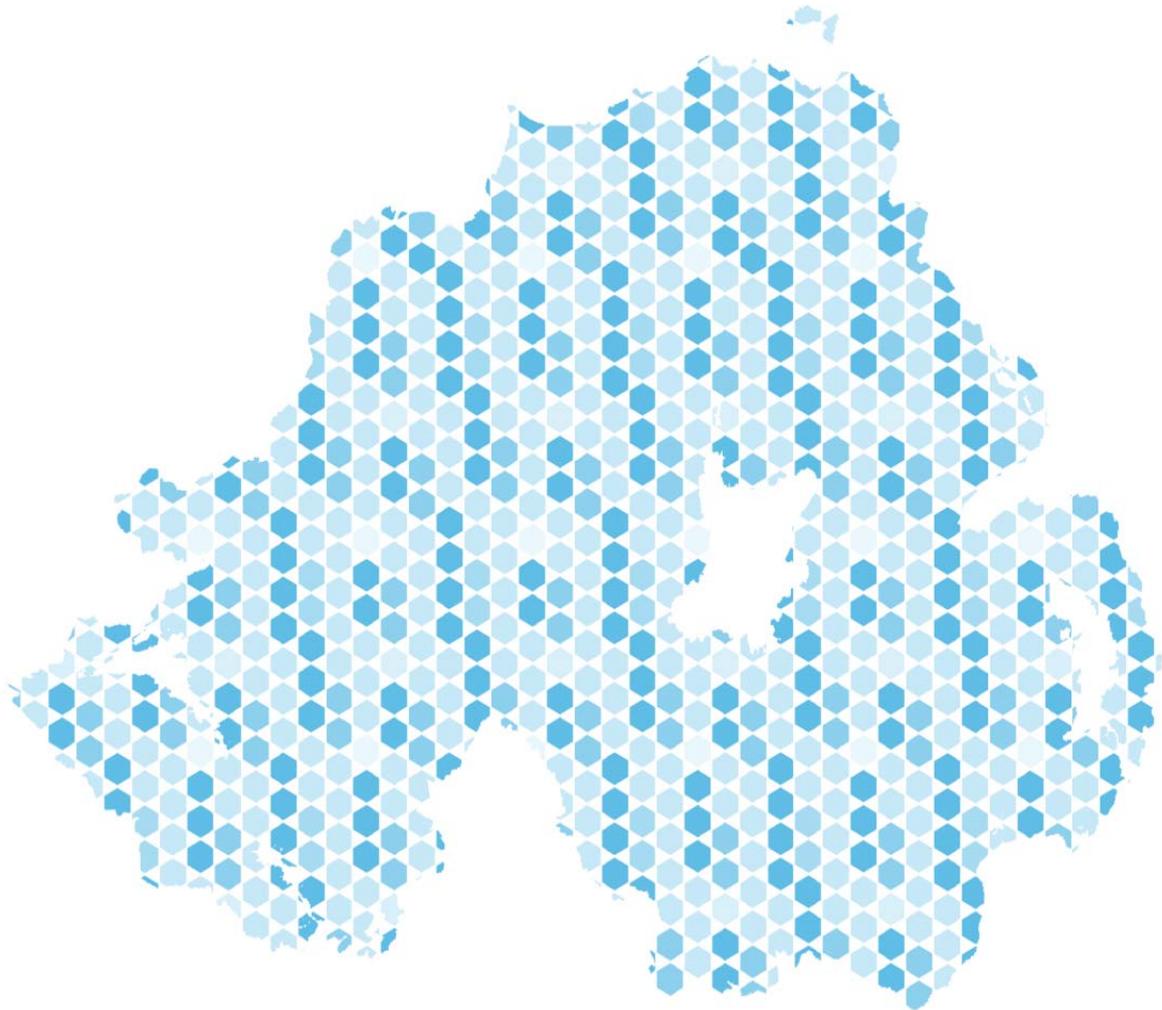


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Peter's Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Cloughreagh

Report of an Inspection
in March 2010

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

ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT, BESSBROOK, CO ARMAGH (503-1176)

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Peter's Primary School is situated in the townland of Cloughreagh between Newry and Bessbrook. Almost all of the children come from the local and surrounding rural area. The enrolment in the primary school has remained steady over recent years and currently stands at 299; in addition, 26 children attend the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection, approximately 23% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 16% 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;
- the quality of leadership and management; and
- the quality of provision in the nursery unit.

