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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

St MacNissi's Primary School
Larne

Inspected: October 2009

ST MACNISSI'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, LARNE, CO ANTRIM, BT40 1RF (303-6575)

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St MacNissi's Primary School is situated in the town and parish of Larne. The majority of the children come from within a three mile radius of the school. The enrolment has generally remained steady and is currently 213. At the time of the inspection, approximately 15% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 11% of the children were identified as requiring 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.

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, as well as meetings with groups of children from year 6 and 7 and a representative from the Board of Governors (governors). One hundred and six questionnaires were issued; 33% were returned to the Department of Education (DE), including 19 which contained an additional written comment. Most of the responses from the parental questionnaires were strongly affirmative of the work of the school highlighting in particular: the high quality of education and care; the good progress made by the children; the dedication and hard work of the staff; and the prompt response of the staff in dealing with incidents. The few issues raised were discussed with the Principal. The responses from the teachers and support staff were very affirmative of the work of the school.

One representative from the governors met with members of the inspection team and expressed his appreciation for the dedication and commitment of the staff and the quality of the leadership provided by the Principal.

The inspectors also met with a group of year 6 children; they talked enthusiastically about their experiences at school and the extra-curricular activities available after school. The children reported that they enjoy school, feel safe and secure and are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety or well-being.

PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. Among the strengths are:

- the high priority given to the health and well-being of the staff and the children;

- the creative ways in which the views of the children and staff are considered;
- the personal target-setting for the children; and
- the positive approach to behaviour.

The children displayed very good behaviour. The classroom assistants contribute significantly to supporting the children's well-being and their learning.

CHILD PROTECTION

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

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the provision of attractive fruit platters at break time and opportunities to taste a variety of new foods which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

CONCLUSION

The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the pastoral care provision and the orderly, purposeful learning environment which promotes positive behaviour;
- the overall quality of the teaching observed, all of which was good or better;
- the very good standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy;
- the very good use made of quantitative data for monitoring, evaluating and target-setting as an integral part of the school's self-evaluation process;
- the highly effective contribution of the support staff to the life and work of the school; and
- the strong and effective leadership of the Principal and her high expectations of, and support for, the staff and children.

An area for improvement is:

- to develop a cross-curricular approach to planning the curriculum in order to enhance further the children's learning experiences.

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.

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

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