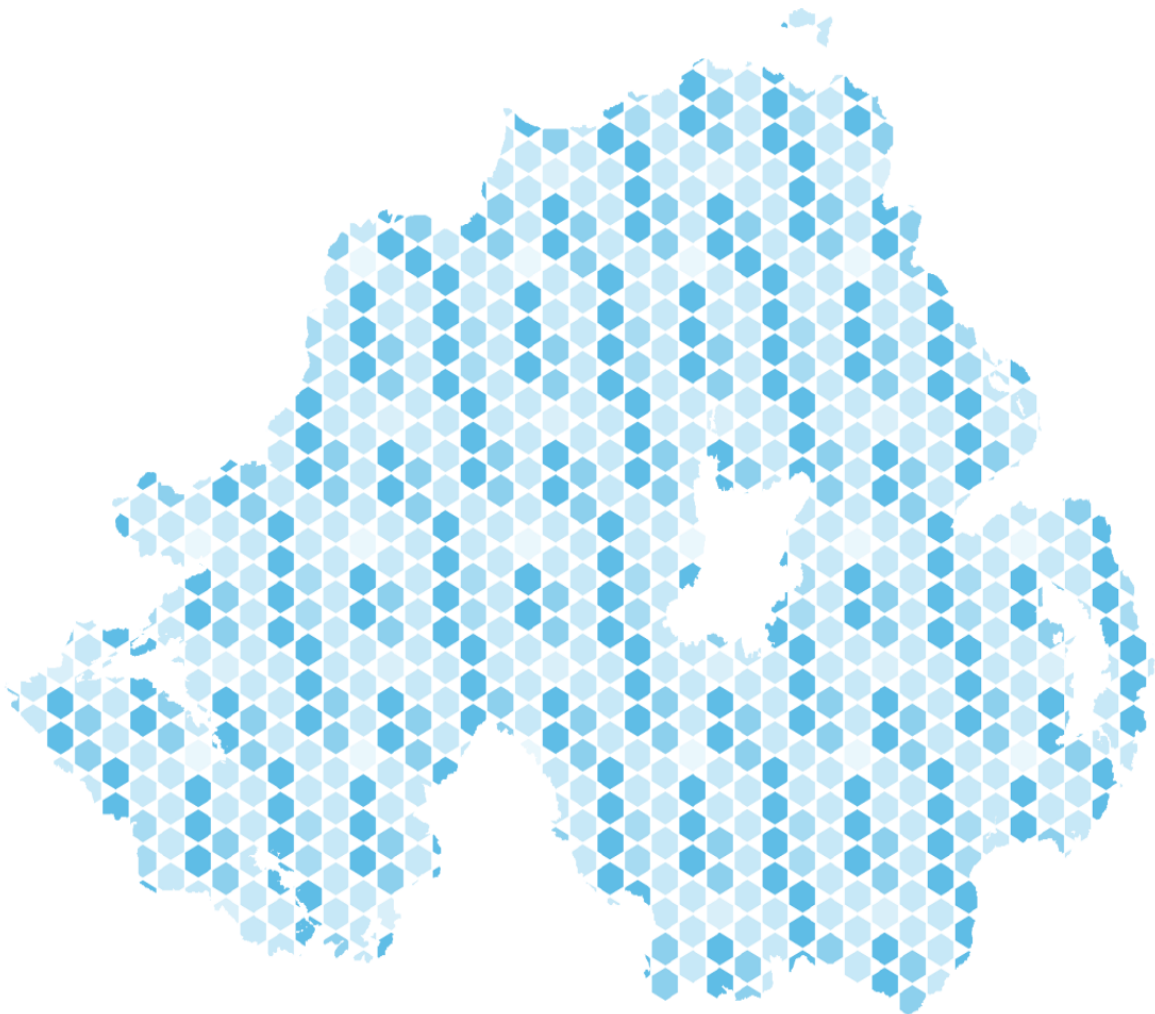


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Brigid's Primary School,
Downpatrick

Report of an Inspection
in September 2012

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

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Brigid's Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Downpatrick. All of the children attending the school come from the local community within a radius of approximately ten miles. The enrolment has increased steadily in recent years and currently stands at 239. At the time of the inspection, 27.5% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 22% children who require additional support with aspects of their learning.

