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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Focused Inspection

**Edenderry Primary School and Special Unit
Portadown**

Inspected: March 2008

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BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Edenderry Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 10.03.08**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 501-1189** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 1 Intake	45	41	40	49	49
Enrolments					
Primary	349	333	329	336	337
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Class/Classes	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	21	19	29	28	28

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):

94.8%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 13.80 0 3
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 21.95 NI PTR: 20.8
- iii. Average Class Size: 25.41
- iv. Class Size (Range): 22 to 30
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|-----|
| i. Clerical support: | 36 |
| ii. Official Making A Good Start Support: | 30 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 131 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.6%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 14.75%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 13.9%

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Edenderry Primary School is a controlled school situated in Princess Way approximately two miles west of the centre of Portadown, Co Armagh. The school incorporates two learning support classes (LSC) and a class for the children who are diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). The school enrolment has remained steady over the past three years and stands currently at 361. The majority of the children come from the surrounding area. Almost 14% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

1.2 The school has gone through a period of several changes of management within the past eight years. The impact of this unsettled period has contributed to strained working relationships within the school and was reflected in the school's Self-Evaluation through Attitudinal Questionnaire survey in 2004, the responses to the teacher questionnaire and in discussions with members of the Board of Governors (governors) and teachers. At the time of the inspection four full-time substitute teachers and one part-time substitute teacher were employed at the school to provide cover for teachers absent due to secondment, job share, bereavement, career break and maternity leave.

1.3 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the completion of questionnaires by a sample of the parents, as well as meetings with the governors, and discussions with groups of the children from years 6 and 7. Prior to the inspection, confidential questionnaires were sent to 145 parents; 39% of the parents responded, and 27 took the opportunity to write additional comments.

1.4 In their responses the governors and the parents indicated their strong satisfaction with the work of the school. In particular they highlighted the commitment and hard work of the Principal and the teachers, the high standards achieved by the children, the wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities provided the excellent school productions and the support of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to the life and work of the school. A small number of the parents expressed their concerns about aspects of school management.

1.5 The majority of the teachers who completed the questionnaire expressed their satisfaction with the work of the school. A minority of the teachers identified poor communication as an issue within the school and expressed concerns about aspects of the leadership and management.

1.6 In discussions held with the year 6 children, they talked openly and positively about their experiences in the school, the extra-curricular activities available to them, and the care and support provided by their teachers. They indicated that they know whom to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their work or their safety and well-being.

1.7 The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported the areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions to the Principal and a representative of the governors. The Principal and governors expressed their commitment to addressing all of the concerns.

1.8 The inspection focused on the quality of work in mathematics; the effectiveness of the school's special educational needs (SEN) provision; the contribution of information and communication technology (ICT), in promoting and supporting learning and teaching in mathematics; and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK

2.1 The Principal and the teachers are dedicated and hardworking; they know the children well and relate to them effectively. The school promotes a positive, supportive ethos which fosters the children's confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment of school life. The teachers work hard to create a rich and stimulating learning environment; the children's work and achievements are celebrated through attractive displays around the school and in individual classrooms. These are further enhanced by the authentic items and work displayed within the school museum. The behaviour of the children is very good; they are friendly, confident, polite, well mannered and responsive to the teachers. The support staff, including the classroom assistants and the school secretary, make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school.

2.2 The school gives excellent attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are effective policies and programmes in place, for example the fruit tuck shop, healthy breaks and a topic-based approach to learning about food, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2.3 The Principal and the teachers are committed to developing effective links with the parents to ensure they work together for the benefit of the children. Communication with the parents is well established and maintained through a regular newsletter and information evenings. The parents are welcomed into the school to discuss their children's progress, and increasingly they are being encouraged to take part in educational initiatives to assist them in helping their children. In addition, there is a well established and active PTA. They meet regularly and through a number of well-organised social, educational and fund-raising events they have made a significant contribution in terms of time, energy and finance to the life of the school.

2.4 The school provides an enjoyable programme of extra-curricular activities for the children, which includes football, netball, hockey, rugby, golf and basketball. In addition there is a wide range of clubs which includes an Eco club and a business club.

