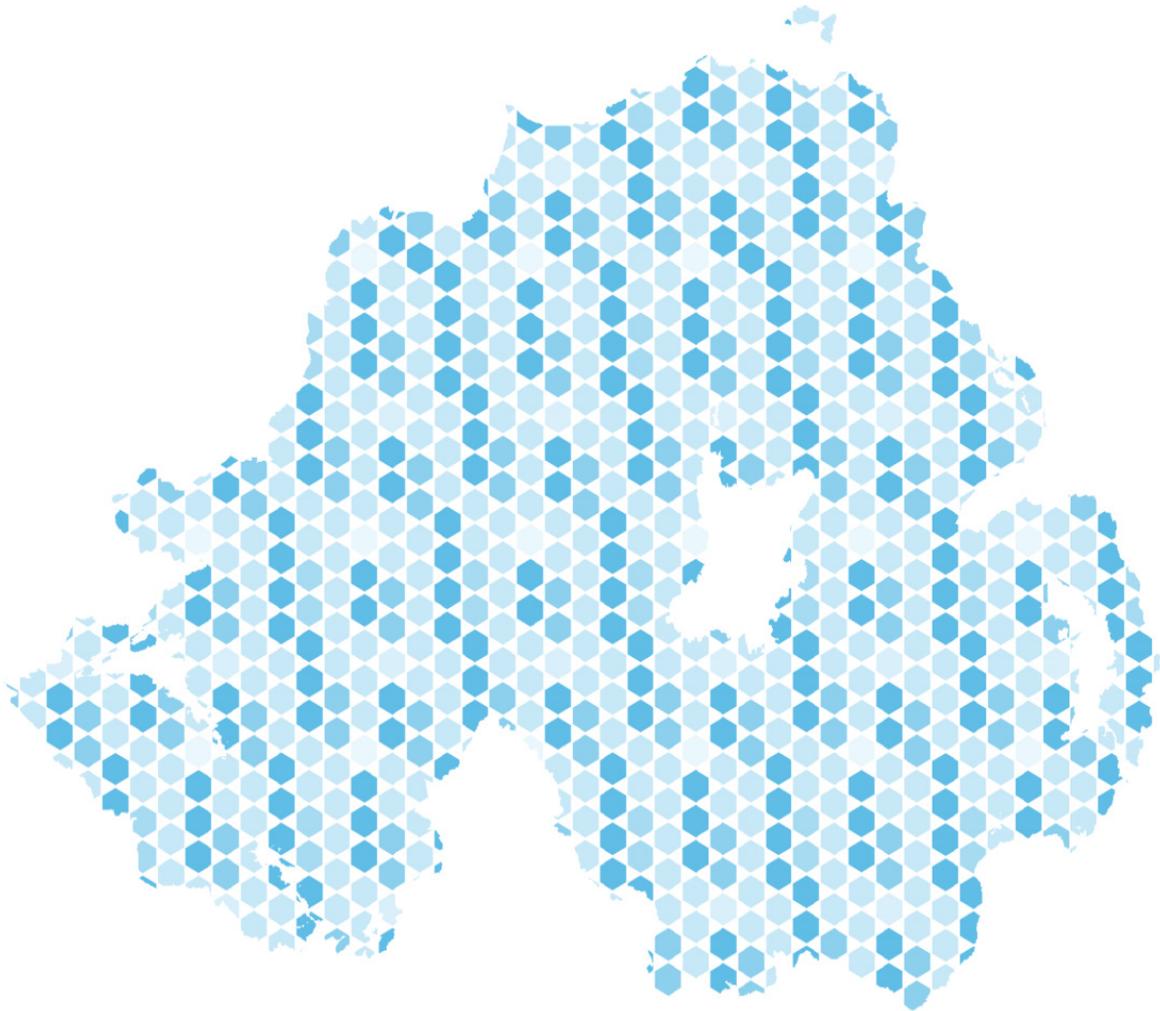


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Faughanvale Primary School,
Greysteel

Report of an Inspection
in December 2011



CONTENTS

Section		Page
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	3
3.	THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	5
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	7
5.	CONCLUSION	7

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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Faughanvale Primary School is situated at the edge of the village of Greysteel in Co Derry. The enrolment has increased significantly over the past four years and currently stands at 163. Most of the children come from the village and the wider rural area. Approximately 31% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 20% have been identified as needing additional support with aspects of their learning, including a very small number of children who have statements of special educational need (SEN).

