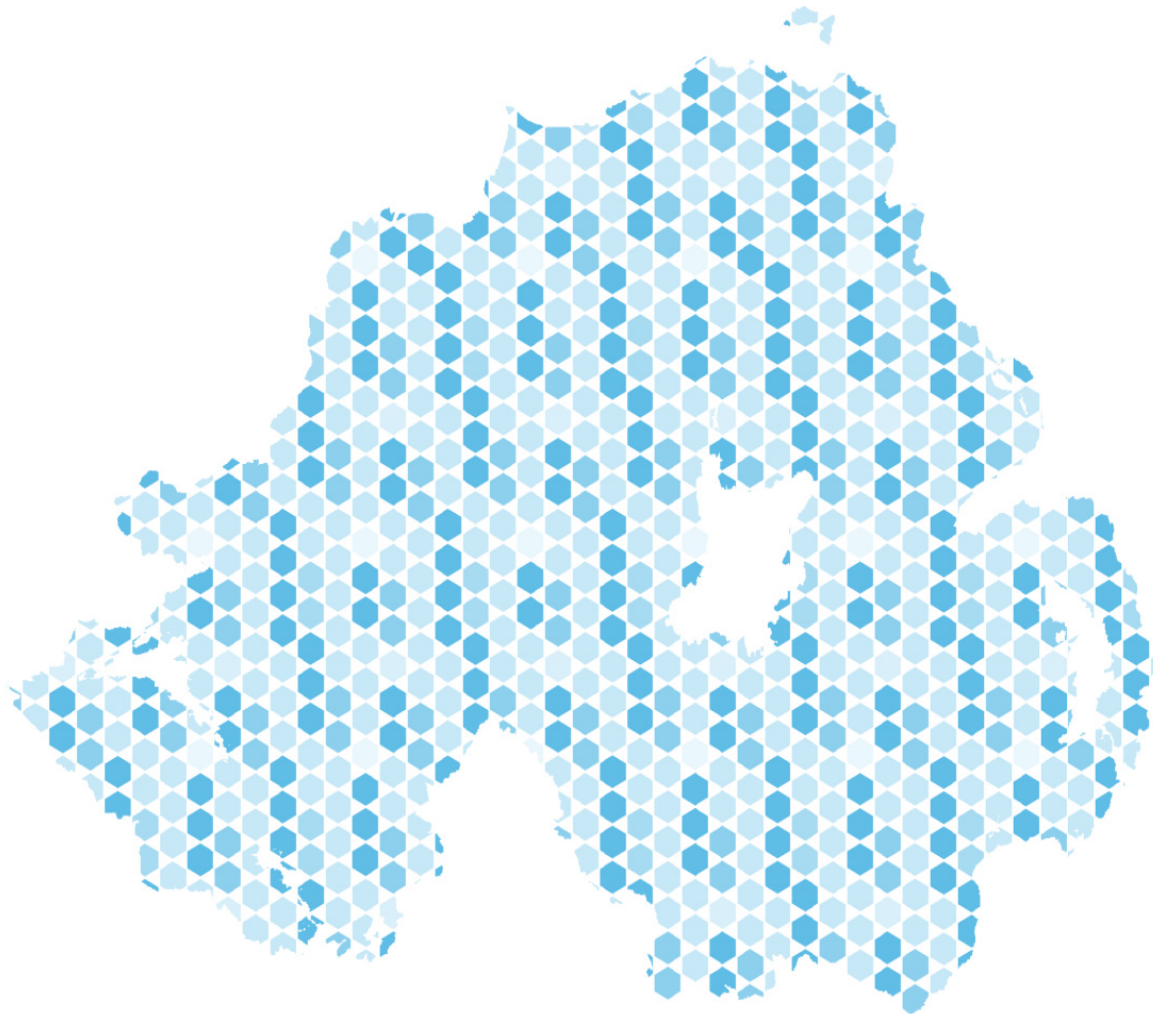


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,  
Brookeborough

Report of an Inspection  
in January 2011

*eti*

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

## CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>		<b>Page</b>
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	2
3.	THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	5
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
5.	CONCLUSION	6

