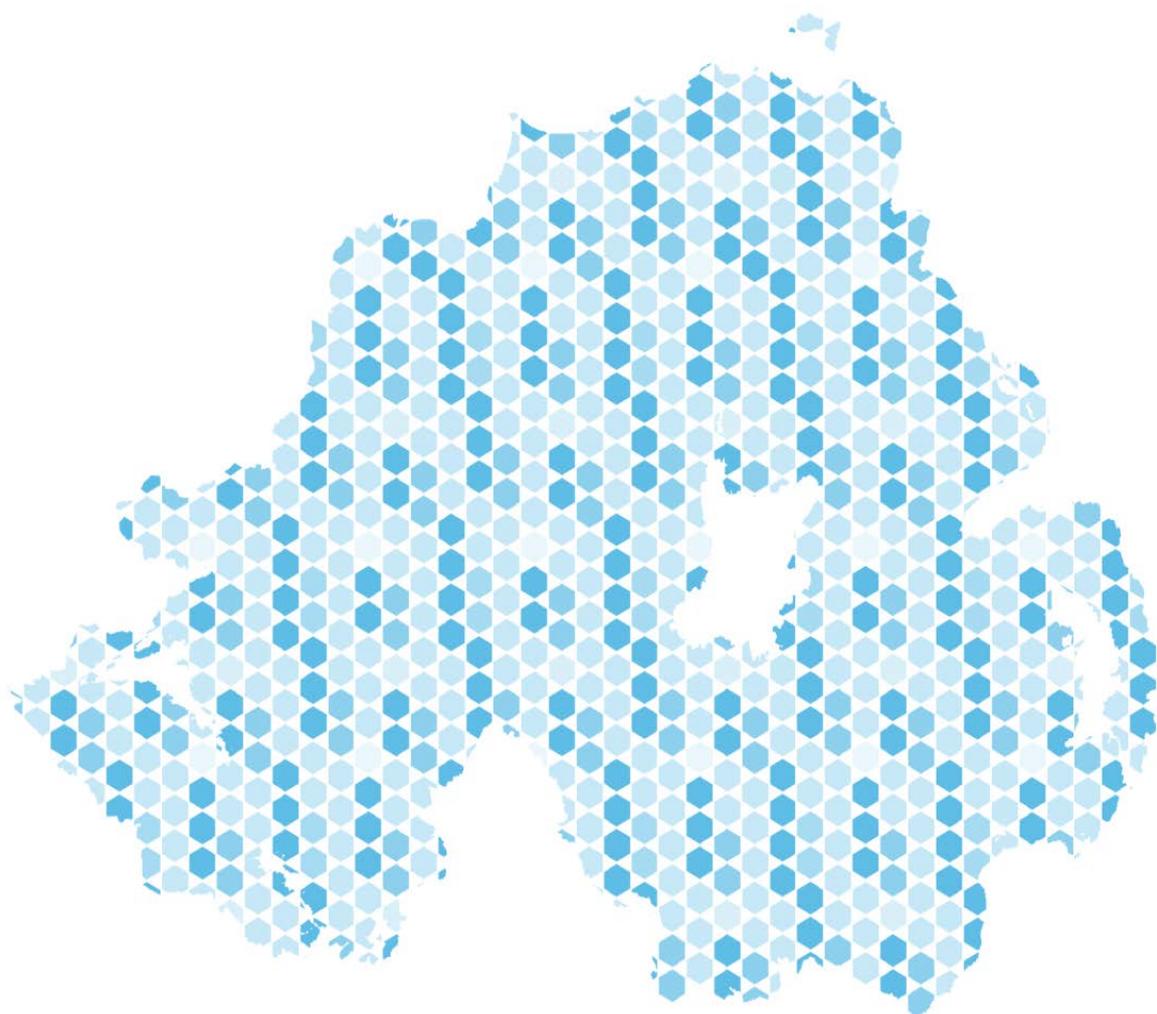


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Anne's Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in April 2013



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
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Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from lesson observations, from scrutiny of the children's completed written work and from a range of documentation including the school's internal performance data. In addition, the inspection team held discussions with groups of the children, with teaching and non-teaching staff and with representatives from the Board of Governors.

The views of the parents, teaching and non-teaching staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the principal and the governors. A summary of the outcomes from the questionnaires is included in section 6 of the report.

