

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

West Winds Primary School,
Newtownards

Report of an Inspection
in May 2012

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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: West Winds Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 28/05/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-6083** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	12	20	28	21	16
Enrolments					
Primary	117	110	131	145	134
Reception	*	*	*	*	*
Nursery Unit	26	26	26	26	26
Special Unit	*	10	7	*	13
Irish Medium Unit	*	*	*	*	*

* Denotes figure fewer than 5

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% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 91.9%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 7.7 1 1 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 16.8 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 20
- iv. Class Size (Range): 16 to 27
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | | | |
|---|--|------|--|
| i. Clerical support: | | 32.5 | |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | 30 | |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | 52.5 | |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 8.1%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 34.7%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: *
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 63%
- 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 | Mathematics | Irish |
| | 85.7% | 81% | N/A |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

West Winds Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Newtownards. Most of the children come from the neighbouring area. The school enrolment has increased over the last five years and 173 children currently attend. Approximately 63% of the children are entitled to free school meals and about 35% of the children are identified with special educational needs.

As well as classes year 1 to year 7, there is a learning support class (LSC) attend by 13 children and a nursery unit which provides a full-time session for 26 children. The Principal was appointed to a permanent post in 2009; four of the nine teachers have been appointed during the last four years.

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 PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching staff and the support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of children from year 6.

Of the 173 questionnaires issued to parents, 38 (22%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 15 which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In their written comments, most of the parents highlighted the warm and welcoming ethos of the school, the high level of care and support provided by the staff, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided for the children. Thirteen members of staff responded to the online questionnaires with nine supplying additional comments; the responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction in relation to all aspects of school life. The group of year 6 children voiced a strong sense of belonging and were very positive about all aspects of the life and work of the school, particularly the various clubs on offer to them. An analysis of the questionnaires and comments made by staff and the parents were shared with the Principal and the governors.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in this school is outstanding.

The strengths of the pastoral care provision include the inclusive, caring ethos leading to a very strong sense of community, a very effective designated teacher and the clear focus on helping children to surmount a wide range of barriers to learning. A whole-school approach to promoting and rewarding positive behaviour develops the children's confidence and self-esteem. The school provides many opportunities for the children to talk about their feelings, for example, through participation in circle time or the Roots of Empathy Programme, while some children avail of the Familyworks Counselling Service. The children in the year 6/7 class recently completed a series of excellent videos during which they acted out scenarios relating to issues such as bullying; these videos have been used productively by other classes within the school to stimulate discussion among the children.

The children's learning and social development are enhanced through trips to places of educational interest, visits to the school by individuals and organisations, and the wide-ranging after-school programme. The school ensures that the provision is open to, and accessible by, all of the children. There are many opportunities for the children to participate in the life and work of the school; for example, the School Council provides the children with a forum to express their views while the older children are able to receive training which allows them to act as 'playground buddies'.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and nursery unit have comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect fully the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school, nursery unit and LSC give very good attention to promoting healthy eating through the implementation of an agreed healthy food policy, the efficiently organised breakfast club and the inclusion of health-related topics. The children are provided with regular opportunities to engage in a wide range of physical education and sports.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school's excellent approach to involving parents, carers and others in the education and life of the school places the school at the heart of the community; the Principal, for example, meets with local community groups to share relevant information. The school and nursery unit have well developed procedures in place to keep the parents informed about school events through monthly newsletters and regular opportunities for the parents to meet both formally and informally with teachers to discuss their children's progress. The extra-curricular activities provided through the Extended School funding, support and enrich the educational, physical and social experiences of the children, their parents and the wider community.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics the standards are below the Northern Ireland (NI) average in three out of the past four years. There is however an improving trend. Compared with schools in the same free schools meals (FSM) category, the literacy standards are consistently above

the average, whilst the standards in mathematics have only recently risen over the FSM average. The school's internal performance data indicates that most of the children are attaining in line with their ability or above expectation. The school has taken cognisance of all forms of internal and external data and has produced appropriate actions plans to raise standards.

