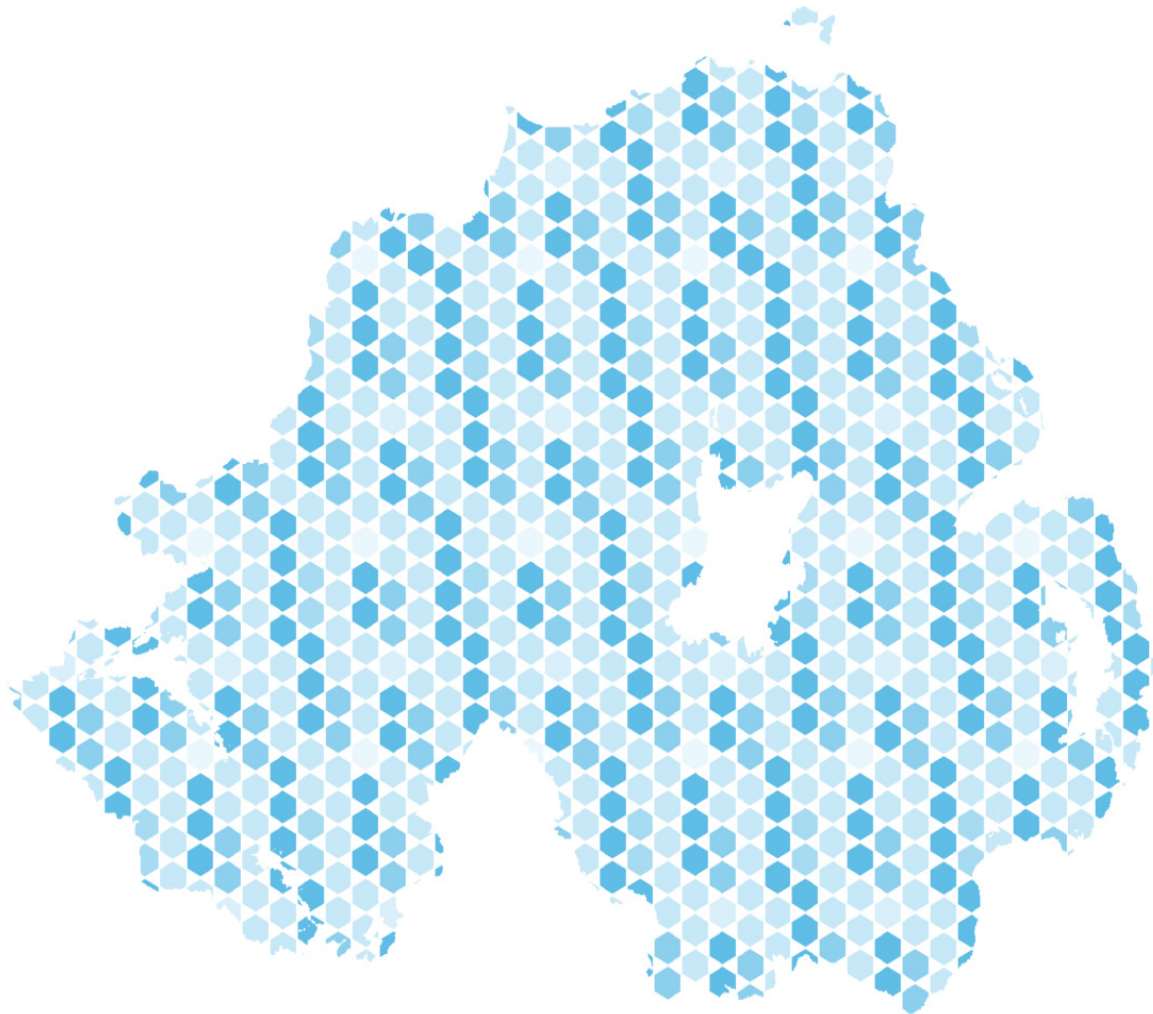


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Portavogie Primary School and
Nursery Unit

Report of an Inspection
in September 2010

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	6
5.	CONCLUSION	7
6.	THE NURSERY UNIT	8
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION (NURSERY UNIT)	

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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Portavogie Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 27/09/10**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-1507** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	21	23	29	25	30
Enrolments					
Primary	145	155	169	172	176
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	52	52	52	52	52
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 should be based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year (expressed as a percentage): 94.04% **NI Avg Att: 94.9%**
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 8 1 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 22 NI PTR: 20.7
- iii. Average Class Size: 25
- iv. Class Size (Range): 20 to 31
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|------|
| i. Clerical support: | 36 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 27.5 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 100 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 2.84%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 15.91%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 7.95%
- x. Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2009/10 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics: **English 74%** **Mathematics 65%**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Portavogie Primary School and nursery unit is situated on the New Harbour Road in Portavogie, Co Down. The majority of the children come from the local area. The nursery unit is situated within the school premises. The enrolment of the school has increased steadily and currently stands at 172 children within the primary school and 52 children in the nursery unit. The school reports that approximately 8% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately 16% of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning.