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT

St Mary's Primary School serves the Aghavea and Aughintaine parishes and is situated in the village of Brookeborough, 12 miles from Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh. Almost all of the children come from the village and surrounding rural area. The enrolment has steadily declined and is currently 62. At the time of the inspection, 24% of the children were entitled to free school meals (FSM). Forty-four per cent of the total children enrolled in the school are on the special needs register.

### 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 teaching and 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 teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Meetings were held with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors), and the children from year 6.

Of the 35 questionnaires issued to the parents; approximately 40% were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which five contained additional written comments. An analysis of the questionnaires and the comments made by the parents and the staff were shared with the Principal and the governors. Most of the responses indicated satisfaction with the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the caring and hard-working staff. A small number of parents raised some concerns about the need to improve communication between the school and the home and in particular to provide helpful information about the children's progress in learning. The concerns raised are addressed in the body of the report.

Five teachers and seven support staff completed the online questionnaire and all were wholly positive about working in the school. Four teaching and six support staff added written comments about the supportive and approachable Principal, the staff team-working ethos and commitment to implement a broad and balanced curriculum.

In discussions held with the year 6 children they talked enthusiastically about all aspects of school life. In particular they valued the help and support of the teachers and support staff and the opportunities available for extra-curricular activities. They indicated strongly that they feel happy and safe in school and know what to do if they have any worries or concerns.

The governors are committed to the development of the school and praised the staff for the wide range of learning experiences provided for the children.

#### 1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good; there is an inclusive and supportive ethos that permeates the school. All the staff are committed to the care and welfare of the children. There is a mutual respect between adults and children which is reflected in the excellent behaviour observed in all classes during the inspection. The children's work and achievements are recognised through a whole-school reward system. The children have opportunities to celebrate their achievements in singing and music through participation in whole school assemblies, feisanna and through cross-community projects. The school has appropriately identified the need to develop a school council in order to involve the children more in consultation about school life.

#### 1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

#### 1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example, through the provision of the popular fruit tuck shop, the promotion of healthy lunches, the involvement of the children in the school's vegetable gardens and the strong focus on sport which encourages the children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

#### 1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The parents receive information about the children's learning through an annual written report, newsletters, formal parent-teacher consultations and some curricular meetings; however, there is a need to develop further the strategies to communicate with the parents about how well the children are developing appropriate skills and experiences and progressing in their learning. There are many examples within the school of very good collaborative work in shared education in Brookeborough village and cross-border work in Co Sligo. There are effective links with the local playgroup, the local football club and a past pupils and friends group.

## 2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

### 2.1 LEARNING

The children show a positive attitude to school and are motivated to learn. They co-operate readily with one another in group and paired work and respond well to the expectations of the teaching staff. For a significant number of the children, the staff expectations need to be raised in order to ensure that all the children reach their full potential.

An analysis of the key stage\* (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English the school's performance at level 4 is variable falling significantly below the Northern Ireland (NI) average in two years and rising significantly above in one year. In mathematics, the school's performance at level 4 is also variable and in two years falls below the NI average. Compared with schools in the same FSM category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are generally in line with the average in similar schools.

An analysis of the information provided at the time of the inspection indicates that most of the children registered with special needs have made appropriate progress commensurate with their ability. During the inspection all the children identified with special needs were fully engaged in all lessons and well-supported by the classroom assistants.

## 2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of provision for English and literacy is good. There are effective early identification, referral and a range of remediation strategies for the children experiencing learning difficulties in English and Literacy. There is a need to ensure a more consistent approach to monitoring the children's progress through the targets set in the individual education plans (IEPs) and a better focus on the outcomes for the children.