Most of the teachers have very high expectations of what the children can achieve, and through a consistent whole-school approach to positive behaviour, the teachers have created a learning environment that is based on trust and respect. The teachers listen to the children and take on board what they say. The children are articulate and confident and polite to visitors. Almost all the children are highly motivated and demonstrate very good levels of engagement and enjoyment in their learning. They settle quickly into very effective routines which support progress in their learning. The children demonstrate clear enjoyment of the more practical elements of their learning, and engage enthusiastically with their teachers and their peers in whole class, group and independent work. Most children respond well in class, take pride in their work and show by their interest and attention that they value the contributions made by others.

As they progress through the school, the children become increasingly independent in their use of equipment, materials and information and communications technology (ICT). They demonstrate an ability to rise to the challenges provided for them by the teachers, for example, through the STEM project which resulted in the a group of the older children travelling to England to represent Northern Ireland, and winning two national trophies for their F1 project.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The overall quality of provision in English and literacy is good.

The co-ordinator has recently taken on responsibility for leading the development of literacy across the school and provides very good leadership. Effective use is made of the school's internal performance data to identify priority areas for development in literacy. Recent initiatives have focused effectively on the teaching of punctuation and grammar and on spelling. Information from professional development opportunities is disseminated to assist staff in keeping abreast of current best practice and staff collaborate well together to plan for improvement.

The children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their talking and listening skills. Across the key stages emphasis is appropriately placed on developing oral and communication skills and, as they move through school, most of the children demonstrate good progress. By the end of KS2 the majority of the children can present their ideas and opinions, often prompted by effective questioning during challenging paired and group activities in class.

The children have opportunities to write for a range of purposes which interest them. Their writing skills are developed progressively from simple sentences to lengthier prose and, by the end of KS1, the majority of children can write accurately in their own words. By the end of KS2 the children's writing skills are developed further and applied across a range of curricular areas. The development of writing is well integrated with the other aspects of the curriculum and there are good opportunities, within language rich group work and class activities, to develop writing in meaningful and interesting contexts which the children enjoy. These are often supported by useful writing frames and other resources which help the children to structure and sequence their written work across a range of writing styles.

There is coherent provision for reading and the majority of children are enthusiastic readers who achieve good standards by the end of KS2. Good phonological awareness is developed as the children progress through a structured phonics programme and there are good quality shared and modelled reading experiences. At KS2 the children can talk with knowledge and understanding about a range of authors and the majority read fluently and with expression. Most of the teachers place good emphasis within their classrooms on providing attractive reading materials across a range of genres. Reading is promoted positively in the school and is supported by a number of initiatives including the Reading Partnership, Paired Reading, and the 'Time To Read' programme organised by the 'Business in the Community' group.

Overall the standards in English are good. The majority of the children make good year on year progress and achieve a good standard by the end of year 7.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision in mathematics and numeracy is good.

The highly effective numeracy co-ordinator has been in post for many years and is very committed to the ongoing development of the provision for numeracy and mathematics. She has been manually tracking and monitoring pupil attainment in the school for a considerable period, and has provided very detailed, individual profiles for her colleagues in recent years through effective use and analyses of whole school data. This has led to appropriate action planning and strategic thinking in the school development plan (SDP). Numeracy has been identified appropriately as a whole school priority, and the school's focus on practical and mental mathematics is starting to embed.

There is an inconsistent approach to numeracy and mathematics across the school. In the best practice the mathematics lessons were well connected to other areas of the curriculum, skilful questioning was used to develop the children's mental maths, and a practical approach using real life contexts enthused and engaged the children. The lessons were well paced, with tasks that matched the children's abilities well. The children responded well to these lessons, and demonstrated through very effective oral and written evaluations that they were enjoying their learning. This good practice needs to be applied more consistently across the school.

