

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Straid Primary School,  
Ballyclare

Report of an Inspection  
in October 2011



Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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

Straid Primary School is situated in the village of Straid in County Antrim. All of the children attending the school come from the village and within a five mile radius of the school. The enrolment has remained steady in recent years and currently stands at 88. At the time of the inspection, approximately 10% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 18% 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. 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**.

- Overall, the children's achievements are in line with their abilities and they mostly attain very good standards in English and mathematics. There is good evidence of progression in their learning year on year including their learning in and through **information and communication technology (ICT)**. The children's thinking skills and personal capabilities are developing well with them able to give, thoughtful, mature and well-considered responses.
- The children identified with **special educational needs** make good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable. The school, through its analysis of its own assessment data, is beginning to demonstrate clearly the good progress made by most of the children.

### Provision for Learning

The provision for learning is **very good**.

- The **children's** behaviour is exemplary, they are well-motivated, demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning and work well both individually and collaboratively on group activities. In the best group work observed, the children were assigned and undertook specific roles and responsibilities maturely and very ably.

- The teachers are very hard-working and committed to the education and care of the children and are very ably supported by the classroom assistants. The quality of the **teaching** observed ranged from good to outstanding, most of the teaching was very good or outstanding. The teaching exemplifies very well the learning and teaching approaches of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- The teachers make good use of **ICT** to support the children in their learning across all areas of the curriculum. During the inspection, there were very good examples observed of the interactive white boards being used effectively to engage the children, record and report on their responses and to consolidate their learning.
- The provision for **special educational needs (SEN)** is very good. Effective arrangements are in place to identify the children early who require additional support across all classes. Realistic targets are set for these children and a variety of good programmes of support are in place to meet their needs. The provision is complemented by helpful voluntary support.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** is outstanding. This is evident through the excellent working relationships at all levels, the whole school celebration of the children's learning and their achievements, the developments to enrich the quality of the children's learning experiences outdoors, and the strong family and community ethos developed in the school. The children are highly respectful and confident and there is a growing commitment to enabling the children to have a say in matters that affect them. The support staff make an excellent contribution to the life and work of the school. There are very effective parental and community links to support the children's well being, cultural awareness and learning.
- The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity** through, for example, the emphasis placed on promoting healthy breaks and lunches and the effective use of opportunities integrated across the curriculum which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

### **Leadership and Management**

**The quality of leadership and management is very good.**

- The Principal has been in post for 12 years, and gives very high priority to the current and future development and sustainability of the school. She has been successful in establishing a wide range of effective links with the local community and further afield through, for example, the Comenius programme. She holds a very high regard for the children's well-being and education and the welfare of the staff.

- There are appropriate action plans to support the school development plan (SDP) and performance data is being used effectively to identify priorities for development. There is a developing culture of **self-evaluation** across the school to bring about improvement. There are many examples of where the school has self-evaluated aspects of the provision and put in place developments which have led to improvement. Through this process the school has identified appropriate priorities for further development.
- The leadership and management of literacy, numeracy, ICT and SEN is very effective. The school has appropriately identified the need to develop the role of co-ordinators further in supporting curricular changes and enhancing professional development.

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.

## **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.

## BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Straid Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 03/10/11**  
 ii. **School Reference Number: 301-0570** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	8	15	11	11	7
<b>Enrolments</b>					
Primary	91	97	102	91	88
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): 95.6% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 93.6%
- |   | Primary & Reception      | Nursery Unit                 | Special Unit        | Irish Medium Unit |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)   | 5.2                      | 0                            | 0                   | 0                 |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):  | 16.92                    | NI PTR: 20.2                 |                     |                   |
| iii. Average Class Size:  | 17.6                     |                              |                     |                   |
| iv. Class Size (Range):   | 9 to 26                  |                              |                     |                   |
| v. Ancillary Support:   |                          |                              |                     |                   |
| Number of Hours <b>Per Week</b> :   |                          |                              |                     |                   |
| i. Clerical support:  |                          |                              |                     | 20                |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:   |                          |                              |                     | 20                |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support:   |                          |                              |                     | 10                |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs:  |                          |                              |                     | 0%                |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register:  |                          |                              |                     | 18.1%             |
| viii. Number of children who are <b>not</b> of statutory school age:  |                          |                              |                     | 0                 |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals:   |                          |                              |                     | 9.09%             |
| x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2010/11 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools): | <b>English</b><br>88.89% | <b>Mathematics</b><br>88.89% | <b>Irish</b><br>N/A |                   |

**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 64 questionnaires issued to the parents, 47% were returned to the Inspection Services Branch, including eleven which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the parental questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents expressed their pleasure with the high quality of education and care provided by the staff, the children's happiness and development and the dedication and approachability of the staff and the Principal. The chair of the governors met with the inspection team on the first day of the inspection and conveyed very positive messages about the life and work of the school.

The questionnaire responses from the teachers and the support staff were very positive of the work of the school.

The very few issues raised through the questionnaires were discussed with the Principal and the governors.

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

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