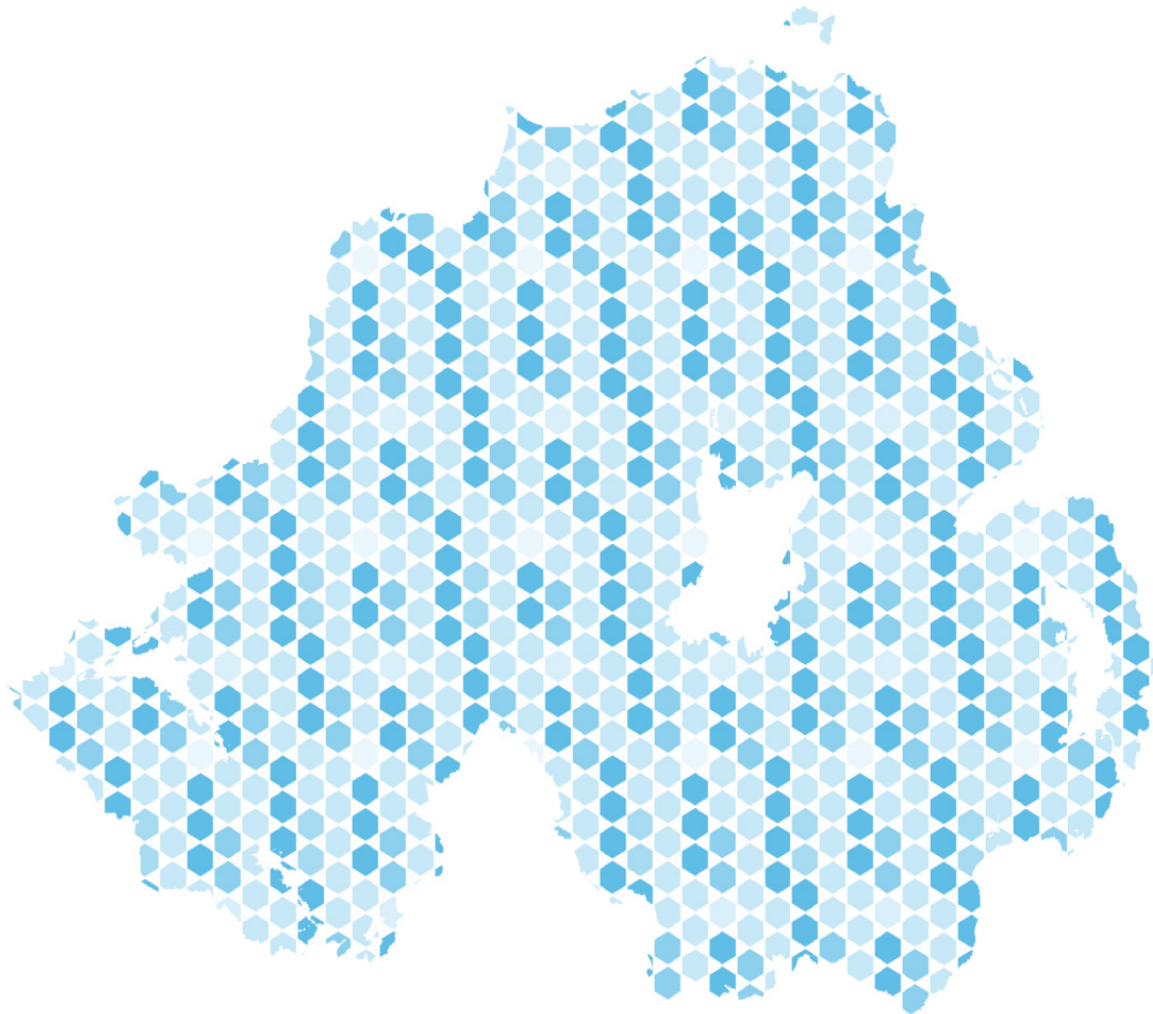


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School,
Aughagallon

Report of an Inspection
in October 2010

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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: St Patrick’s Primary
Aughagallon** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 11/10/10**
ii. **School Reference Number: 503-3324** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	14	10	11	15	21
Enrolments					
Primary	123	104	98	87	92
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):
- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 93.94% | 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): 4.4 0 0 0
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
 - ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 20.9 NI PTR: 20.7
 - iii. Average Class Size: 23
 - iv. Class Size (Range): 17 to 28
 - v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours **Per Week**:
 - i. Clerical support: 30
 - ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: 20
 - iii. Additional hours of other domestic assistant support: 12.5
 - vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.08%
 - vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 20.65%
 - viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
 - ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 24%
 - 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	Mathematics
78.58%	78.57%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Patrick's Primary School is situated on the Aghalee Road in Aughagallon. The enrolment has decreased over the past five years, from 123 in 2006 to the current figure of 92. Almost all of the children come from the immediate area. At the time of the inspection 24% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 21% of the children were identified as requiring help 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 teachers 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 groups of children from years 6 and 7.

