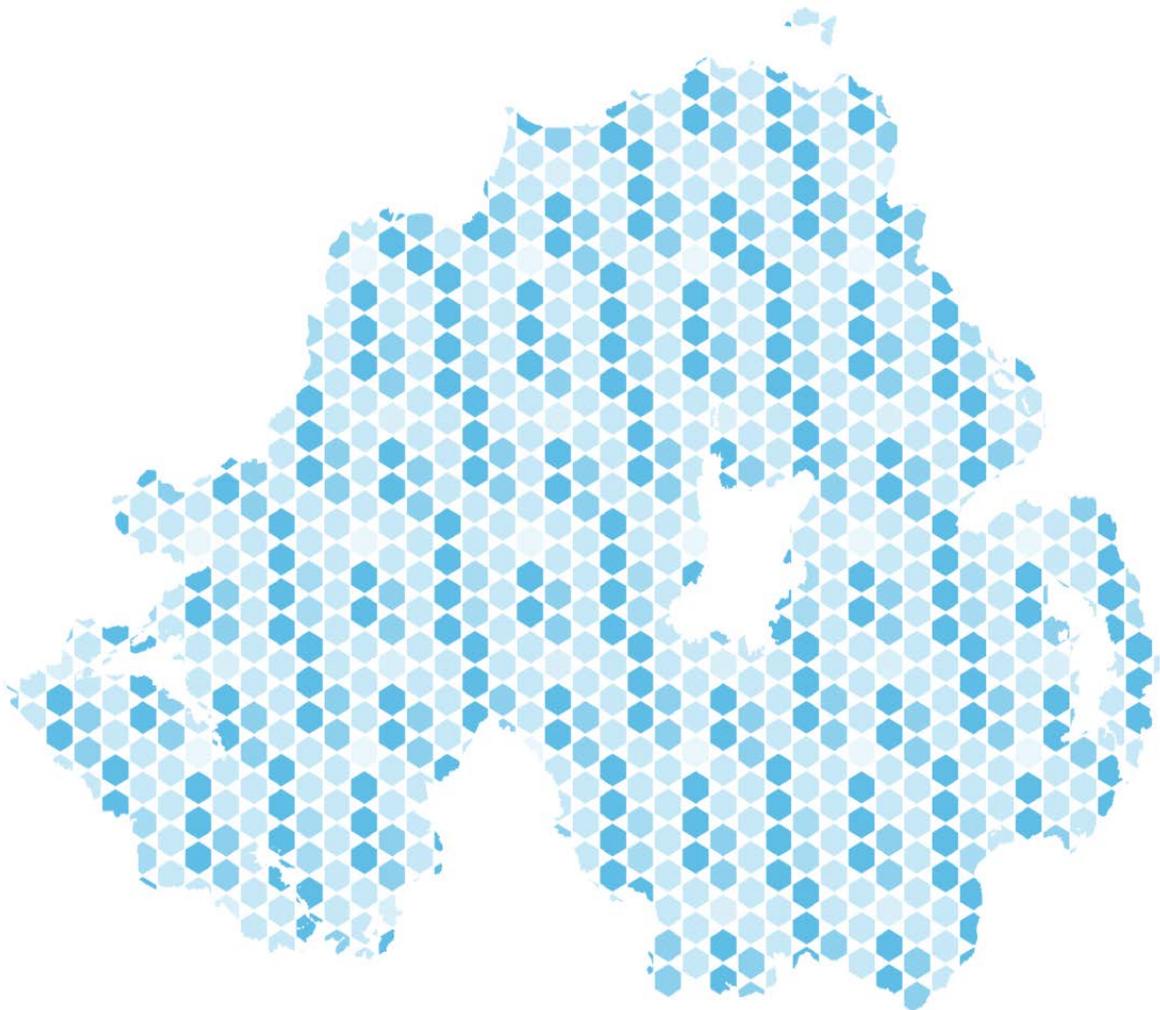


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School,
Downpatrick

Report of an Inspection
in June 2013

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

St Joseph's Primary School is situated outside the village of Tyrella, County Down. The children attending the school live near the village or in the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has fluctuated over recent years and stands currently at 67 children. The school has identified 31% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. At the time of the inspection, 17% of the children attending the school were entitled to free school meals.

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 FINDING 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.