2.5 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection has important strengths. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant Department of Education circulars and has identified a few areas for improvement which it is currently implementing. Among the strengths are:

- the caring and supportive ethos;
- the courteous, well-behaved and responsive children;
- the quality of the policy documentation which guides the pastoral care work throughout the school;
- the commitment of the pastoral co-ordinator and the staff to the welfare of the children;
- the wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities; and

- the opportunities provided for the children to contribute to the life and work of the school.

2.6 The area for improvement identified is the need to:

- monitor and evaluate further the impact of the pastoral policies on the children, including the procedures and recording methods used for the handling of pastoral concerns.

2.7 The teachers use praise and encouragement well to motivate the children. There is a good balance between rewards and sanctions which contributes well to the positive ethos evident throughout the school. The school council provides good opportunities for the children to become increasingly involved in aspects of decision-making in the day-to-day working of the school.

2.8 There are many strengths within the school's numeracy provision. The Principal has been fulfilling the role of numeracy co-ordinator since September 2006. The school's programme for mathematics is suitably broad and provides the children with a wide range of experiences over the seven years. Appropriate long term planning is provided through a scheme of work for each year group which is cross-referenced with the line of development for numeracy. The teachers' medium term planning is provided through eight-weekly units covering number, shape and space, measures, handling data and mental mathematics. The teachers now need to evaluate collaboratively the children's learning over the duration of these planning periods and to use the outcomes of this evaluation to inform their future planning. The mathematics co-ordinator's role in monitoring and evaluating planning needs to be developed further.

2.9 The quality of teaching in the majority of the lessons observed in both key stages was good or better with a minority being outstanding. In addition there was evidence of mathematics being incorporated appropriately across the curriculum, particularly within personal development and connected learning lessons, and the effective use of ICT to enhance and support learning and teaching in mathematics. In the best practice, in both key stages, the children were well motivated, thinking mathematically and actively engaged in the learning process. In addition, the teachers reviewed the previous learning, explained clearly the learning intentions, incorporated high levels of formative assessment and used skilful questioning to promote the articulation of the children's mathematical thinking. During the plenary sessions the teachers made efficient use of the time to reinforce and assess the children's progress. In the less effective practice there was closed questioning requiring one word answers, limited use of practical resources and a lack of appropriate differentiation.

2.10 By the end of key stage (KS) 2 the children achieve good standards in mathematics and they can work flexibly with numbers. They have a good mathematical understanding of place value, calculating, estimating and measuring, presenting and interpreting properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Standards of presentation throughout the school are very good.

2.11 The numeracy coordinator monitors whole school performance, benchmarks this performance appropriately against similar schools and sets targets for numeracy that take cognisance of the children's previous levels of attainment. Individual children's progress is monitored and tracked using standardised tests scores. These outcomes are also used to

identify the children who are in need of additional learning support, and to stream the children into three groups for the teaching and learning of numeracy. There is a whole school numeracy action plan; however there is a need to identify specific targets and measurable success criteria, and implement more effective monitoring and evaluation of progress towards meeting these targets.

2.12 The work in the early years builds on that provided in the pre-school centres. The school has established good pastoral and curricular links with the centres. Within each year group the teachers work well together to develop the planning and implementation of the children's play based learning experiences. The children demonstrated very positive attitudes to learning; they displayed a clear sense of enjoyment and motivation as they participated fully in activities. The daily routines promote effectively the children's social skills, independence and approach to healthy eating. In the best practice the very well organised and attractive learning classroom environments supported the children's own self-management and autonomy in learning. The teachers are beginning to develop additional systematic records of the children's responses to their learning experiences and have appropriately identified the need to link these observations more fully to the planning. There is a need for clear leadership of and guidance in the provision for the work in the early years to build on the existing good work and to disseminate more widely the very many examples of effective practice observed.