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 and 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.

One hundred and twenty questionnaires were issued to parents within the primary school: approximately 52% were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which 21 contained additional written comments. Most of the responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the dedicated and supportive staff and the care and attention shown for the well-being of all the children. A small number of responses made reference to the accommodation, and different aspects of the school's provision and procedures.

Seven teachers and three support staff completed the online questionnaire and two of the teachers included written comments. The responses were wholly positive regarding the hard-working and mannerly children, the supportive governors, the emphasis on team-work at all levels within the school and the focus on helping the children enjoy their learning.

In the nursery unit, 17% of the parents responded to the questionnaire and two made additional written comments. Those who responded indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the overall provision. The parents recorded their appreciation of the caring and professional staff and the efforts made to create a welcoming and inviting learning environment.

The governors spoke very positively about the inclusive ethos of the school and the developing links with the local community. They expressed their appreciation of the leadership provided by the Principal to developing many aspects of the school provision since his appointment, just over a year ago. The governors reported that they are kept well informed and are now more actively involved in the life and work of the school.

The children in year 6 spoke enthusiastically about the help and encouragement they receive from their teachers and the support staff. They expressed their appreciation and their enjoyment of the extra-curricular activities and educational visits. There is evidence from the discussion with the children that they know what to do and who to speak to if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

An analysis of the questionnaires and the written comments made by the parents and the staff were shared with the Principal and the governors.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in both the school and the nursery unit is very good. The supportive learning environment in the school helps the children develop their self confidence and the standard of their behaviour during the inspection was excellent. The individual merit systems, such as the certificates distributed during school assemblies are highly valued by the children; there is clear evidence that the reward system has a positive influence on the children's motivation and behaviour both indoors and outdoors. The school is well maintained.

The nursery has a welcoming atmosphere and relationships at all levels are very good. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to develop the children's good behaviour. The children are settling in quickly to their nursery environment and enjoy the good variety of activities and learning experiences on offer.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school and the nursery unit have very good and comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school and the nursery unit give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The healthy breaks and the regular opportunities for energetic outdoor play and sports encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Principal and the teachers are developing a strong sense of community within the school; the parents are encouraged to become involved in school events and in supporting the children's learning. The school has recently established the Portavogie and Friends group and evening classes such as woodwork and ICT have been on offer to the parents.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

The children represent the school very well; they are mannerly, value each other's opinions and take pride in the presentation of their work. At foundation stage (FS), the children experience an interesting play-based curriculum and most are able to sustain extended periods of concentrated play. They access equipment independently, enjoy the healthy break and are able to discuss their learning with developing confidence.

In key stage (KS) 1 and KS2, the majority of children work collaboratively on shared tasks and are capable of sustained periods of concentrated effort in line with their age. In the literacy and numeracy lessons observed, the majority of children were encouraged to reflect, discuss and make connections in their learning through purposeful thematic work across the areas of learning.

An analysis of the KS2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance is generally below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared with schools in a similar free schools meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are below the average. The school's internal data indicates that, when comparing the children's standardised scores in English and mathematics with the Non-reading Intelligence Test (NRIT), in English, most of the children are achieving at a level commensurate with their ability, and in mathematics, the majority of the children are performing at a level commensurate with their abilities.

The quality of the provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) is good. The school's internal data indicates that most children with SEN make good progress in English and mathematics, at a level commensurate with their ability.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The quality of provision for literacy is good.

The medium-term planning for literacy across the school is good and provides a coherent framework for progression. The literacy action plan identifies significant areas for development which play an integral role in the school's development plan, such as the establishment of a whole-school phonological programme and the consistent application of assessment for learning strategies. The recently-established literacy team now needs to focus on a smaller number of priorities and take a more strategic approach to their implementation, focusing on school improvement.

In all key stages, there are good opportunities for the children to talk about their work. The teachers provide well-planned activities to develop the children's talking, listening and thinking skills. In play-based learning in the FS and in whole-class or group discussions in KS1 and KS2, the children interact well with one another, listen attentively to the views of their peers and respond with enthusiasm. The teachers' effective questioning in the classes enables the children to make extended oral contributions and take a more active role in their own learning.