Of the 67 questionnaires issued to parents, 26 (39%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 12 which contained additional written comments. All of the parents indicated high levels of satisfaction with the provision for the care and safety of the children and with the school's procedures for promoting positive behaviour. However, a number (30%) of parents indicated that they had not received information about key aspects of the school's provision, such as, the procedures to deal with child protection matters.

Three of the members of the teaching staff and three of the members of the support staff completed the online questionnaire. Two members of staff expressed concerns about the Principal's leadership and about the lack of support from Management for the staff's welfare.

Most of the representatives from the governors have taken up post very recently. They expressed their appreciation of the Principal's hard work in raising the school's profile within the community and highlighted their awareness of the challenges facing the school, particularly in respect of the declining enrolment and the poor professional working relationships among senior members of staff.

In discussions held with the year 6 and 7 children, they indicated that they feel safe and at ease in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns.

All of the concerns raised by parents, governors and staff have been discussed with the governors and the Principal and, where relevant, are commented on in the main body of the report.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of pastoral care in the school is satisfactory. Among the strengths are the safe and secure learning environment, the well-behaved and courteous children, the links made with the parents and the local community, and the warm rapport between the staff and children.

The working relationships between the Principal and senior post holders are strained; the lack of effective communication, cohesion and team work among them is having a detrimental affect on the quality of education provided for the children. They need to address this issue as a matter of urgency.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The role of designated teacher for child protection needs to be reassigned to a senior member of staff, other than the Principal.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING and PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives satisfactory attention to developing aspects of healthy eating and physical activity, for example through the successful 'Grandparents to Lunch Day' and healthy eating talks for each class. However, there is a need to extend the range of healthy eating programmes and activities to develop further the children's knowledge and understanding of positive health messages.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

There are good links with the local church, Gaelic club, and post-primary schools, and some of the pre-school settings from which the children come. The parents are kept informed about school events through regular newsletters. There is an active parent support group which provides additional funding and resources for the school. The children's learning is enhanced through participation in competitions, and in cultural and sporting events.

2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 LEARNING

The children are friendly, courteous and very well-behaved; they co-operate well with their teachers and, when given the opportunity, are able to work purposefully and independently to complete the learning tasks.

In the foundation stage (FS) the play-based learning activities often lack sufficient challenge for the children and do not adequately support the development of their skills in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, the teachers need to review the resources, routines and organisation of the activities for play-based learning in order to ensure that there is appropriate progression in the children's learning.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance is consistently below the Northern Ireland average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are consistently below the average.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The literacy co-ordinator has been in post for two years; in that time she has introduced a framework for literacy devised by the Southern Education and Library Board and has begun to monitor its implementation. The literacy action plan outlines a number of tasks to be completed within the current academic year including the need to use the framework for medium and short-term planning. In light of the inspection findings it will be necessary for the teachers to review the plan, in order to focus the priorities more specifically on learning and teaching and on raising the children's levels of attainment.

Most of the children in the school demonstrate satisfactory spoken communication and listening skills. The majority speak confidently to peers, teachers and other adults within the school. However, during almost all of the lessons observed, the teachers missed opportunities to extend the children's language and communication skills, across all areas of learning. The teachers need to develop and implement an agreed language programme in order to ensure consistent progress and development of the children's oracy skills.

There is a structured programme in place for the teaching of reading within the school. In the FS and KS1 the children acquire the basic skills of reading through the development of phonological awareness and through shared and guided reading. In KS1 and KS2 class novels are being used, primarily, for the development of the children's literal comprehension skills and as a stimulus for writing. The teachers need additional training to ensure that they have a shared understanding of the school's new phonics programme and to implement it consistently throughout the school. In addition, the teachers need to focus the planned reading activities more specifically on extending and deepening the children's understanding of what they read and of how authors use language for a range of purposes and audiences.