Quantitative terms

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. School context

St Anne's Primary School and Nursery Unit are situated at Kingsway between Finaghy and Dunmurry. The main school is accommodated in four blocks on a split site. The double nursery unit occupies a mobile unit within the school grounds. The access route for both the school and the nursery unit is shared with St Anne's Church and Rathmore Grammar School. The enrolment in the school has remained steady increasing slightly to 810 children in the current academic year with an additional 52 children in the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection 16% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 17% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. There has been an increase in the number of newcomer families enrolling in recent years. The children who attend come mainly from the local area with a number travelling from a wider catchment area.

2. Focus of inspection and overall finding

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school and the nursery unit; and
- the quality of leadership and management, including the arrangements for child protection.

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

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.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards	Very Good
Quality of provision	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good
Nursery Unit	Good

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards is very good.

- Almost all of the children in the school and the nursery unit are highly motivated and engaged in their learning and respond well to the high expectations set by their teachers. The children are able to work collaboratively in pairs and groups, and are also developing well their independence and their ability to manage their own learning. They are able to transfer skills and capabilities across all areas of learning and to real life contexts.

- An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that the school's performance in English and in mathematics has consistently been well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and above the average when compared with schools in a similar free school meals band.
- The children achieve very good standards in literacy and numeracy. The children in the Foundation Stage (FS) respond well to the blended approach to the teaching of phonics. They make steady progress in recognising sounds and word building and use these skills as they engage, enthusiastically in a range of well planned play based activities. Across all key stages the children express themselves confidently and articulately and read with fluency and expression. By the end of KS2 the most able children have a very good understanding of characterisation within texts and an appreciation of the writing style of the authors. The children write to a good standard and demonstrate high levels of enjoyment, confidence and increasing independence in literacy. To raise the standards further the children in KS1 and KS2, in particular, need more consistent opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum and link the development of their writing more closely to their reading.
- In mathematics, the children in the FS are confident in their use of practical materials and are gaining a very good understanding of key concepts and the associated language. As they progress through the school there are many examples when the children work with enthusiasm and engage well with their peers to complete problem-solving and investigative activities. By the end of KS2 they have a very good understanding of number and key mathematical concepts and can complete mental calculations quickly with high levels of flexibility in their mathematical thinking. In the best practice, the children are developing an awareness of the interconnections across the areas of mathematics and apply their mathematical knowledge in practical and meaningful investigative activities. This good work needs to be implemented more consistently across all classes.
- All of the children who are identified with special educational needs (SEN) are making good progress in their learning and development and most are making very good progress.
- The children in the nursery unit are independent and are developing very good social skills. They are attentive during story sessions and explore information books during their play. They are beginning to understand a range of early mathematical concepts and are developing emergent writing skills. The children's early scientific skills are progressing well through activities and resources that stimulate their curiosity and problem-solving approaches.
- By the end of KS2, the children attain very good standards in their use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which is at the Northern Ireland average in KS1 and above the Northern Ireland average in KS2.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- The overall quality of the teaching is a strength in the school. Almost two thirds of the teaching is very good and over one fifth of the lessons were evaluated as outstanding. A small number of the lessons observed have aspects which require improvement.
- In the best practice the teachers build well on the children's prior learning and use creative teaching approaches and very skilful questioning to motivate the children and encourage extended oral responses. There is a strong ethos of enjoyment and appropriate challenge in these lessons. The teachers use their assessment strategies and information effectively to ensure that teaching approaches and learning activities are differentiated meeting the needs of the full range of ability within the class.
- In the less effective practice the lessons are too teacher directed limiting the development of the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities. The children have insufficient time to complete their work to a good standard and the activities provided were not at appropriate levels to progress the children's learning.
- The short term planning has been updated to inform a whole school approach to developing connections across areas of learning and promote detailed evaluations which focus clearly on the children's learning. A wide range of additional learning experiences are planned such as young enterprise, music, drama and health promoting events which enrich the children's experiences further. The school recognises the need to develop further the whole school schemes of work for literacy and numeracy. The play activities for the FS are well planned to promote learning across all areas of the curriculum. The teachers' use an appropriately wide range of assessment for learning strategies with the children encouraging them for example to self and peer assess their work.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the primary school is outstanding. The school has an inclusive and welcoming ethos with effective working relationships at all levels. As a result of the well-considered procedures in place to encourage and reward the children's positive behaviour, the children are attentive, confident and respectful. The development of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme focuses appropriately on the children's personal, social and emotional development. The programme is a particular strength of the school's provision as it creates excellent opportunities for the children to develop empathy and to express their thoughts and ideas. The pastoral care within the nursery unit is very good. The staff are caring and supportive of the children's needs and they use appropriate strategies to develop their confidence and self esteem.

