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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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**Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Focused Inspection

**Carnmoney Primary School
Newtownabbey**

Inspected: October 2007

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School:** Carnmoney Primary Newtownabbey
 ii. **School Reference Number:** 301-3301
 iii. **Date of Inspection:** W/B 8.10.07
 iv. **Nature of Inspection:** FI/English/ICT

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	41	50	41	41	48
Enrolments					
Primary	325	349	341	339	342
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	0	0	0	0	0
Special 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):

95.9%

	Primary & Nursery Unit	Nursery Unit	Special
Reception			

- | | | | |
|--|---|--------------|---|
| D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 15.6 | 0 | 0 |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 21.9 | NI PTR: 20.8 | |
| iii. Average Class Size: | 24.4 | | |
| iv. Class Size (Range): | 20 to 30 | | |
| v. Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | | | |
| | i. Clerical support: | 30 | |
| | ii. Official Making A Good Start Support: | 30 | |
| | iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 70 | |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | 1.8% | |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | 7.3% | |
| viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | 0 | |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | 6% | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Carnmoney Primary School is situated on the north side of Newtownabbey. The majority of the children live in close proximity to the school. The enrolment figures have remained steady over the past five years with a slight increase last year. Approximately 6% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified just over 7% of the children as having additional educational needs.

1.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching 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. One hundred and fourteen questionnaires were issued to the parents; almost 58% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and twenty-seven contained additional written comments. The governors and the majority of the parents were very positive and demonstrated a high level of support for the school and the staff. In particular they mentioned how happy their children were, the approachability, commitment and good support of the teaching and ancillary staff, the enthusiasm of the recently-appointed Principal, the good provision in extra-curricular activities and the importance of the school in the community. The few areas for concern raised by parents have been discussed with the Principal. The children stated that they enjoyed their work in school, that they felt safe and secure and that they knew to whom to turn if they needed help.

1.3 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is excellent and is a significant feature of the school. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and children are fully aware of the school's procedures in relation to pastoral care and child protection; there has been a review of the range of effective policies which guide the work of the school. The school has worked successfully towards the introduction and understanding of a useful policy on the promotion of positive behaviour. Among the strengths are:

- the caring and supportive ethos;
- the children's participation in a wide range of extra-curricular provision;
- the valuable contribution made by the teaching and support staff to the children's well-being and their learning experiences;
- the strong support of the parents and the governors; and
- the effective co-operation with other agencies to enhance and support the children's health and education.

1.4 The school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has important strengths. The school has given particular attention to the development and implementation of healthy eating and physical activity programmes, for example, healthy breaks, a breakfast club and links with a local food supplier. The school offers a wide range of opportunities for the children to participate in physical activities throughout and after the school day.

1.5 The inspection focused on the quality of the work in English, the effectiveness of the school's special educational needs provision and the contribution of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting and supporting learning and teaching in English. The inspection also evaluated the school's procedures for pastoral care, including child protection.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 There is a strong sense of pride and team-work in the school with excellent working relationships at all levels. The teaching and support staff know the children well and provide a caring and welcoming atmosphere in which the children feel valued and develop their confidence. The children's behaviour is exemplary; there is evidence that they enjoy their learning, settle well to tasks and are mutually supportive. The teachers provide a stimulating learning environment in which the children's work is acknowledged, displayed and valued. They work alongside the wider community and use its facilities well to enhance and develop the children's learning.

2.2 The school provides a wide range of additional educational experiences for the children, ranging from participation in competitions, through school outings to a well-organised and successful sporting programme. The high rate of participation and retention in the extra-curricular activities demonstrates the well-developed partnership between the committed teachers, the agencies and the parents who provide the support, and the children who enjoy and benefit from the activities.

2.3 The teachers have been reviewing how planning might take better account of the current curriculum and their attendance at recent in-service training (INSET) courses. There is an appropriate focus already on encouraging the children to develop and use a range of language skills and to raise their attainment, in particular, through developing further their writing skills. A significant strength of the school is the willingness of the teachers to work collegially towards improving their planning so that it focuses more clearly on the intended learning outcomes and uses effective assessment to inform future planning. Increasingly the teachers' planning identifies appropriate opportunities to use ICT and they are enthusiastic about incorporating its use to support and stimulate the children's interest in literacy.

2.4 There were major strengths in over half of the lessons observed; the quality of the teaching ranged from consistently good to excellent practice in a third of the lessons. In the best practice, the work was matched well to the range of abilities within the class, there was regular evaluation of the children's learning, and, through a

plenary session, the success of the learning intentions was easily measurable by both the teacher and the children. There were a few examples of the children agreeing the intended learning outcomes with the teacher and setting themselves appropriate targets, which they met and, on occasions, surpassed.

2.5 In a significant number of the lessons, there was a need to increase the expectations which the teachers had of the children. On occasions, there was undue emphasis on the completion of routine, isolated, and often low-level tasks where skills were not transferred, developed or applied directly in the children's work across the curriculum. There was often insufficient challenge provided, particularly for the more able children. The examples of effective practice should be identified, shared and disseminated across year groups and across the whole school in order to promote greater consistency in the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching.

2.6 The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that literacy is given a high priority in the school development planning process. Significant school-based INSET sessions and individual support have been helpful in raising awareness within the staff of the importance of placing spoken and written language as integral to the children's learning across the curriculum. The school has committed substantial resources to install interactive whiteboards. The effective use of interactive whiteboards and of the school's computer suite, the good use of a range of software to promote the children's literacy skills and examples of excellent learning materials are evidence of the considerable commitment by the school to develop and integrate the use of ICT to enhance learning. In addition, the staff have begun to review the policy for learning and teaching in the early years, to ensure that good quality play experiences provide adequate challenge and progression throughout key stage (KS) 1.