In the foundation stage (FS) the children have a good understanding of basic number facts. Numeracy is incorporated well into play based learning which develops the children's use of mathematical language. In KS1 a practical approach has helped the children develop a good understanding of the use of money through for example buying and selling everyday objects. The children benefit from well-matched activities and mental mathematics tasks. By the end of KS1 the children's mental agility is good and they have a good grasp of basic shape and space, measures and data handling. In KS2 the children respond well to investigative mathematics, and are enthusiastic about mathematical problems that allow for extended and practical collaborative work. The teachers set the learning in meaningful contexts and make effective use of the outdoor environment to support the children's understanding of mathematical concepts such as measures. The hitherto under-developed application of number impacts however on the high standard of teaching in KS2, and as a result, standards have fluctuated..

By the end of KS2 the children are able to talk enthusiastically about their mathematical experiences; the highest attaining children demonstrated a good understanding of number facts and other key concepts, but were less secure in the application of number. Most of the children make good progress in mathematics in line with their ability. The co-ordinator has appropriately identified, through the analysis of assessment information, the need to raise further the standards attained by the children.

The teachers use ICT well to support the children's mathematical understanding and to promote numeracy across the curriculum; data handling is well developed across all three key stages, and good use is made of computer software.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The school has developed a wide range of important policies and plans to guide its work and to ensure the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum. The teachers now need to tailor their existing planning formats to define more clearly how short, medium and long term planning can be more effective a tool to inform future planning and teaching. Recently, the school has implemented appropriately a whole school approach to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision across the school; this includes reviewing the teachers' planning, scrutinising the quality of work in the children's books, class visits and the analysis of assessment data.

Part of the school building is used by Sure Start to deliver a programme for two year olds; the staff from Sure Start group and the teachers from the nursery unit and FS meet to discuss and plan for the use of the outside shared area and the use of age-appropriate resources. The nursery teacher and the year 1 teacher have been reviewing the transition arrangements to help support the nursery children and have arranged that in the summer term the year 1 teacher teaches in the nursery class one afternoon a week to allow the children to become familiar with their next teacher; visits are also arranged to the year 1 classroom. The Principal and the FS co-ordinator have appropriately identified, and begun to plan for, the need to develop further the curricular links between the nursery unit and the FS classes in order to promote continuity and steady progression in the children learning.

3.2 TEACHING

The teachers make appropriate use of praise and encouragement to motivate the children and create a positive ethos and an orderly learning environment. All of the teachers, including those in the nursery unit and LSC, are supported well by their classroom assistants who contribute significantly to the children's overall progress. The school has developed a very effective working relationship between the class teachers and the SEN teacher, who provides relevant and structured high quality support to individuals and groups that connects well to the class learning.

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Most of the lessons observed were good or better while very good or better teaching was observed in just over half the lessons. In the most effective practice, the teachers built on the children's prior knowledge and understanding, the learning activities were set in real and relevant contexts for the children and the teachers used constructive oral questioning which extended the learning for all of the children. In the less effective practice, the lessons were heavily work-sheet based in a whole-class setting, and there were missed opportunities to extend or develop the children's learning. The school needs to disseminate the aspects of the most effective practice in order to ensure consistently high-quality teaching and learning experiences for all the children.

3.3 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Special educational needs (SEN) is given high priority by the school and the quality of provision overall is good.

There are very productive links between the numeracy, literacy and SEN co-ordinators in order to inform and guide the selection of pupils for additional support. The teachers use the detailed information provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to guide their classroom practice. The teachers have identified appropriately the need to further personalise the children's individual education plans (IEPs). The children participate in setting their own personal targets and benefit from the useful opportunity to complete a cover sheet for their IEPs stating how they feel they have progressed.

Support for literacy and numeracy is delivered through a blend of withdrawal support and in-class support. In the excellent withdrawal sessions, the lessons are well paced and the children benefit greatly from the positive ethos and the high expectations. The in-class support is also of high quality; the teachers plan and collaborate together to ensure good outcomes for the children. In addition, the SENCO and teachers have used internal data strategically to target and support those children not on the SEN register but who may be underachieving. Several children also benefit from support from outside agencies such as the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust's Children's Multi Disciplinary Team.