Reading standards for most of the children are good; they are reading at a level commensurate with, or above, their chronological age. Across the year groups, the children benefit from a range of approaches to reading, including shared, modelled, guided and independent reading. In the FS, the children's reading is developed through a range of word recognition strategies. The school now needs to ensure that the phonics programme is implemented consistently by all staff and across all year groups in order to help develop the

children's phonological awareness and increase their confidence when decoding new words. The enjoyment of reading is encouraged through timetabled silent reading time in KS1 and KS2 classes, age-appropriate class novels and attractive class libraries, which are regularly accessed for research. An area within the school is used as a central library. The literacy team needs to consider whether it is in the most suitable location and how to maximise its potential for learning and teaching. As the children progress through the school, they engage with an increasingly challenging range of texts and read with increasing fluency, expression and understanding.

The standard of writing in the children's books is good. Their achievements in writing are celebrated in attractive displays in classrooms and corridors. In the FS the children are introduced to different forms of print and experiment with letter and word formation. The teachers need to provide more opportunities for the children to develop as independent writers. The children in KS1 and KS2 develop skills by writing in a range of forms such as, poems, narratives, instructions, personal accounts, letters and reports. The teachers need to ensure that the children are given appropriate opportunities to develop their confidence to 'have a go' and to write independently across the areas of learning.

The children make good use of ICT for researching topic work, by enhancing the presentation of their work and drafting and editing their writing.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The quality of provision in mathematics and numeracy is satisfactory.

The teachers provide a varied programme that covers the processes in mathematics, number, measures, shape and space and handling data in a comprehensive manner. In the effective practice, the teachers plan for the full ability range and promote learning in mathematics which is matched to the needs of individuals and groups of children. The lessons often commence with mental mathematics sessions in which the children respond well to a variety of interesting activities and are given sufficient time to reflect and explain fully their solutions. Often the effective use of the interactive white board provides the stimulus for these sessions, as well as enhancing the introduction to the mathematics lessons. There is a suitable emphasis on the promotion of mathematical language; the teachers use effective questioning strategies to check the children's understanding and mathematical thinking around key concepts.

In the FS and KS1, there is a good focus on practical mathematics, the use of concrete materials and games to consolidate learning. In the lessons observed, the children displayed a secure grasp of number. The KS2 children were involved in investigative activities relating to shape and space using a wide range of resources.

The mathematics co-ordinator leads effectively the development of the mathematics programme. Through the audit process, the staff have identified appropriately the need for the development of greater opportunities for investigative activities and an appropriate focus on raising the children's attainment in mathematics, in particular, shape and space and handling data. The co-ordinator monitors the children's mathematical learning through, for example, a regular review of the teaching plans and the analysis of performance data. There is now a need to extend these procedures to facilitate regular evaluations of the effectiveness of the teaching strategies on the learning experiences and attainment of the children.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The whole-school medium-term planning provides a clear overview which ensures continuity and progression in the children's learning. In the effective practice, the medium-term planning is matched closely to the needs of the children and the teachers' evaluations inform appropriately future action for individuals and groups of children. There is a need for the teachers to ensure consistency across the three key stages so that the planning for learning includes appropriate differentiation for all of the children's learning needs, the more able as well as the less able children. The teachers have made good progress in the development of topic based planning.

The children who require additional support with their learning are identified early through the teachers' observations and evaluations. For these children, individual education plans (IEPs) set out appropriate targets which are reviewed regularly with the parents. The school has indicated appropriately the need to review the content of the IEP by focusing more sharply on short term targets and to include an input from the children about their progress and future targets. In addition, the teachers recognise the need to monitor and evaluate more effectively the extent to which the special educational needs (SEN) arrangements lead to improvements in the progress made and the standards achieved by the children.

3.2 TEACHING

During the inspection, the quality of most of the teaching was good or very good, and a small number of lessons observed were outstanding.

In the most effective practice, the lessons were well paced and had a developmental and effective structure to promote the children's learning. The children were clear about what they were expected to learn and how to complete the tasks as the learning outcomes were shared in a meaningful manner within the context of the lesson and across the areas of learning. The teachers facilitated learning by providing well differentiated work, appropriate challenge and opportunities for investigative work, and good opportunities for the children to enjoy their learning.

In a minority of lessons, where the practice was satisfactory, there were limited opportunities for the children to think independently and to problem-solve. In addition, there was a lack of appropriate differentiation in these lessons, and an over emphasis on the completion of worksheets.

The support for children with special educational needs is provided through in-class differentiated teaching for literacy and numeracy. The classroom assistants generally work well alongside the class teachers to support the wide range of needs of the children. There are occasions however, where the children in classes with no additional assistants, or the few children with English as an additional language, require more support to reinforce and consolidate their learning.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers mark the children's written work regularly and, in most classes provide prompt oral feedback to improve learning. In the best practice, effective marking promotes improvement and the children are encouraged to engage in self-evaluation of their learning. The school has identified appropriately, the need to further develop the assessment for learning practices.