2.7 The teachers have created a supportive literacy environment within which reading and the development of language are valued, promoted and enjoyed by both the children and the teachers. In the early years, it supports well the development of the children's language skills and personal capabilities. The teachers use visual timetables and classroom routines to cultivate the children's interest and engagement and, in the best practice, to promote useful personal learning targets.

2.8 In the most effective practice to develop talking and listening, the teachers skilfully used a range of questioning strategies to encourage the children to reflect, organise their ideas and opinions and respond in an extended manner. The children have opportunities to reflect on what they have learned, to ask questions and, in a few cases, to evaluate their own work and the contribution of others.

2.9 The current emphasis on the development of the phonics programme, the effective use of Big Books and the access to word banks is having a positive impact on the development of the children's literacy skills. Through word games, rhymes, poems, stories, class novels and the good use of the interactive white boards, the children have developed a range of appropriate strategies to help them recognise unfamiliar words and to build up a suitable bank of words that they can read and write. The children in all of the classes have opportunities to develop their thinking skills, to express themselves and to communicate with their peers, and with teachers and other adults in the classrooms.

2.10 The teachers use well the good range of texts in the class libraries and research by the children on the Internet to enhance class topics and themes. The newly refurbished and re-stocked school library provides useful support to the learning of the children in KS2, and cultivates a love for books and reading. The increasing use of the library by the younger children has the potential to enrich their learning and to promote further their enjoyment of reading.

2.11 From the earliest years, the children have good opportunities through play to experiment with informal mark-making and writing. Structured activities, including modelled writing sessions, help the children to make connections between sounds and letters and to increase their understanding of letter formation and sentence structure. In KS2 the children build upon their writing skills, write for a broad range of purposes and are capable of sharing their opinions, feelings and personal experiences. There were also good examples of effective research in KS2 with the children having the opportunity to organise and present material through the use of presentation software.

2.12 While there are children in each class who display a good level of maturity and skill as writers, the overall quality of writing varies considerably. The older children generally would benefit from more opportunities to write independently and to develop and use their talking, listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum.

2.13 The standards of English across the school are generally good. In each year group there is a minority of children who need additional support in the development of language and communication. By year 7 most children are articulate; they read with fluency and understanding, and express their views confidently, both orally and in written form.

2.14 The school is aware that while the majority of the children make progress, for a minority, the standards could be better. This is reflected in the emphasis placed by the staff on reviewing the whole-school programme, the benefits being derived for the phonics approaches used particularly in the early years, the use of school performance information and the efforts made to improve the overall attainment of the children.

2.15 The ICT co-ordinators work hard to support their colleagues and to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum. They maintain an interesting school website, which provides the opportunity to celebrate the children's work and achievements to a wider audience. The teachers are beginning to keep records of the children's work using ICT. There is a need to plan strategically for the systematic development of ICT across the school, to extend the good practice currently within the school and to ensure that there is clear progression in the children's experiences and learning. The school participates in the ICT accreditation scheme at KS2 organised by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

2.16 Through a combination of teacher observation and the use of standardised and diagnostic tests the school has identified a small number of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides effective support for these children in withdrawal sessions which take place in a supportive atmosphere and which focus on the children's reading and writing development. The SENCO collaborates with the class

teachers to write education plans which identify, for the most part, general targets and support strategies to promote improvement and to address each child's needs. In line with the review of its assessment procedures, the school recognises the importance of ensuring that the targets are more specific and measurable in order to evaluate each child's progress.

2.17 A small number of children receive further assistance through the outreach and peripatetic support programme provided by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). The SENCO maintains the relevant documentation on the school's provision and has established appropriate links with the parents and with external support agencies.

2.18 The enthusiastic and informed Principal has been in post for 18 months and is supported well by a new management team. Since his appointment he has reviewed many of the policies, and has led the refurbishment of the school building. Due to a changeover in staff, the roles and responsibilities within the school have changed. Those teachers with specific responsibilities and individual class teachers are beginning to use school performance information and data to inform future learning and teaching.

2.19 The Principal, with the effective support of his team and in consultation with the governors, has been encouraging a culture of school improvement. The action plans are well-focused and inform the new school development planning process. It is important that the management team has a good knowledge of the current baseline of the quality of learning and teaching in order to set appropriate and agreed targets with the teachers.

2.20 The school has been reviewing its overall assessment procedures and has received support from the NEELB Curriculum, Advisory and Support Service. The children's work is marked regularly and, in the best practice, with clear indicators towards improvement. There is evidence that the teachers are discussing and developing more effective ways to support the children better, a focus which the inspection would endorse.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the positive and supportive ethos within the school, which is reflected in the high quality of the pastoral care provision and, in particular, the success of the promotion of positive behaviour;
- the commitment and hard work of the staff who are reviewing their planning and practice to promote and sustain overall improvement;
- the examples of consistently good to excellent teaching which challenge the children, set them appropriate and agreed targets and meet effectively the varying needs within the class;

- the informed and effective leadership of the Principal and the management team who are promoting successfully a corporate approach to improvement;
- the wide range of extra-curricular activities with evidence of high participation and retention rates; and
- the good support from the wider community, and in particular of the parents and the governors, to the benefit of the children.

3.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- continue to implement the well-conceived action plans which seek to raise the attainment in literacy further and the overall standards within the school in general; and
- identify and disseminate the effective practice across year groups and across the whole school in order to promote greater consistency in the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching.

3.3 In the areas inspected, the school has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all the learners.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

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