- The provision for special educational needs is very good. Children are identified early using effective screening procedures and they benefit from well-planned and enjoyable withdrawal sessions for literacy and numeracy. Regular assessments are made of individual progress and there are well-established and extensive interagency links which support the children's learning, health and well being. The parents are well-informed about their children's progress and the children integrate well into the life and work of the school.
- The support for children who are newcomers, and for their parents, is very good. The children make very good progress with their English, are developing friendships and are able to increasingly participate well in class lessons.
- The nursery unit's educational programme provides good opportunities for learning in all areas of the preschool curriculum. The development of the children's early mathematical concepts and language and their knowledge and understanding of the World Around Us are particular strengths of the programme. The staff's work with the children is consistently of a good quality, with examples of very good interactions that extend the children's imaginative responses and decision-making skills. The planning and resources for outdoor play need to be improved to develop the children's learning experiences further.
- The school gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and there are very good opportunities for physical activity through the regular physical education lessons and sport. The school has prioritised the need to improve the quality of the playground experiences for the children. There is good promotion of healthy eating and physical activity in the nursery unit.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The Principal provides very effective leadership and management of the school while developing distributive leadership among the newly established senior leadership team. Together, they have established systematic processes for monitoring and evaluating the standards achieved by the children and the quality of the provision; all of which they plan to extend further through developing the role of the co-ordinators.
- The processes in place for school development planning are well-paced, based on wide consultation and self evaluation, including the use of a range of qualitative and quantitative data, leading to clear evidence of improvements. There are effective links between the whole school priorities identified, relevant staff development, and the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the work.. The work of the nursery unit needs to be incorporated more fully into this very good practice.
- The accommodation and resources are well-managed to ensure a safe and stimulating learning environment which supports the children's learning. The recently installed interactive whiteboards are increasingly being used effectively in most classes to support the teaching and learning. The quality of the accommodation is variable due to the differences in the age and fabric of the buildings; the staff make the best use of the space available.

- The school has very effective links with the local and wider community which are strongly focused on supporting the children's learning and personal development. The parents are kept very well-informed about the work of the school and the support of the parents association is highly valued within the school community.
- Based on the evidence at the time of the inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors bring a high degree of professionalism, knowledge and expertise to their role.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and the nursery unit have comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

CONCLUSION

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

The Education and training Inspectorate will monitor the nursery unit's progress on the areas for improvement.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued to the school and nursery unit (Based on 09/10 Enrolment)	198
Number of Questionnaires Returned	78
Percentage of Returns	39%
Number of Comments	42

The positive responses from the parental questionnaires indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision being provided within the school and the nursery unit. In particular, parents reported their appreciation of the caring and dedicated staff, the quality of the teaching, the approachability of the leadership, and the focus on developing both the academics, social and emotional development of the children. The small number of issues raised has been shared with the Principal and the governors.

In discussions with the governors they reported their confidence in the work of the Principal and the hard work of the staff team. They reported on the high standards being achieved within the school, the effective communication between the governors and the senior leadership team and their commitment to continuous improvement.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	29
Number of Comments	9

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	24
Number of Comments	4

The responses from the teaching staff and almost all of the support staff were highly affirmative about all aspects of school life. They indicated confidence in the leadership of the school and a strong sense of team work among the staff.

The small number of concerns raised has been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

In discussions with a group of year 6 pupils they reported their enjoyment of the wide range of experiences in the school and the approaches taken to reward positive behaviour and achievements. They were confident about how to raise a concern and resolve problems and indicated that they felt safe and happy in school.

Health and safety

- Access to areas within the school are limited for children with a physical disability.
- There is no wheelchair access to block A.

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ST ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT,
BELFAST**

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	52	52
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	1
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	1
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	2	1
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	0
With English as an additional language	2	2

* 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.	61.5%
Average attendance for the previous year.	92.95%

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	2	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	2	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	4
Trainees	3

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	30.76%
Number of written comments	8

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