The children in years 4 and 7, they read fluently and with some expression. However, they display limited interest or enjoyment in reading. There is a need for the teachers to promote more actively reading for pleasure, to provide an appropriate reading area and to complete and implement the book banding system in order to ensure that the books available match the interests and needs of all the children.

By the end of KS2 a majority of the children are reading at a satisfactory level.

In the FS, the children experiment with letter and word formation through a variety of activities including the use of whiteboards. The teachers need to provide the children with more focused opportunities to develop these initial writing and phonic skills, in order for the children to become independent writers. In KS1 and 2 the children are given opportunities to write in a variety of styles, which in the best practice, are linked to work across the curriculum. However, the standards achieved in writing are inadequate. There is a lack of development of the children's writing style, their sense of audience and creative use of language. The teachers need to develop a shared understanding of how to help the children to improve the quality of their writing and to achieve higher standards.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of provision in mathematics is inadequate.

The co-ordinator has been in post for 18 years. In that time, the teacher reports that she has had limited training to develop her skills as a lead practitioner and leader in this important area of learning. However, she has begun to analyse the standardised test results for each year group and has used the outcomes to identify gaps in the mathematics programme. The mathematics action plan broadly identifies priorities for development, including the development of the children's problem solving skills. Whilst provision has been made to address this priority in the short-term, there is a need to ensure that all of the teachers have appropriate training in order to ensure sustained improvement in the provision. It will be important for the teachers to review the action plan in light of the inspection findings and to focus more specifically on priorities which will lead to an improvement in the standards achieved by the children.

Most of the lessons observed during the inspection included a basic mental mathematics activity. However, these activities were at too low a level and were ineffective in helping the children to develop flexible thinking skills. There is a need for an agreed, whole-school programme for progression in mental mathematics which addresses all areas of the mathematics curriculum and includes the key teaching strategies to be used.

In a small number of lessons, the children had the opportunity to develop their understanding of key concepts through purposeful practical work; they were encouraged to articulate their thinking using appropriate mathematical language and the teacher built effectively on their spoken responses. In the majority of lessons the planned learning activities lacked meaningful context, did not take account of the children's prior knowledge and were not sufficiently challenging. In each of the classes there was insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all of the children, particularly the more able and those with additional learning needs. In discussions with groups of children from years 4, 5 and 7, they found mental calculations difficult, were insecure in their understanding of broader mathematical concepts and had a limited understanding of key mathematical language.

The teachers make satisfactory use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. The children have opportunities to use computers during play-based learning in the FS and to write and present work and engage in research in KS1 and 2. The year 7 children have successfully participated in the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment ICT Accreditation scheme. The action plan for the development of ICT has some appropriate targets; however, it needs to be more closely aligned to the priorities identified in other curricular areas.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

Most of the teachers use the whole-school programmes for literacy and numeracy to guide them in their day-to-day work with the children. They need to develop, customise and translate these programmes into effective medium- and short-term planning in order to ensure that key skills and concepts are fully developed and to meet more effectively the individual needs of all of the children, particularly those who are experiencing difficulty with aspects of their learning.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from unsatisfactory, in the case of one teacher, to good. In one-third of the lessons the teaching was good. However, in just over one-third of the lessons observed there was a need for significant improvement in the quality of teaching. In the most effective practice observed, the teachers created a

settled, well-organised environment for learning; routines were well-established and used effectively to promote the development of the children's personal and social skills; the lessons were well-structured, well-paced and used to consolidate and build on the children's prior knowledge. In these lessons the teachers used effective questioning to challenge the children's thinking.

In the less effective practice, the lessons were over-directed by the teacher, there were limited opportunities for the children to engage in collaborative learning, to think creatively or to apply their knowledge in meaningful contexts. In almost all of the lessons, the teachers had low expectations of what the children could achieve and the learning activities were not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all of the learners.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers mark the children's written work regularly and frequently. In the majority of the classes the marking is of a supportive nature. The teachers are beginning to advise the children, orally or in writing, on how to improve the quality of their work; however this tends to relate to presentation and secretarial skills rather than composition or structure. The teachers are also beginning to encourage the children to reflect on their own learning at the end of individual lessons and at the end of topics. They need to agree strategies for marking for improvement and to implement them consistently in all classes.

The school carries out a range of standardised testing to identify individual children's potential for learning and to confirm their levels of attainment in English and mathematics. The information gained from the test outcomes has not been sufficiently analysed to inform planning at whole-school, class or individual level or to track individual children's progress. There is a need for the teachers to develop robust assessment procedures which will effectively inform planning to raise the children's standards in literacy and numeracy.