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

The arrangements for the inspection of the primary school included an opportunity for the parents, the teaching staff and the support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. Of the 57 questionnaires issued to the parents, 46% were returned to Inspectorate Services Branch and 24 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires indicated that the parents highly value the child-centred ethos, the leadership of the Principal, the very caring, hardworking and supportive staff, and the children's enjoyment of learning and school. The one issue arising from the parental questionnaires was shared with the Principal.

In the nursery unit 25 questionnaires were issued to parents; 48% of the parents responded to the questionnaire and six made additional comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that the parents regard the nursery unit highly and appreciate the caring, professional and approachable staff, the progress made by the children, and the safe, friendly environment.

Ten members of the teaching staff responded to the online questionnaire and all included written comments about the life and work of the school. The responses were wholly positive about all aspects of school life including the high quality pastoral care for the staff, the inspirational working environment and the leadership, support and encouragement provided by the Principal.

Nineteen members of the support staff responded to the online questionnaire, including seven who included a written comment. Almost all of the responses were extremely positive and complimented highly the strong sense of family throughout the school, the emphasis placed on the professional and personal development of the staff and the care given to each child in the school community.

In discussions, the children from years 6 and 7 reported that they are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being. The children talked very enthusiastically about their learning experiences and the many aspects of school life that they enjoyed, including the value placed on their views about their school, the caring and helpful teachers and the emphasis placed on learning being fun.

PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the nurturing and inclusive ethos across the whole school community;
- the outstanding level of care and commitment to the children's emotional, social and academic development;
- the excellent relationships at all levels, exemplified by the very happy children and staff; and
- the exemplary behaviour of the children.

CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the development of the school's healthy eating programme in consultation with the parents and children, and the strong emphasis placed on participation in a wide range of sports.

CONCLUSION

The strengths of the school include:

- the very high levels of motivation, engagement and enjoyment of learning displayed by the children;
- the very good standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy across the school;
- the high quality of the teaching which was very good or outstanding in most of the lessons observed;
- the outstanding provision for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning or emotional development;
- the outstanding, inspirational leadership of the Principal who has established and embedded an effective approach to continuous improvement which involves the children, staff, parents, governors and the wider community; and

- the strong curricular leadership provided by the Vice-principal, the senior leadership team and co-ordinators, who lead by example and promote high quality learning experiences for all of the children.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

THE NURSERY UNIT

The main strengths within the nursery unit's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- There is a very positive ethos in the nursery based on good working relationships at all levels. The play rooms are bright and colourful and equipped to a very high standard; good use is made of the children's art work and photographs of them at play to create colourful displays throughout the nursery.
- The staff follow a High Scope approach to provide good opportunities for learning in all areas of the curriculum. The children's early language and mathematical understanding is promoted well by the staff. The majority of the children can talk about their experiences, ask questions, follow instructions and show an awareness of early concepts of size, shape and quantity.
- The well organised daily timetable effectively promotes learning through a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff.
- Good provision is made for the children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The staff are well supported through the good links that they have established with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in the primary school.
- During the inspection, the staff provided the children with sensitive and sustained support during purposeful play. The staff encourage the children to observe closely and to think for themselves, and regularly engage them in valuable discussions about their play and their experiences. In return, the children display a positive attitude to their learning and respect to the staff and their peers.
- All of the staff are hard-working and committed to the continuous development of the work within the nursery unit. The Principal of the school provides good support and regards the unit to be an integral part of the life and work of the school.

The nursery unit has a development plan which identifies relevant targets for improvement. While the staff are reflective in the approach to their work, they have not yet embarked on a formal process of self-evaluation.

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON THE NURSERY UNIT IN ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	0
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	1	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	3	0
With English as an additional language	0	0

* On 1 July.

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	11.5
Average attendance for the previous year.	93.9%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours	-	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	1	0
Nursery Assistants	1	1
Qualified Nursery Assistants	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	0
Trainees	1

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	46%
Number of written comments	6

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