The children display good talking and listening skills. In foundation stage (FS) play-based learning promotes the children's oral skills. Most of the children communicate very effectively during group work. As the children progress through the school, by year 7 they are able to listen well and contribute with increasing confidence to class discussions. They work well collaboratively in pairs and in groups. The children have very good opportunities to take part in drama and have recently participated in the Wizard of Oz production facilitated by the shared education programme.

The school has provided informative workshops on Language and Communication, facilitated by the Western Education and Library Board, (WELB) which have helped to involve parents in developing their children's spoken language.

Most of the children read with fluency, demonstrate very good word decoding skills and have a good understanding of the text read. The children have very good opportunities to enjoy books during play-based learning and formal story time. They are well-supported by the adults who interact effectively with the children to discuss the content of the books. The children in FS and KS1 achieve very good standards in reading. In KS2 the children are able to discuss enthusiastically their text preferences, favourite authors and characters. There is a need, to develop a more rigorous and systematic approach to the teaching of reading in KS2 in order to ensure that all children are using appropriately challenging material to develop further their reading and comprehension skills.

The literacy co-ordinator has appropriately identified the need to improve standards in writing; for example, to provide more opportunities for the children in KS2 to write in a variety of genres, and to improve the standard of handwriting and the presentation of the children's work. In FS and KS1 the children develop increasing fluency in their writing. They write in a wide variety of genres and for a variety of audiences. They are able to plan their writing

---

\* The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

using well established methods. Most children write with an appropriate degree of accuracy and to a good standard. In the best practice, in KS2, the children have good opportunities to develop their creative writing through individual and class poems. The success in writing competitions organised by the Riverbrooke Cross-Community Project stimulates the children to write using meaningful contexts.

The school has in place an overview of progression in literacy which effectively informs the teachers' short-term and medium planning. There is a need to update and monitor the implementation of the school's literacy policy, to ensure continuity of approach, and to revise the literacy action plan in line with the school policy.

### 2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision for mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory.

There is a need to raise the staff expectation for the children's attainment in mathematics by the end of KS2 and in particular for the majority of the children registered with special needs.

The numeracy co-ordinator has appropriately identified the need to develop and review the numeracy provision and to analyse data in order to set informed targets to raise the standards in numeracy. The co-ordinator needs to develop more systematic processes for action-planning for improvement and ensure that the focus is on the outcomes for the children's learning.

The teachers have produced useful medium and short-term numeracy planning and aim to ensure continuity and progression in the children's learning. There is a need for a more collaborative whole-school approach to planning for mathematics in order to ensure progression, differentiation and continuity particularly in composite classes.

All the teachers have worked hard to develop the role of mental mathematics and there are opportunities at the start of all numeracy lessons for the children to develop their mental mathematics skills. In almost all of the lessons observed these activities were practical and included the effective use of the interactive whiteboard to extend mathematical thinking.

In the FS and KS1 the children show a good understanding of data-handling, shape, measures and the number system and apply their learning through a range of appropriate sorting, ordering, counting and shopping activities. They have very good opportunities to develop mathematical language and ideas through play-based learning activities. The children benefit from the frequent and appropriate use of practical materials which consolidate very effectively their mathematical learning.

In KS2 the teachers use the interactive whiteboard, games and practical resources to introduce and motivate the children to develop a range of mathematical skills and concepts. The children's flexibility with number operations and mental calculations is variable and there is a need to ensure that the children by the end of KS2 consolidate their understanding of key mathematical concepts; and have appropriate opportunities to apply their learning using mathematical investigations.

In the best practice, the teachers make effective use of ICT, including games and the interactive whiteboards to support learning and teaching in mathematics. The ICT co-ordinator appropriately identifies this as an area for further development.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

#### **3.1 PLANNING**

The teaching staff diligently prepare long-, medium- and short-term planners to guide learning and use topic webs to support connected learning across the curricular areas of the revised curriculum. The teachers evaluate their planning effectively in order to inform future planning. There is a need to incorporate into the planning appropriate strategies to challenge and extend the learning of the more able pupils and those children identified by the school as underachieving.