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 including the school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

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

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Achievements and Standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards is very good.

- In English and mathematics, the children make very good progress as they move through the school and attain standards in line with, or better than, their assessed ability.
- The school's data indicates that the children's achievements in literacy and numeracy over the past four years in Key Stage (KS) 2 English and mathematics were above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and in three out of the past four years they were consistently above the average for similar schools in the same free school meals band.
- The children identified with special educational needs make very good progress in line with their ability. The school is able to demonstrate clearly the progress made by each child.
- All the children in KS1 attained level 2 and in KS2 all the children attained level 4 in the information and communication technology (ICT) accreditation of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment .

Provision for Learning

The provision for learning is good.

- The children's behaviour is exemplary; they are welcoming and helpful to visitors and newcomers to the school. The children are keen to achieve well and they respond enthusiastically to the opportunities to participate in the life and work of the school, through the school council and the wide range of enrichment activities.
- The quality of the teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding. In 60% of the lessons observed, the teaching was very good or better.
- The teachers have made good progress in planning a broad and balanced curriculum to match the needs, interests and abilities of the children. The children would benefit from greater opportunities to evaluate their own learning, set personal targets, develop talking and listening skills further, and from greater independence in their use of ICT across the curriculum.
- The provision for special educational needs is outstanding. The children in need of additional help with their learning are identified early through a wide range of assessments and taught in regular and well planned withdrawal lessons for literacy. The children are supported very well in their learning through highly effective in-class differentiation. The school is able to demonstrate, through their internal data, that the children attending the Reading Partnership programme make very good progress with their reading. The classroom assistants contribute very effectively to the children's education.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. The school has a caring, supportive and community ethos. There are positive working relationships at all levels throughout the school and the school promotes effective links with the parents and a wide range of organisations to support the children's academic, personal and social development.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The Principal has worked effectively to build a professional team ethos amongst the staff and to develop the very good links with the parents and the community. He is highly effective in leading and motivating the staff in raising the standards attained by all the children. Since taking up post he has paced the necessary changes to the work of the school appropriately and has ensured the development of a collegial and cohesive staff team.
- The school development plan is compliant with the Department of Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (NI 2005). The co-ordinators use the wide range of data available and evaluations by the teachers to develop appropriate, well-paced action plans to bring about improvement in the learning of the children.

CONCLUSION

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 children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: St Brigid's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: 26/09/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 403-3040** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	27	37	36	32	43
Enrolments					
Primary	179	199	216	220	239
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium 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): 95.2%
 Average age of those children on the SEN register 94%

Primary & Reception Nursery Unit Special Unit Irish Medium Unit

- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 11 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 21.8 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 26.5
- iv. Class Size (Range): 20 to 32
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
 i. Clerical support: 30 hours
 ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: 45 hours
 iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 70
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 3.3%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 22%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 27.5%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2011/12 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics: **English** 87.5% **Mathematics** 91.67%

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 a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 110 questionnaires issued to the parents of the children in the primary school, 57 (51.8%) were returned to Inspection Services branch, including 38 which contained additional written comments. All of the parental questionnaires expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents valued the warm, friendly ethos of the school, the commitment of the principal and staff to the holistic development of the children and the wide variety of school activities available to the children.

Ten of the teachers and three members of the learning support staff responded very positively to the staff questionnaires, valuing the strong leadership and collegiality of the school.

The inspectors met with a group of the year 6 children; they talked happily about their learning experiences at school and the wide range of activities available to them. The children reported that they feel secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety.

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