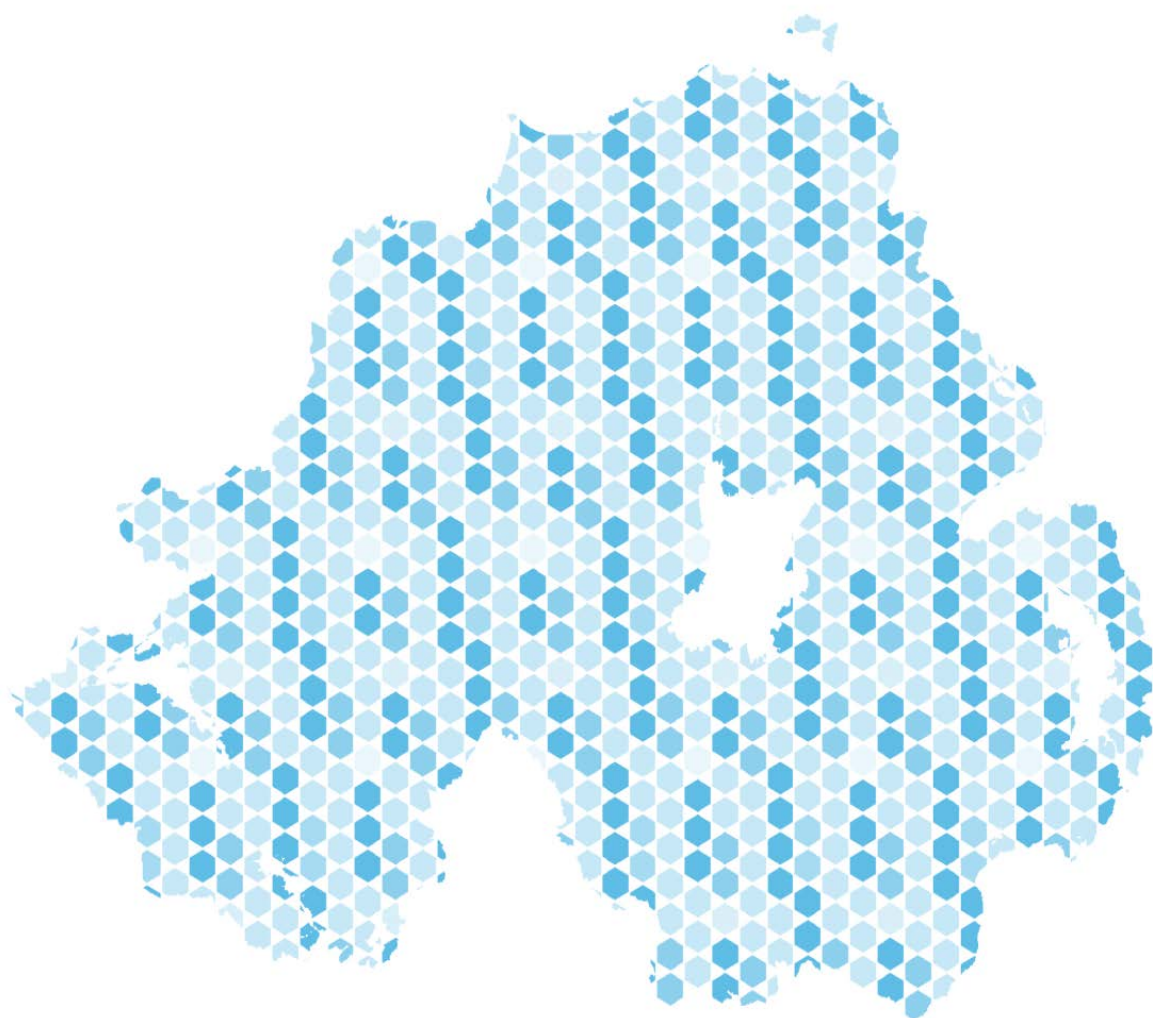


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Lawrence's Primary School
and Nursery Unit, Fintona

Report of an Inspection
in April 2013



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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. Lawrence's Primary School is situated on the Tattymoyle Road in the town of Fintona, County Tyrone. The enrolment has risen steadily in the last few years to the current figure of 217. At the time of the inspection approximately 35% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 15% 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 the school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of all of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards	Very Good
Quality of provision	Very Good
Leadership and management	Good
Nursery Unit	Very Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and Standards

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

- The children are well motivated and have positive attitudes to their learning. They collaborate well in pairs and groups, listening with interest and responding respectfully to the views of others. They apply their learning confidently in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. In the nursery unit and across the three key stages (KS), they are developing well their independence and ability to manage their own learning. All of the children have the opportunity to take part in sporting, musical and verse speaking competitions and have experienced high levels of success in these events.

