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*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**

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Short Inspection**

**Ballylifford Primary School**  
**Cookstown**

**Inspected: September 2009**



**BALLYLIFFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL, COOKSTOWN, CO TYRONE, BT80 0AY  
(503-2208)**

**SCHOOL CONTEXT**

Ballylifford Primary School is situated in the rural townland of Ballylifford, on the north-western shore of Lough Neagh, Co Tyrone. Almost all of the children come from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has remained steady over recent years and currently stands at 60 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 10% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 20% of the children require additional support with aspects of their learning.

**FOCUS**

The short inspection focused on achievements and standards, the quality of provision for learning and leadership and management.

**THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS AND CHILDREN**

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 39 questionnaires issued to the parents; nine (23%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE), including four which contained an additional written comment. The parental questionnaires and written comments indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of school life; particular reference was made to the high quality of education which the children of all abilities receive, the dedicated teachers and support staff and the caring and supportive ethos. The teachers and support staff responses were wholly positive towards the leadership of the school and the developmental work occurring within the school. A group of parents and governors met with the inspection team on the first day of the inspection; they endorsed fully the support for the school as indicated in the responses to the questionnaires.

The inspectors also met with a group of children from year 6; the latter talked enthusiastically about their experiences at school and the support and encouragement they receive from the staff. The children are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety and well-being.

**PASTORAL CARE**

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding; the Principal and the staff are committed to the children in their care. The teachers have high expectations of the children, encouraging them to be well-behaved, mannerly and to take pride in their work. The children are friendly and courteous; their behaviour is exemplary.

**CHILD PROTECTION**

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued in the relevant DE circulars. The area which needs to be addressed is the updating of the child protection training for the governors.

## HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the provision of healthy breaks and a wide range of extra-curricular activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## CONCLUSION

The strengths of the school include:

- the high quality of the pastoral care provision which fosters successfully the children's positive attitude to learning;
- the effective and inclusive special educational needs support;
- the quality of the teaching observed, which was consistently good and, in a majority of lessons, very good;
- <sup>1</sup>the good standards achieved by the children in literacy and the very good standards achieved in mathematics;
- the very good quality and use made of the School Development Plan including the school's process of self evaluation and the effective use of data to promote school improvement; and
- the effective leadership and management of the Principal, ably supported by the teachers and support staff.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- The need for the employing authority, governors and the school leadership to review the security of the access arrangements to the school buildings and the height of the school's perimeter fence.
- The location of the main school entrance gate beside a busy main road contributes to potentially dangerous traffic conditions outside the school.

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, the Inspectorate relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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