Thirteen KS2 children attend the LSC. The children are well behaved, participate in class routines positively and respond to staff politely. The children have regular opportunities to join their peers for useful integration activities. At present the lessons are often taught in isolation without being reflected in any long term planning framework. There is a need for a more strategic overall plan for the class guided by a clear rationale and policy which identifies key priorities for whole class activities and clear planning for individual pupils within this.

3.4 ASSESSMENT

The very good use and analyses of a broad range of standardised and classroom data has led to robust action planning in the SDP. This has informed well the whole school on priorities that will raise further the attainment of the children, for example, the evaluative nature of the data analysis has helped the various co-ordinators in providing whole class, group and individual pupil profiles for the teachers. The school's analysis of its KS1 data demonstrates an improving trend in English and mathematics. The class teachers, in the best practice, elicit the views of the children in different forms on the effectiveness of the teaching and on their learning. During the inspection good examples were observed of self and peer evaluation in class. The teachers regularly mark the children's work; however, feedback and the development of areas for learning are inconsistent. There are appropriate procedures and records for keeping the parents informed about their children's progress, for example, written reports, parent-teacher consultations and an open-door policy for informal consultations.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of leadership and management within the school is very good.

The Principal knows the children well and is deeply committed to meeting their educational and pastoral needs. She fosters a strong sense of collegiality and team-work amongst the staff and she inspires confidence with the children, the staff, the parents and the governors. Since her permanent appointment three years ago, the Principal has worked with great commitment to develop a clear and shared strategic vision for the school which has an appropriate focus on raising the standards and achievements of all the children.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Over recent years, there has been a significant amount of curricular development being undertaken by the various co-ordinators; they have audited the provision, identified priorities and drawn up action plans. In addition, the Principal has encouraged all of the staff to take increased responsibility for developing aspects of school life and the curriculum. In this manner, the capacity for self-evaluation within the school is being enhanced.

The SDP complies with the requirements of the School Development Plans regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

4.3 ACCOMODATION

The school, which opened in 1972, was refurbished in 1996. The school building is spacious and well-organised; very good use is made of all the space available for learning. The central courtyard, which is shared by the children from the nursery unit, KS1 and the SureStart programme, has recently been refurbished and new resources added. The standard of the care-taking is high.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care provision which promotes effectively the children's academic, social and personal development;
- the excellent links and partnerships established with parents and others which enhance the children's learning experiences;
- the quality of the teaching observed, most of which was good or better;
- the increased focus on raising standards and early indications of progress; and
- the key role of the Principal and the dedication of the whole staff team in supporting the children and their families.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need:

- for the teachers to revise their short and medium term planning in order to support further the teaching and learning.

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 outstanding pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate) will monitor the school progress on the area for improvement.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

6.1 Key findings of the inspection of the nursery unit:

- the staff listen to the children, foster their personal and social skills and generally promote purposeful and settled play;
- the children enjoy their activities and most are able to play independently and collaboratively for sustained periods of time particularly when the areas of play are matched to their needs and stages of development. They are independent in their personal care, in their choice of resources and in the snack and lunch time routines;
- the quality of the staff interaction needs to promote more consistently the children's language and learning through the play activities. In the best practice, the staff enhance the children's language, thinking and learning as they engage meaningfully for extended periods; at times, however, they are too supervisory and consequently miss opportunities to exploit fully the learning potential of activities and daily routines;
- the weekly planning needs to be developed further to identify more clearly the learning to be promoted through all activities both indoors and outdoors and to guide the day to day work of the staff;
- the observations of the children need to be developed further and this on-going assessment used more effectively to ensure that all children make sufficient progress across all areas of the curriculum; and
- The nursery teacher and the year 1 teacher have been usefully reviewing the transition arrangements to help support the nursery children.

6.2 In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in the nursery unit is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON WEST WINDS PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, NEWTOWNARDS

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	*
Attending part-time	*	*
Under 3 years of age**	*	*
With statement of special educational needs	*	*
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	5	*
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	*	*
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	6	*
With English as an additional language	*	*

* Denotes figure fewer than 5.

** 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.	54%
Average attendance for the previous year.	87.5%

2. Duration of Sessions

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

3. Details of Staff

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

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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