2.13 Almost 27% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school's planning for SEN highlights appropriately the importance of early identification of those children experiencing difficulties and is linked closely to the pastoral care policy. The children's needs are met through additional support teaching in withdrawal sessions involving small groups. During these lessons, the learning support teacher is appropriately prepared, highly supportive of the children and uses a good range of teaching strategies to enhance the children's literacy and numeracy skills. There is evidence that the children are making progress. The learning support teacher liaises effectively with the class teachers in the writing of education plans which identify general targets and support strategies for each child. The individual education plans are reviewed on a regular basis and progress is reported to the parents. In the main, the class teachers have responsibility for meeting the needs of all the children within their own classes; classroom assistants also provide valuable support. In developing further the provision, the planned class work needs to be more appropriately differentiated to take account of the individual needs and abilities within each class. Peripatetic support from an Outreach teacher of the Southern Education and Library Board is also available for a small number of the children. Good progress has been made in addressing the requirements of the special educational needs disability order within the school.

2.14 There are 22 children in the two LSCs and six children from KS1 in a class for children who have ASD. The classes are located in the various appropriate KS areas within the school. At the time of the inspection, the teacher of the junior LSC class, who is also the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, was on leave. In the majority of the lessons observed, the teachers were confident in deploying a number of teaching strategies to meet the wide range of learning needs of the children. The teachers have worked hard at ensuring there are effective and appropriate integration activities for the children with their peers in the

mainstream primary school classes. In the best practice, the children were enthusiastic about their work, engaged well in a range of practical activities and the targets set for the children were realistic and achievable. In addition the quality of the teachers' assessment, recording and planning was thorough and used effectively to inform teaching and record the progress made by the children.

2.15 The teachers mark the children's work regularly, and there are good examples of marking for improvement and positive comments which provide praise and encouragement to the children. Some of the marking, however, lacks sufficient detail to indicate to the children how their work might improve. The school's marking policy has a strong focus on marking for improvement and needs to be implemented more consistently and monitored for its impact on the children's learning.

2.16 There are effective procedures and records for keeping the parents informed about their child's progress, which include written reports and formal parent-teacher consultations twice a year. In addition, the parents are encouraged to meet with the teachers, both on a formal and informal basis, to discuss their child's educational and pastoral needs.

2.17 The Principal has been in post for four years. He is hard-working and fully committed to the children's education and welfare. His responsibilities are wide ranging and include both the overall management of the learning support unit and the primary school. He has worked with the teachers and has established good routines and communication systems for the organisation and administration of the day-to-day running of the school. It will be important that the Principal develops his strategic leadership and curricular management capabilities in order to guide more effectively the work of the school. In addition, the teachers need to support a clear set of achievable priorities and procedures within an agreed School Development Plan for both the short-term and long-term development of aspects of the life and work of the school. The teachers, and management at all levels would benefit from well-focused support and training on establishing effective team-working arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school.

2.18 The physical environment of the school is well maintained and conducive to learning. The standard of cleaning and caretaking is good. The school has carried out an accommodation audit which has identified a number of important areas which need to be addressed. These are included in the Appendix.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the high standards in mathematics achieved by most the children;
- the caring and supportive atmosphere throughout the school;
- the positive attitudes of the children and the high level of engagement in their learning;
- the hard-working and committed teachers;

- the quality of teaching which in the majority of the lessons observed was good or better with a minority being outstanding; and
- the commitment of the Principal to the life and work of the school.

3.2 The area for development is the need:

- to improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels focusing specifically on developing a greater sense of common purpose and collegiality among all the staff.

In the areas inspected, the school has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few important areas for improvement 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.

ACCOMMODATION AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The school needs to carry out a comprehensive risk assessment.
- The entrance/exit doors in the school need a secure locking system.
- There are no disabled toilet facilities.
- There are insufficient toilet facilities available for female members of staff.
- The raised paving stones at the entrance to the infant school are a hazard.
- The car parking arrangements are a hazard.
- The infant toilets need to be refurbished.
- A safe system needs to be in place for the children arriving early to school.
- The concrete steps of the school's internal staircase are a safety hazard.
- A safe system needs to be in place to prevent the children from accessing the public pathway at the rear of the school.

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