1.2 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.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection were evaluated.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching staff and the support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of the children from year 6.

Of the 127 questionnaires issued to the parents, 60 (47%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch, including 21 which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the questionnaires expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In their written comments the parents highlighted: the strong commitment of the Principal, together with the teaching, support and ancillary staff to providing high quality care and guidance for the children; the very effective communications between home and school; and the high regard that the local community has for the school.

All of the teachers responded to the online questionnaires and supplied additional comments; nine of the support staff responded with four providing written comments. All the responses indicated very high levels of support for the work of the school. The staff reported that they feel valued, enjoy working in the school and support the work of the Principal in developing the school in the best interests of all the children.

The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school. They spoke very positively about the leadership of the Principal, the contribution and commitment of the staff, and the close links that the school has developed with the local community.

In discussions held with a group of children in year 6, they talked positively about their experiences in school. The children valued the support given by their teachers, the opportunities they have to participate and perform in extra-curricular activities and their active involvement in the School Council and the Eco Council. They indicated strongly that they feel happy in school and know what to do if they have any worries about their care and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to, and discussed with the Principal and the governors the main messages emerging from the questionnaires and discussions, including a very small number of the issues that were raised.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. The children are very courteous and their behaviour is exemplary. The staff knows the children well and contributes fully to promoting a caring and supportive family ethos in which the children learn.

The key strengths of the pastoral provision include: the attention given to celebrating the children's work and achievements; the wide range of activities, events and visits which promote well the children's personal and social development; and the pro-active approach taken by the teachers to support the children's health and emotional wellbeing through the use of appropriate external support services. Of particular note is the role of the school choir in developing the children's confidence and self-esteem; approximately half of the children from year 3 to year 7 participate in the choir and they have performed successfully in competitions and within the local community.

The children contribute meaningfully to discussions and decisions about aspects of school life that directly affect them through circle-time sessions, class councils, the active School Council and the Eco Council; their opinions and ideas are valued and acted on.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. There are a wide range of strategies and initiatives to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles, including the promotion of healthy lunches, the cookery programme for the children and their parents, the gardening club, the range of physical activities and the health-related displays within the school.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school works hard to develop and maintain very effective links with the local community and a range of programmes are organised to involve and support the parents, grand-parents, past pupils and the parents of local pre-school children in aspects of the work of the school.

The parents are kept very well informed about the school events through a weekly newsletter, the school website and a texting service. They attend a range of meetings and receive regular information to help them support their children's learning across the curriculum. The active Friends and Parents' Association has raised significant funds which have helped to broaden the children's learning experiences.

The school provides a wide range of programmes which address well the needs of the local community. As part of the Extended Schools programme, the school, working with the local further education college, supports well the learning and personal development needs of the parents through the provision of accredited courses. The children benefit from the good

range of creative and sporting activities provided as part of the summer scheme programme. The children's learning is also enriched through activities related to the school's successful involvement in the Eco Schools award scheme and through links to other schools. The children in year 7 develop their ICT skills through a well-established link with a nearby post-primary school; this arrangement supports well the children's transition to the next stage of their education.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children show very positive attitudes to their learning. They work well individually, in pairs and groups. They take great pride in the quality and presentation of their work in response to the teachers' high expectations. In the foundation stage (FS) the children demonstrate curiosity and creativity through the wide range of practical and stimulating experiences provided by the teachers. As they progress through the school they develop their personal and social skills; they learn well together in group activities, taking account of others' ideas and viewpoints, and contributing purposefully to group tasks. By the end of key stage (KS) 2 the children are aware of their own strengths and interests and they can set and review personal learning targets. They take greater responsibility for their own work and achieve high standards.

An analysis of the KS2 assessment data over the past four years shows that the school's performance in English and mathematics has been mostly below the NI average. However, compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics are in line with the average and, at the higher level of attainment, are above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in English and well above the NI average in mathematics.

An analysis of the available data for those children identified as needing additional support with aspects of their learning, demonstrates that the children make good progress in line with their individual education plan (EP) targets and, on occasion, make sufficient progress to be removed from the SEN register.

The Principal has identified rightly, the need to improve standards further and has implemented a range of appropriate strategies to raise levels of attainment. The inspection confirms this as a key focus for development.

In all key stages, the children work regularly on a range of ICT activities which complement and support their work in literacy and numeracy. By the end of KS1 and KS2 the children attain good standards in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT accreditation scheme.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of the provision for English and literacy is very good.

