

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Moneyrea Primary School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in May 2011



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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: Moneyrea Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 16/05/11**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-1699** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 1 Intake	17	23	21	30	30
Enrolments					
Primary	138	142	148	170	169
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 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): 96.9% **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): (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 21.1 | NI PTR: 20.7 | | |
| iii. Average Class Size: | 24 | | | |
| iv. Class Size (Range): | 20 to 30 | | | |
| v. Ancillary Support: | | | | |
| Number of Hours Per Week : | | | | |
| i. Clerical support: | | | | 20 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | | | 40 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | | | 35 |
| vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | | | 1.7% |
| vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | | | 23% |
| viii. Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | | | 0 |
| ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | | | 8.8% |
| 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
96% | Mathematics
100% | | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Moneyrea Primary School is situated at the centre of Moneyrea Village on the outskirts of Belfast. The majority of the children come from the village and surrounding area. The enrolment of the school has shown an upward trend over the past three years and currently stands at 169 children. The school reports that approximately nine percent of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately 23% 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, and 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.

Almost 64% of parental questionnaires were returned to the Inspection Services Branch and 42 contained additional written comments. The responses of almost all of the questionnaires were positive. A majority of the comments reflected very favourably on the energetic leadership of the Principal and the professionalism and approachability of the teaching and support staff; attention was also drawn to the family orientated ethos of the school.

Eight of the teaching staff and eight members of the support staff responded to the online questionnaires. Two teachers and two support staff supplied additional comments all of which were very positive about the life and work of the school.

The governors spoke very positively about the caring, inclusive ethos of the school, and their appreciation of the work of the school and the commitment of the Principal and staff to the children. They reported that they were kept well informed about all aspects of school life and that their understanding of developments in the life and work of the school had been enhanced through regular reports from members of staff.

In discussions held with the year 6 children they talked articulately, positively and with great enthusiasm about their experiences in the school. They appreciated the range of rewards for positive behaviour and value how the teachers work hard to make learning fun. The children indicated that they know what to do and whom to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their work or their safety and well-being.

An analysis of the questionnaires and the written comments was shared with the Principal and the governors.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. The children are very welcoming and their behaviour both in and out of class is exemplary. A strong sense of family and community exists in the school and this is underpinned by the very good working relationships, and a caring, supportive and inclusive ethos. A whole school approach to promoting and rewarding positive behaviour encourages the children to develop further their confidence and self-esteem. The older children develop their levels of responsibility through working with the younger children. In addition, the extensive range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to participate in inter-school events enriches the learning experiences for the children. The school has been awarded the ECO School Green Flag Award for its environmental work.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

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

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The school ensures that the parents are kept well informed about their child's progress through parental meetings and an annual written report. Information on curricular developments is conveyed to the parents through focused information evenings. The parents have ready access to relevant policies through the school web-site. The school also informs parents of special events through a weekly news bulletin and a more detailed newsletter celebrating the achievements of the children is published once a term. The Parent Teacher Association is highly supportive of the school; parents are encouraged to become involved in school events and funds raised have contributed to the purchasing of resources such as the school minibus. The school has developed extensive links with the local and international community and is the recipient of an International Schools' Award.

2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 LEARNING

The children demonstrate high levels of motivation and engagement; they enjoy their learning, listen well, respect the staff and work well collaboratively and in small groups. Information and communication technology is used very effectively, with teachers making adept use of interactive whiteboards, websites, programmable devices, and computer programmes to motivate the children and support learning and teaching in English and mathematics.

At foundation stage (FS), the children experience a stimulating play-based curriculum and most are able to sustain extended periods of concentrated play. They access independently the range of support materials and equipment provided by the teachers and support staff.

The children who receive additional support with their learning make good progress.

An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance is consistently well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. The levels of attainment in English and mathematics are also above the average when compared with schools in the same free schools meals category.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The literacy co-ordinator (LITCO) monitors and evaluates the quality of the provision very effectively; for example she has conducted two whole school writing audits, including internal standardisation of levelling of samples of work; and, through analysis of data, she has identified important areas for development for literacy which have been prioritised in the school development plan (SDP). The English Scheme plans for appropriate progression across all key stages.

The teachers support well the development of the children's spoken language and thinking skills through effective, open-ended questions which enable the children to make extended contributions to discussion in the classroom. When given the opportunity, the children can communicate their ideas and feelings using an expanding vocabulary.

In FS, the children become familiar with different forms of print and experiment with informal mark making. The children's letter formation, word building skills and knowledge of the basic conventions such as simple sentence structure are developed through shared writing activities. As their skills develop, the children's independent writing is promoted appropriately; by the end of KS1, the majority of children can express their ideas with a length and quality of content appropriate to their ability. As they progress through KS2, the children extend their range of writing styles and in the samples of work available during the inspection there were opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences across the curriculum. Information and communication technology was used effectively to support learning; in KS2, the children were using the internet for independent research purposes and selection of information, and also to produce stories in a format that replicates commercial book production. The majority of the children achieve a high standard of writing by the end of KS2.