- In English and mathematics, most of the children attain very good **standards** in line with their ability or better than expected. They have confidence in their talking and listening and reading and writing. They read with fluency, are able to discuss characters and themes in texts and are able to write for a variety of audiences and purposes. The children have a good understanding of the key mathematical concepts. They can complete calculations quickly and accurately, are flexible in their mathematical thinking and are able to explain confidently a variety of strategies they use for problem-solving.
- The children identified with **special educational needs (SEN)** make good progress in their learning and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The achievements and standards attained by the children in **information and communication technology (ICT)** are very good. The children in year 7 are entered for the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT Accreditation scheme, and most recently, most of the children attained very good standards in their assessments.

Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- Most of the **children** are well behaved, well-motivated and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They work cooperatively in paired and group work and are able to apply their learning in a variety of contexts across the curriculum.
- The quality of the **teaching** observed was either good or very good, with most being very good. The teachers build effectively on the children's previous experiences and provide stimulating and interesting activities that engage the children well, extend further their learning and challenge their thinking. In this work they are supported ably by the classroom assistants. The teachers make very good use of ICT to support the children's learning in both literacy and numeracy.
- The high quality arrangements for **pastoral care** are evident in the strong family and child-centred ethos and the excellent working relationships evident at all levels which support well the school's motto of 'preparing our children for life in the 21st century in a happy safe environment'. There is a valuable buddy system in place whereby the older children mentor the children in the foundation stage (FS). All of the children are provided with regular opportunities to contribute to the decision-making processes of the school through questionnaires and participation in both the whole school and eco school councils.
- The school gives very good attention to **promoting healthy lifestyles** through the curriculum topics, including the good emphasis placed on active learning in the outdoors and the regular opportunities provided to participate in an extensive range of sports, physical and extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for those children identified as having **SEN** is very good. Effective arrangements are in place to identify the children who need additional support. They are supported through appropriate withdrawal sessions and activities in class that are well-matched to their specific needs. The individual education plans (IEP) have clearly focused targets which are shared and agreed with the children and their parents and guide well the provision made for the children. The children who make sufficient progress in their learning are withdrawn from the SEN register.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for **safeguarding children**. These arrangements reflect broadly the child protection guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE). However, there is a need to update the training in safeguarding and child-protection for the governors.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The **Principal** who has been in post for 12 years, provides outstanding pastoral and strategic leadership. She combines very effectively her teaching role in FS with her leadership and management roles. She promotes a strong collegial ethos within the school, has established a collaborative approach to decision making and encourages and supports the on-going professional development of the staff. A particular feature of her work is her commitment to the school as a centre of the community. She has established very good links with the parents, local community and nearby schools in the south Down area and has encouraged the use of the school's facilities for a range of adult learning and leisure purposes.
- The **co-ordinators**, all of whom carry a number of responsibilities, provide very effective leadership in their respective areas. They reflect regularly on their practice and make good use of data both quantitative and qualitative to monitor the quality of the provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility.
- The school has a well-embedded culture of **self-evaluation** and there are clear and systematic processes in place to inform the school development plan (SDP), including the use of regular audits and consultations with the staff, parents and children. The SDP sets out a well considered range of priorities for improvement with supporting action plans including an appropriate focus placed on improving the provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- It will be important for that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of 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: St Joseph's Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 05/06/13**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 403-3037** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	8	7	13	10	17
Enrolments					
Primary	65	70	69	65	67
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 are based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year
(expressed as a percentage):

NI Avg Att: 94.7%

Average Attendance for those children on the
Special Educational Needs Register:

	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	0	0	0
ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):	18	NI PTR: 20.2		
iii. Average Class Size:	18			
iv. Class Size (Range):	13 to 20			
v. Ancillary Support: Number of Hours Per Week :	i. Clerical support:		20	
	ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support:		20	
	iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support:		85	
vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs:				10%
vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register:				31%
viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age:				0
ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals:				18%
x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2011/12 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools):	English 80%	Mathematics 80%	Irish N/A	

APPENDIX 2

THE VIEWS OF THE GOVERNORS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, 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 50 questionnaires issued to the parents, 35 (70%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch (ISB), including 20 which contained additional written comments. Almost all of the parental questionnaires and all of the written comments expressed high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular the parents acknowledged the Principal's dynamic leadership, the high quality care and support provided by all the staff and the high regard the school is held within the community.

All of the teachers and most of the support staff responded to the staff questionnaires; nearly all of the responses were wholly positive. An analysis of the findings and the written comments were shared with the Principal.

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 children; they talked positively and enthusiastically about many aspects of school life, including their enjoyment of school and of learning, the kind and friendly teachers and the range of after school activities available to them. They are aware of what to do if they have worries about their safety and well-being.

A small number of the governors met with the inspection team and expressed strong support for the work of the Principal and staff. They emphasised the pivotal role the school plays in the local community.

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