#### **3.2 TEACHING**

The teaching staff are hard-working and committed to the development of the school. The quality of the teaching observed in the lessons ranged from good to outstanding. There is a need to continue to build on the strength of the teaching in order to implement learning strategies that suit the wide range of individual children.

#### **3.3 ASSESSMENT**

The assessment co-ordinator has developed a range of policies and procedures to guide the assessment of and for learning. The marking of the children's work is generally regular; however, the quality of the marking often lacks rigour in encouraging the children to improve their work. The marking policy needs to be monitored to ensure that all the staff implement the agreed procedures and that all the children's work is appropriately marked, particularly the children with learning difficulties.

At a whole-school level the staff are beginning to use standardised tests to record and track individual and class progress in literacy and numeracy.

#### **3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The quality of the special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has identified the need to review the SEN provision, particularly the tracking of the children's progress through their IEPs and the criteria for those children who progress through and within the Code of Practice.

The school has identified 44% who require additional support with aspects of their learning. A small number of the children are identified with physical and behavioural needs. There is a culture of inclusion and the children readily participate in lessons. Almost all of the literacy and numeracy support is provided through differentiated class teaching which is well-supported by the classroom assistants.

The FS teacher is deployed to support children with specific literacy difficulties during specified weeks each term. The time to provide this support is occasionally restricted because the teacher is engaged in supervision of a small number of children who remain in school after the FS day has ended. There is a need to make more efficient use of the teacher's time and expertise to support teaching and learning beyond FS and to develop further her role in leadership and management at whole-school level.

The school receives beneficial multi-disciplinary support for those children requiring specialised help through, for example, the services of the WEST multi-disciplinary support team of the WELB, the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service Outreach Support Team and the Educational Psychology Service.

## **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1 LEADERSHIP**

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

The teaching Principal is in post for six years and currently has lead responsibility for most of the key areas of pastoral and curricular leadership and is also the SENCO. He has effectively overseen the implementation of many of the principles of the revised curriculum and maintains very good links with local and cross-border schools in community programmes.

There is a need to review all staff roles and responsibilities for pastoral and curricular leadership and management to meet the changing needs and future sustainability of the school.

All of the teaching staff work hard to effectively provide a stimulating range of learning experiences through a broad curriculum. The staff has recently begun to prioritise the literacy and numeracy provision for development in order to raise the children's standards and attainments.

### **4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT**

There is a collegial approach to identifying the priorities for improvement in the School Development Plan (SDP). The Principal and staff need to develop more rigorous self-evaluation processes and make more effective use of data to action plan for whole-school improvement.

### **4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The governors are committed to the future sustainability of the school. The financial need of the school to meet the identified priorities in the SDP is an ongoing priority. There is a need to develop a more systematic approach to the review and development of policies and procedures that underpin the management of the school.

### **4.4 ACCOMMODATION**

The accommodation and grounds are well-maintained. The standard of the caretaking is excellent.

The outdoor areas are well-developed and effectively used for learning and sport. There are limitations in that the Principal does not have his own office space.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the exemplary behaviour of the children and their motivation to learn;
- the very good collaboration with local and cross-border schools in shared education programmes;
- the quality of the teaching observed which ranged from good to outstanding;

- the literacy and numeracy standards and provision for most of the children in FS and KS1;
- the very good support and care provided by the classroom assistants; and
- the commitment of the Principal and the teaching staff to the development of the school.

5.2 The areas for improvement include the need:

- to develop a collaborative approach to whole-school self-evaluation and action-planning for improvement;
- to raise the standards and improve the provision for literacy and numeracy, particularly for those children with special needs; and
- to develop further the pastoral and curricular leadership and management including the review of staff roles and responsibilities to meet the changing needs of the school.

5.3 In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, 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. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2011

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)

