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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Short Inspection

**Loreto Convent Primary School
Omagh**

Inspected: April 2008

**LORETO CONVENT PRIMARY SCHOOL, OMAGH, CO TYRONE, BT78 5HZ
(203-2537)**

Loreto Convent Primary School is situated in the centre of Omagh, County Tyrone. Almost all of the children come from the immediate area. The current enrolment is 224 including a reception class of 23 boys and girls, of which 12 are funded by Department of Education (DE). The school has indentified approximately 29% of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. Approximately 24% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

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 a group of the children from year 6. Almost all the parents responded to the questionnaire; almost all of the responses and the additional written comments were very positive. All of the teaching staff responded to the on-line questionnaire and the responses and written comments were wholly positive. In their comments, the parents highlighted the welcoming and supportive ethos, the approachable and dedicated Principal and staff, the range of extra-curricular activities, the safe and secure environment and the support for the school in the community. All of the comments made through the questionnaires and the written comments have been discussed with the Principal and the governors.

The reception class is characterised by a caring and supportive atmosphere. The classroom is attractively presented and the children's achievements are regularly celebrated. The children are well settled and their behaviour is excellent. The organisation of the day provides a good balance between free play and activities led by the staff. Overall, the curriculum provides good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school programme. As the staff continues to develop aspects of the provision more attention needs to be given to developing the planning, assessment and provision for special educational needs in order to meet more effectively the differing needs of all of the children.

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is excellent. 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 and have had an opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school. Among the strengths are; the excellent behaviour of the children, the high priority given to the health and well-being of the staff and the children, the commitment to diversity and inclusion and the very effective process of consultation with the parents and the children.

The school gives excellent attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity, and has effective policies and programmes in place which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The strengths of the school include:

- the very caring and supportive ethos, characterised by the excellent working relationships at all levels, which promotes the children's confidence, self-esteem and well-being;

- the hard-working and dedicated staff and the quality of the teaching observed which was consistently good and, at times, excellent;
- the arrangements and provision for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning;
- the very effective communication with the parents, and the valuable links established with children and schools in the wider community and in other countries;
- the well-embedded culture of self-evaluation and the good quality of the self-evaluation report provided for the inspection; and
- the dedication and vision of the Principal and her commitment to continuous whole school improvement.

In the areas inspected, the quality of the education provided in this school is very good. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents and the local community can have confidence in the school's capacity of sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:-

- More than 90% - almost/nearly all
- 75%-90% - most
- 50%-74% - a majority
- 30%-49% - a significant minority
- 10%-29% - a minority
- Less than 10% - very few/a small number.

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