The Literacy co-ordinator makes good use of the school's external and internal performance data to set appropriate targets for literacy across the school. She provides effective advice and guidance for the teachers and has comprehensive systems in place to regularly monitor and evaluate the provision for learning and teaching in literacy across the school. She has identified appropriately the need to review and update the literacy policy.

Across key stages much emphasis is placed on developing the children's talking and listening skills and as a result almost all of the children have very good oral communication skills and speak confidently to peers, teachers and other adults. The teachers use effective questioning to scaffold the children's oral responses and seek their views and opinions on a wide range of topics; in the best practice the children are given appropriate thinking time, extended responses are encouraged and their suggestions are valued.

The staff has worked hard to develop reading across the school and a recent focus has been the implementation of a new phonics programme. The children are taught to read systematically through the use of commercial reading schemes which are enhanced by a wide range of appropriate support materials such as novels, 'big books' and reference materials. They enjoy reading and are developing a good range of appropriate strategies to help them interpret unfamiliar text. Across the year groups the children benefit from a range of approaches to reading, including shared, modelled and guided reading. During the inspection, groups of children from years 4 and 7 read with fluency and understanding. Reading is promoted positively in the school through World Book Day events, an annual Book Fair and timetabled sessions in the recently refurbished library. The school has implemented several reading support programmes and initiatives, for example, 'Rapid Reading', 'Paired Reading' and an interactive phonics programme to provide additional support for the children. Most of the children achieve good standards in reading and by the end of KS2 are reading at a level commensurate with their ability.

The standards attained by the children in writing are very good. In the FS, the children become familiar with different forms of print and have regular opportunities to experiment with informal mark making. The children's letter formation, word building skills and knowledge of the basic conventions such as simple sentence structure is developing well. Across the key stages the children write in a range of genre across the curriculum and for a variety of audiences. Themes, topics and visitors to the school such as a recent visit from a local journalist provide a valuable stimulus for writing. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing the children's hand writing skills and as a result the presentation in the children's books is of a very high standard.

Information and communication technology is used successfully to stimulate interest and support all aspects of literacy learning and teaching across the school.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of the provision for mathematics and numeracy is very good.

The numeracy co-ordinator is highly committed to the ongoing development of the provision for mathematics. A comprehensive policy guides well the teachers' work. The school's programme for mathematics is suitably broad the teachers work together well to ensure that there is appropriate coherence and progression in the mathematics curriculum throughout the school. The co-ordinator has put in place effective strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of the mathematics provision across the school. As in literacy, these include the scrutiny of the quality of work in the children's books, reviews of the teachers' planning, lesson observations, and the sharing of the good practice identified.

In most classes, the mathematics lessons incorporate an appropriate balance of mental maths sessions, practical activities and discussions. In the best practice, the teachers give the children appropriate time and encouragement to communicate their mathematical thinking and explain the processes and strategies they used. The teachers make effective use of routines and incidental opportunities to consolidate the children's understanding.

In the FS the emphasis on oral and practical activities and rich play- based contexts enable the children to gain a good understanding of basic number operations. In KS1 teachers make good use of practical activities to engage the children in investigative work. The children apply well their mathematical skills in real contexts and across other areas of the curriculum; for example, as part of a World Around Us topic, the children can generate and interpret authentic mathematical data to investigate the flow of traffic along the main road. By the end of KS1 the children use mental strategies to perform basic calculations, can talk through the methods they used and demonstrate a good understanding of measures and common shapes.

In KS2 the teachers set the learning in meaningful contexts and make very effective use of everyday practical materials which develop well the children's understanding of mathematical concepts such as shape and space. The teachers support the children well in more open-ended problem solving activities and the children can pose their own mathematical problems. By the end of KS2 the higher achieving children talk very enthusiastically about their mathematics experiences; they are very secure in their knowledge of number operations, can explain well the range of different strategies they use and can solve problems relating to measures, shape and space. Most of the children attain good standards in mathematics by the end of KS2 and a majority of the children attain very good standards.

The mathematics provision is enhanced through workshops for the parents and an after school numeracy club which develop well the children's enjoyment and confidence. The teachers use ICT very effectively to support mathematics and promote the children's independence. The children can control programmable devices, create and interrogate data sets, respond to on-line problem solving tasks, and use interactive assessments to monitor their progress and set their own targets in mathematics.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers' short-term and medium-term planning is centred appropriately on clearly defined learning intentions which guide effectively the work in the classroom. In the best practice, there are a range of detailed teaching and learning activities outlined. The teachers need to build on this good practice and ensure the planning identifies an appropriate range of strategies to meet the needs of all the children within the class.