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. The children's reading skills are developed progressively as they move through the school; they make steady progress in their reading in line with their abilities, and by the end of year 7 many read with confidence and fluency. Teachers and classroom assistants have also undergone training in Reading Partnership. The LITCO, who is also the SENCO, has monitored reading standards closely and the test results indicate an improving trend in the children's attainments.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

The programme for mathematics provides the children with a wide range of experiences in number, shape and space, measures and data-handling; this includes the effective use of practical equipment and regular opportunities for work in pairs and small groups. A scheme of work for mental mathematics enables the teachers to plan for, and develop, the progression of the children's mental mathematics strategies. In the majority of the lessons

observed, the pace was good, and the activities engaged, challenged and motivated the children; the teachers provided good opportunities for the children to develop mathematical language and to articulate, clarify and extend their mathematical thinking. The very good practice observed in a significant minority of classes, where the children have frequent opportunities to engage in a variety of problem-solving and investigative mathematics, should be applied more consistently across the school; in most classes, there is currently an over-emphasis on worksheets and routine calculations.

The children are provided with very good opportunities to apply their mathematics in a range of contexts across the curriculum and in everyday life; for example, in year 3 the children investigated the tastes of a small range of Swedish foods, drew graphs to show their preferences and wrote sentences to summarise their conclusions.

The co-ordinator supports well her colleagues in implementing the agreed strategies. She monitors regularly the quality of the mathematics provision through the sampling of the children's work, the review of teaching plans and the analysis of performance data. She now needs to use the outcomes of these evaluations to plan more systematically for whole school development. The co-ordinator identifies groups of children who require targeted support in order to enhance further the standards they attain. It will be important that these children receive intensive and targeted support in order to enhance their progress in their areas of need.

The standards achieved by the children in mathematics are outstanding. During the inspection the highest attaining children in years 4 and 7 demonstrated their ability to think mathematically across all areas of the numeracy programme and to talk with confidence about their experiences.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The long term planning provides a broad framework for progression in the children's learning. The school needs to develop further the medium term planning in order to match the learning more clearly to the needs of the children. The teachers need to evaluate their planning more regularly in order to inform future planning and guide better the learning.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed was always good or better with over half being very good or outstanding.

In the most effective practice, teachers used skilful questioning to promote the children's thinking skills and elicit extended responses from them; learning intentions were shared clearly with the children at the beginning of lessons with the learning consolidated in the course of the lesson and through focused plenary sessions. Lessons were also well paced, appropriate differentiation was in evidence and the learning was often linked to the children's experiences.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is highly committed to the children in her care. Through the assessment procedures and the teachers' observations, the school identifies appropriately those children who need additional support at an early stage. The classroom assistants play a valuable role in supporting the children's learning within lessons as well as through the Reading Partnership programme. The SENCO provides good quality withdrawal sessions to support the children who require help in literacy. The children enjoy the sessions and interact well with their teachers. The school works effectively with a

number of outside agencies to further enhance the provision for those children who have been identified by the school as being in need of additional learning support. The senior management team (SMT) needs to implement a more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the targets and strategies within the Individual Education Plans to ensure consistency across the school.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers use a range of standardised and end of key stage tests to evaluate the children's learning. The key stage data is analysed effectively to identify whole school priorities. The Principal and SMT have, appropriately, identified the need to engage in more rigorous analysis of the assessment outcomes in order to track the children's progress at individual, class and whole-school level, to identify low or under-achievement and to help further prioritise key areas for development.

In most classes the teachers mark the children's written work regularly and supportively and provide prompt oral feedback to improve learning. In the best practice, in a minority of classes, effective marking promotes improvement and the children are encouraged to engage in the self-evaluation of their learning. This good practice needs to be consistently applied across the whole school.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of leadership and management is good.

The Principal has been in post for eleven years and manages the school and the resources effectively. He has worked hard to promote the school in the local and wider community and has overseen important changes in the life of the school. He has a very good knowledge and understanding of the school context and knows the children and their families well. He is supported well by his Vice-Principal and the teachers. It is appropriate at this time, for the SMT to review and revise the distribution of roles and responsibilities of all members of staff.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

A collegial approach to school development planning has been established which involves the staff in the audit of provision and in the setting of priorities for the school. The SDP is compliant with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. However, most of the action plans are not sufficiently focused on teaching and learning and do not adequately identify the strategies through which the targets will be realised.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The school governors make very positive contributions to the life and work of the school and support effectively the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP. They ensure that all aspects of the life and work of the school are kept under review.

4.4 ACCOMMODATION

The school building and surrounding grounds, which include an ECO garden and outdoor classroom, are maintained to a high standard and provide a pleasant working environment for the staff and children. A new classroom, foyer and special educational needs room were completed in June 2009.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good quality of the pastoral care provided for the children and the significant contribution made by the support staff to the children's learning and development;
- the exemplary behaviour of the children who are highly motivated and display enjoyment in their learning;
- the very good opportunities provided for the children to apply their learning in a range of contexts across the curriculum and in everyday life;
- the very high standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy;
- the majority of the teaching observed which was very good or outstanding; and
- the commitment of the Principal, well supported by the Vice-principal, who have worked hard to raise the profile of the school in the local and wider community.

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 learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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