

eti

*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 Mary's Primary School
Lisbuoy, Dungannon**

Inspected: October 2009

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, LISBUOY, DUNGANNON, BT70 3LH (503-2592)

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Mary's Primary School is a rural school situated in the townland of Lisbuoy, outside Dungannon. The enrolment has been declining in recent years and is currently 49. At the time of the inspection, approximately 14% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 16% of the children were on the special educational needs register.

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 AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 32 questionnaires issued to the parents, ten (31%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE), including five which contained an additional written comment. In addition, six parents met with the inspection team on the first day of the inspection. Most of the parental questionnaires and written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with the provision in the school. All of the oral comments indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of school life. In particular the parents made reference to the very good oral and written communication, the comprehensive information about key policies such as pastoral care and child protection and the high levels of support provided for their children. They commented on the central role which the school plays in the community and praised highly the work of the recently appointed Principal. The small number of issues raised in the written comments was discussed with the Principal and Board of Governors (governors).

The teaching and support staff completed confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Their responses were wholly supportive of the work of the school.

Two members of the governors met with the inspection team prior to the inspection. They expressed strong support and appreciation for the work of the school; in particular they praised the vision and leadership of the Principal and the dedication of the whole school staff.

The inspectors also met with the year 6 children. They spoke enthusiastically about the teachers, the healthy break routines, the wide range of after school activities and the strong links established with the local gaelic club. The children are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety and well-being.

PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. Among the strengths are the positive relationships at all levels, the strong family ethos throughout the school and the effective consultation with the parents in relation to supporting their children's learning.

CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements generally reflect the guidance in the relevant DE circulars but the following area needs to be addressed:

- the parents need to be informed of the school's intimate care policy.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the children having a choice of fruit for healthy break and the extensive range of physical activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

CONCLUSION

The strengths of the school include the:

- very positive, inclusive ethos which is characterised by the orderly learning environment, the effective links with parents and the excellent behaviour of the children;
- very good provision for the children with special educational needs and the steady progress which they make in their learning;
- good or better teaching in most of the lessons observed;
- good standards in literacy attained by the children by the end of key stage 2;
- very good leadership provided by the recently appointed Principal and the developing sense of team spirit amongst all the staff; and
- developing culture of self evaluation to promote improvement.

Areas for Improvement include the need to:

- develop effective long-term planning in literacy and numeracy in order to ensure continuity and progression in the children's learning; and
- develop a more strategic approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching throughout the school, in order to better inform the School Development Plan and to raise further the standards in literacy and, particularly, in numeracy.

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for 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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The very low perimeter wall of the school leaves the children vulnerable. A risk assessment should be carried out on access to and from the school grounds.
- There are no toilet facilities in the main building or in the temporary classrooms. The children are therefore required to use facilities at the back of the school and the younger children have to be escorted by an adult. This is disruptive to learning, impedes the development of independence in younger children and creates particular difficulties during inclement weather.

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

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2009

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.