- An analysis of the KS2 assessment data over the past four years shows that the school's performance in English and mathematics has been well above the Northern Ireland average in three of the four years. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are also well above the average during the same three years.
- In literacy, most of the children attain very good standards in line with or above expectation. Most read with very good fluency and high levels of interest; from an early stage, they use an effective blend of strategies to read well and comprehend increasingly challenging texts. The children's ability to express their creative ideas and opinions in writing across a good variety of genres is also developing well and the most able children can produce writing of a very good standard. In mathematics, in most classes, the children complete practical problem-solving and investigative activities to a good standard. The children have a very good knowledge and understanding of important mathematical ideas and concepts across all areas of the mathematics curriculum and are flexible in their thinking and able to explain their strategies. Throughout the school, the children attain good standards in ICT. They are confident and competent in using a range of software and digital media to support their learning.
- Most of children in the school who have been identified with special educational needs (SEN) make very good progress in their learning in line with their ability.
- The children in the nursery unit engage productively in their learning; they are able to play co-operatively and to follow instructions. Most of the children have acquired a high level of mathematical awareness and their well-developed representational drawings show a readiness to begin early writing. The children are able to communicate well during role play activities with the adults and engage fully in energetic play in the outdoors.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The quality of the teaching in the school and the nursery unit ranged from satisfactory to outstanding; most of the teaching observed was very good or outstanding. In these classes, the teachers plan well and have good procedures in place to assess the children's learning. They develop enjoyment in learning through well-paced and challenging lessons and have high expectations for what the children can achieve. They are creative in connecting the children's learning across the curriculum and in relating it to familiar and practical contexts. The use of stimulating resources in the nursery unit and foundation stage, and the close involvement of the adults in the children's play sustains the children's interest and learning. The quality of teaching in a small number of instances needs to be improved. In these lessons, the slow pace of the work and the low-level activities restrict the children's decision-making skills and result in the children making insufficient progress in their learning.
- In literacy and numeracy, key skills are taught in a holistic way, progressing from nursery stage and through the primary years. In the best practice, teachers use very well a skilful blend of interactive approaches and take very good account of the children's varying needs and abilities. This stimulates well the children's

interest in how language works and broadens their vocabulary and mathematical thinking. The teachers value and support well the children's attempts in writing and spelling and mark the children's work carefully. In the best practice, clear guidance is given to the children about how to go about improving their work further; this needs to be undertaken more consistently across the school. In a majority of classes, mental mathematics activities are integrated well into the planned mathematics lessons and are often used as a challenging starting activity for a lesson, building on the children's prior knowledge.

- The quality of the provision for children with special educational needs is very good. The children with SEN are identified early through classroom observation and the use of appropriate performance data. They are supported well in class by the teachers and classroom assistants. The individual education plans have clearly focused targets, are regularly reviewed and guide well the provision made for the children.
- The school and nursery unit give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through a range of strategies and initiatives to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. There is a strong, caring and inclusive ethos throughout the school. The children are confident, courteous, very well-behaved and interact politely with their peers and adults. They are supportive of one another and take on roles and responsibilities, for example, in the school council and eco committee, with maturity and confidence. The staff know the children well and build on their interests and experiences through, for example, the wide range of after school activities available through the extended school's programme. The children's work and achievements are celebrated in the high quality displays throughout the school and through whole school reward systems.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The Principal has a clear vision for the work of the school which focuses strongly on improving learning and teaching and on the pastoral development of the whole-school community. The senior leadership team, the teacher-in-charge of the nursery unit and the co-ordinators are working hard at an individual level to promote improvement within their respective areas of responsibility. They have made a good start to using teacher observation and performance data to identify low and underachievement and to prioritise areas for improvement within the curriculum provision. In order to improve further the school's self-evaluation processes, the leadership team and co-ordinators need to work collaboratively to develop a more coherent and strategic approach to self evaluation, including the more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's overall provision.
- The nursery unit staff have a well-organised team approach to development and improvement and are led effectively by the teacher-in-charge.

- The school has effective arrangements for communicating with the parents and values the contribution they make to the life and work of the school and to their children's learning. The children benefit from meaningful links with local sporting organisations, charitable organisations and the local and international community. The school liaises very effectively with a range of educational, health and statutory agencies in order to support individual children's needs.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the evaluation is that the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well informed about and engaged in decisions in relation to recruitment, safeguarding, finances and management structures within the school. Their contribution to the life and work of the school could be further enhanced through the monitoring of the processes for self evaluation and the outcomes from the specific actions undertaken.
- 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 (DE).

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of all of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	101
Number of Questionnaires Returned	59
Percentage of Returns (Based on Actual Issue)	58.4%
Number of Comments	21
NURSERY UNIT	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	26
Number of Questionnaires Returned	12
Percentage of Returns	46.2%
Number of Comments	5

Almost all of the responses from the parental questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school and nursery unit. In particular, the parents highlighted the approachable and dedicated Principal and staff team. In addition, they expressed their appreciation of the care and support shown by the Principal and staff to the children and their families. The very small number of concerns raised in the written comments has been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

In discussions with the governors, they expressed their appreciation of the work of the Principal and staff and highlighted the important role the school had in the community.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	9
Number of Comments	3

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	10
Number of Comments	5

Almost all of the staff indicated that they are very happy in their work in the school and that they appreciate the Principal's support and the care and attention given to the well-being of all of the staff and children.

In discussions with the children from Year 6, they 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 positively about their experiences in school and spoke with confidence about their role in the school council and the school's eco committee.

Health and safety

- There is a need for a risk assessment to be carried out with regard to access to the school grounds and to the school buildings.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Lawrence’s Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 22/04/13**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 203-2684** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	27	36	25	39	27
Enrolments					
Primary	208	203	193	202	217
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): 96.2% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 93.3%
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 10 1 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 21.7 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 24.1
- iv. Class Size (Range): 16 to 30
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|--------|
| i. Clerical support: | 30 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 15 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 198.75 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.8%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 15.2%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 34.6%
- 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 | 89.5% | Mathematics | 89.5% | Irish | N/A |
|----------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------|-----|

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST LAWRENCE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, FINTONA

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Attending full-time	26	0	0
Attending part-time	0	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	0	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	0	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	0	0
With English as an additional language	6	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.	6%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93%

2. Duration of Sessions

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

3. Details of Staff

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

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	2

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	46.2%
Number of written comments	5

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