The teachers complete very useful written evaluations of their planned work, which outline the extent to which the learning intentions were met and help identify the future learning needs of groups and individual children.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection the quality of the teaching observed was always good and in the majority of lessons it was very good and outstanding. The teachers prepare well and the lessons are well structured and suitably resourced.

In the most effective practice: the children participated fully in a good balance of individual, group and whole-class activities; the teachers used very effective classroom management strategies to organise the various learning activities; they built well on the children's interests and experiences, and the learning activities were set in real and relevant contexts for the children. In addition, the teachers interacted very positively with the children and as a result the children developed in confidence and learned through taking risks and trying different approaches.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school has made significant progress in developing the whole-school assessment processes in recent years. A wide range of standardised tests is used to obtain information about the children's levels of attainment to enable the teachers to identify key areas for the development of literacy and numeracy and to set individual targets for the children. The teachers have refined their approach to target setting and this work needs to continue as planned, to ensure that the targets for individuals and groups of children are more specific and are supported by identified teaching strategies.

In taking forward this work on the use of assessment data, it is important that the teachers continue to review and streamline the systems for gathering and analysing data to ensure that they reflect more precisely the children's progress and standards.

The teachers mark the children's written work regularly and the feedback is personalised and affirmative. Where this is most effective, the combination of constructive comments made by the teacher and self- and peer-assessment enables the children to make further improvement to the quality of their work. Appropriately, the teachers have developed a collegiate approach to the moderation of samples of the children's work.

The school keeps the parents well informed about their children's progress and development through a meeting in the first term and an informative written report at the end of the school year. The school operates an open-door policy should the parents wish to discuss any aspect of their child's progress.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Special Educational Needs is given a high priority by the school and the quality of the provision is good.

The teachers, with the support of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), identify early those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning through observations of the children in class, the use of standardised tests and the analysis of assessment data. The current provision is through both well planned literacy withdrawal sessions and in-class support where the teachers provide differentiated work and spend valuable time with individuals. There are plans to introduce specific numeracy support in the near future. Good links are maintained with the parents and a range of support agencies.

In the best practice the EP targets are well focused, specific to individual needs and appropriately time bound to measure short term progress; however, some of the targets set are too general to guide the teachers in their work with individuals. The SENCO is aware of the need to draw up an action plan to guide effectively the further development of SEN in the school.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The overall quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The Principal has been in post for seven years. She provides very effective strategic leadership giving a high priority to meeting the care and wellbeing of all the children and to raising further the standards they attain. She has a clear and appropriate vision for the work of the school and sets high standards for teaching and learning. She has successfully developed and maintained links and partnerships with a range of stakeholders to promote the school and to enhance the learning opportunities for all the children. The school is highly regarded by the parents and the local community.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) and key co-ordinators are very supportive of the Principal and they provide effective guidance and support for all the staff. They work closely together to monitor and develop all aspects of the pastoral and curriculum provision.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed school development plan (SDP) which is underpinned by regular and effective self-evaluation including the analysis of qualitative and quantitative information. There are effective processes for consultation about the SDP within the school community. Appropriate policies and action plans are in place for the key curricular areas that are focused on raising further the children's standards and achievements. The school meets the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations. (Northern Ireland) 2005.

4.3 ACCOMODATION

The teachers have created stimulating environments in the classrooms and shared areas which support and celebrate the children's learning. Very good use is made of the available outdoor space to provide learning opportunities and to develop in the children a sense of environmental responsibility. The school is very well maintained.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are fully involved in the strategic planning and policy development for the school. They support effectively the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP and they have a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the school.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the outstanding quality of the pastoral provision characterised by a very supportive ethos and the exemplary behaviour of the children;
- the good standards attained by the children in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of the teaching observed, the majority of which was very good and outstanding;

- the highly effective strategic leadership of the Principal and her commitment to continuous whole school improvement;
- the commitment and strong sense of collegiality of the teaching and non-teaching staff who provide a range of practical, purposeful and enjoyable learning experiences for the children; and
- the very strong links and partnerships developed with the local community which enhance the educational and social provision for the children and the parents.

5.2 The area for improvement is:

- to continue to review the systems for gathering and analysing data to ensure they reflect more precisely the children's progress and standards.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in 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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2012

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 ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