The parents are kept informed of their children's progress through individual meetings with the class teacher in term 1 and an annual written report which issues at the end of term 3.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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

The school has identified twenty-one percent of the children who require additional support with aspects of their behaviour and/or learning. One percent of the children at the school have a statement of special educational need.

The special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO), who is also the Vice-principal, has been in post for approximately four years. She knows the children well and liaises effectively with parents and external agencies; she maintains the SEN register and the SEN files which contain the children's individual education plans (IEPs) and additional external advice.

The school has an inclusive approach to SEN provision with almost all of the additional support provided by the class teachers and learning support assistants. During the inspection, the teachers and assistants were observed giving sensitive support to individuals and small groups of children.

The children's IEPs are written and reviewed by the classroom teacher, in consultation with the parents and, in most cases, with the SENCO. The main intervention strategy they use to support the children is differentiation of the learning activities. However, in the lessons observed during the inspection, the learning activities were not sufficiently differentiated to meet the children's needs or to ensure progression in their learning. The SENCO and the teachers need to agree specific, key targets and support strategies to guide their work with the children. The children need to have the opportunity to contribute to the target setting process, appropriate to their age and stage of development.

The Principal and SENCO need to agree criteria for the early identification of those children in need of additional support and need to ensure that it is understood and applied consistently throughout the school. In addition, the SENCO needs to make effective use of all the available data and information to accurately identify the children's individual needs, to inform IEP target setting and to track the children's progress.

Overall, the current provision lacks rigour and cohesion and does not provide sufficiently for the varied needs of the children. The school needs to review its provision for SEN and to provide a comprehensive staff training programme to ensure that more appropriately targeted support is provided, monitored and evaluated to track the progress made by the children.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management in the school is inadequate.

There is insufficient emphasis placed on improving the children's standards in literacy and numeracy. There is lack of a coherent approach to the development of teaching and learning in key areas of the curriculum, a lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning to promote improvement and ineffective use of the time available for the continuing professional development of the teaching staff.

The Principal has been in post for almost four years. In addition to his leadership role, he has responsibility for teaching a composite year 6 and 7 class three days per week. He has a good rapport with all of the children and is committed to promoting their sense of well-being, confidence and self-esteem. He has worked hard and with some measure of success at promoting a positive image of the school by developing links with the parents and members of the wider school community.

The professional working relationships among the Principal and the senior post holders have deteriorated significantly over the past eighteen months and are now poor. This is having an adverse effect on the quality of provision for the children. There is an urgent need for the development of mutual respect and improved communication between the Principal and the senior post holders if the school is to move forward. The quality of the work of the Principal, in leading and managing the school, is unsatisfactory.

4.1 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school's self-evaluation and development planning processes are inadequate.

The main strategy for self-evaluation has been the use of attitudinal questionnaires to gain the views of the parents, staff and children about aspects of the life and work of the school. Whilst the information gained from these questionnaires has been used effectively as a basis for developing, and successfully implementing, the school's policy for promoting positive

behaviour, there has been no strategic evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. The senior post holders need to establish rigorous self-evaluation and development planning processes which address, as a priority, the need to improve the children's standards in literacy and numeracy.

4.2 ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation within the main school building and temporary classrooms is generally used to good effect. However, in light of the inspection findings, it will be important for the senior post holders to consider what potential exists to create a dedicated library area to foster the children's interest in and enjoyment of reading. The standards of caretaking and cleaning are very good.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The school is adequately resourced to support learning and teaching. The resources are well maintained and fit for purpose.

The governors have been recently re-constituted with almost half of them taking up post for the first time. They are aware of some of the challenges the school faces but will need well-focused external support to help them take forward the necessary areas for improvement.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the friendly, well-behaved children;
- the warm rapport between the children and the staff;
- the effective use of the outdoor space and resources to engage children constructively during playtime; and
- the good links with the parents and the wider community.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need:

- to improve the quality of leadership throughout the school, through the development and implementation of rigorous self-evaluation and school development planning processes;
- for the teachers to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning and teaching, differentiation and progression in the children's learning; and
- to raise the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy;

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the organisation is inadequate; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified major areas for improvement in achievements and standards, learning and teaching, leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

The governors, Principal and staff will require external and well-focused support from the Southern Education and Library Board Curriculum Advisory and Support Services and from the employing authority, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools to help them take forward the necessary areas for improvement

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-18 month period.

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