The school uses a range of standardised and non-standardised testing to assess the children's level of achievement in English and mathematics. Recently, the staff have introduced an effective C2k computer program to track the children's progress and to identify and target underachievement. They are making good progress in the use of this assessment information to plan for the continued raising of standards.

There are appropriate procedures and records for keeping the parents well informed about their children's progress. The annual written reports provide detailed information about progress in learning.

The teacher in the nursery unit shares valuable information on the children's achievements with the year 1 teacher; most of the children transfer directly from the nursery provision to the primary school. This transition process facilitates smooth and effective progression in the children's learning from the pre-school provision to year 1.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal has been in post for just over one year. During this time, he has worked effectively to promote positive working relationships with the children, staff, governors, parents and the local community. He is committed to the welfare of the children and the staff. The Principal is creating a collegial approach to decision-making and has a shared agenda for the future development of the school and the community. He has enabled key personnel within the staff to lead, disseminate and begin to embed improvements within their areas of curricular development. A meaningful partnership in leadership and management is now developing with a strategic and inclusive focus for the future development of the school through the creation of these curricular teams. The governors, Principal and the teaching staff need to sharpen their focus on the development of the priorities in the school development plan (SDP) with the central purpose of improving further the children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Overall, the quality of the collective strategic leadership is good.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The SDP is appropriate and sets out a wide range of areas for development including appropriate priorities for the nursery unit. It is based on clear evidence about raising attainment for the children. Several action plans have been devised; these plans need to be adjusted to prioritise particular areas for development, to include realistic timescales for completion and to identify in greater detail the steps to be taken to achieve consistency and rigour in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the children's learning experiences. There are good opportunities for consultation about the SDP across the whole school community. The school gives good attention to, and meets the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

4.3 ACCOMMODATION

The school accommodation consists of a main building which contains 7 classrooms, an assembly hall which also functions as a gymnasium and canteen, a small library area, offices for the school secretary and the Principal and a staffroom. There are two temporary classrooms on site which the Principal plans to develop as a base for community involvement with educational projects. The governors, Principal and staff are reviewing appropriately the current use made of the classrooms and their resource areas in order to

use more effectively the space available and, in particular, to address the lack of space in the year 3 classroom which limits unduly the opportunities for practical activities by the children. The school is well maintained and the children take pride in helping the teachers and support staff to keep their school tidy.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The school are developing the range of resources to support the children with their learning; in particular, there are good resources for ICT. There is a need for the school to acquire additional resources for the activity based learning programme in KS1.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the pastoral care arrangements;
- the very good behaviour, interest and motivation of the children;
- the school's strategic analysis of the performance data to inform improvement in the children's levels of attainment in Literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of teaching observed, most of which was good or very good; and
- the developing approach to collaborative leadership and management.

5.2 The areas for improvement includes the need to:

- prioritise the targets of the Literacy, numeracy, SEN and ICT action plans and set a realistic timescale for implementation; and
- extend the roles of the co-ordinators to provide a sharper focus on monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching to improve further the standards in Literacy and numeracy.

5.3 In most areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, teaching, leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all 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.

6. THE NURSERY UNIT

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

- there is a caring and inclusive atmosphere in the nursery unit where the contributions of individual children are valued. The children are very well settled and respond positively to the high expectations of good behaviour expressed consistently by the staff;
- the planning is very well informed by the staff's regular and detailed observations of the children's achievements which are used appropriately to assess their progress;
- there is a good balance of free play and activities organised by the staff. The clear routines ensure that there are very good opportunities for the children to develop self management skills;
- the staff provide well for children with additional educational needs. They carry out detailed observations of these children and draw up appropriate individual action plans to support their learning. The teacher has established effective links with the local Sure Start centre to enhance the provision of speech and language support for all the children in the nursery;
- the quality of the staff's interaction with the children is consistently good and at times, very good. The children are very well supported in sustained, concentrated and cooperative play; and
- there are well developed links between the nursery unit and the FS. These links support the smooth transition of the children to year 1 in the primary school and inform appropriately the FS planning.

6.2 The inspection has identified the following area for improvement.

- The further development of the outdoor learning environment to enhance the quality of the learning experiences for the children across all areas of the pre-school curriculum.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the nursery unit is good. The nursery unit has important strengths in most of its educational provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the nursery unit has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the nursery unit's progress on the areas for improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PORTAVOGIE PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	0	0
Attending part-time	26	26
Under 3 years of age*	0	8
With statement of SEN**	0	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4***	0	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2***	1	2
With English as an additional language	1	1

* On 1 July.

** Special Educational Needs.

*** 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.	3.85%
Average attendance for the previous year.	80%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
-	2½ hours	2½ hours

3. Details of Staff

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

Number of: ****	
Students	0
Trainees	0

**** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires (to be completed by Inspection Services Branch)

Number issued	52
Percentage returned	17.3%
Number of written comments	2

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