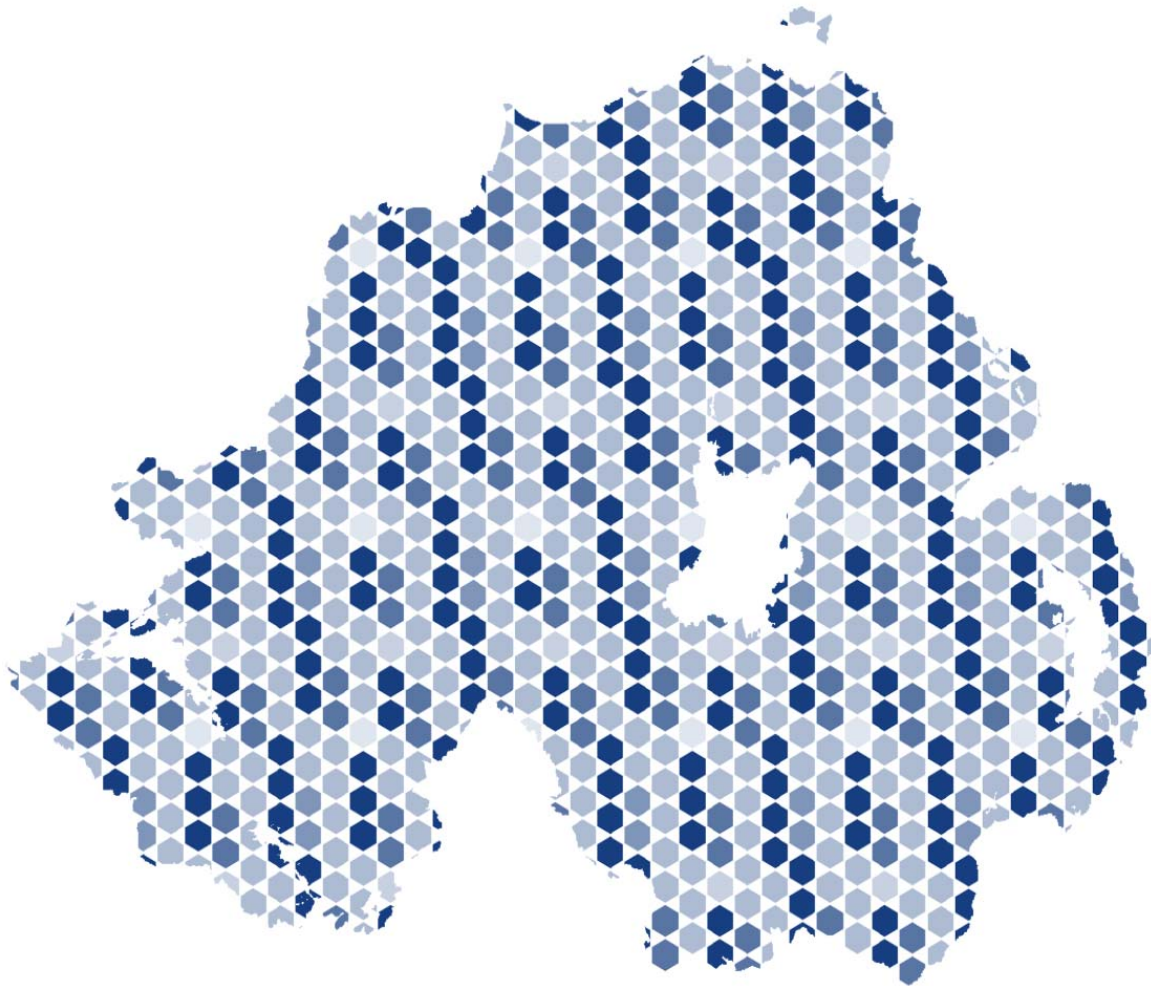


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Killicomaine Junior High
School, Portadown

Report of an Inspection
in April 2010

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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, the Inspectorate relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Killicomaine Junior High School is a controlled, co-educational school situated in Portadown. It caters for pupils of all abilities at key stage (KS) 3 within the two-tier system of post-primary education of the Southern Education and Library Board. The enrolment has decreased slightly over the last three years and currently stands at 452. Approximately 9% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified almost 12% of the pupils as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and 5% of pupils are newcomer pupils.

1.2 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF, GOVERNORS AND PUPILS

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teaching staff and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. In addition, meetings were held with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of pupils from years 8 and 10.

One hundred and five questionnaires were issued to parents; 49 were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 31 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires and most of the comments from the parents indicated good levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. In particular, they mentioned the care and support for their children in settling in the school, the range of educational visits and the hard work and dedication of the staff. A significant minority of the written comments raised a variety of individual issues in relation to aspects of teaching and learning and the pastoral care provision.

Twenty-six teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with five providing additional written comments. Fifteen support staff also completed questionnaires and one of them provided an additional written comment. All the staff enjoy working in the school, they feel that the school promotes the care and welfare of the pupils and that standards of behaviour across the school are upheld consistently. All of the staff reported that they have benefited from staff development opportunities in the past three years. Almost half of the staff, however, feel that the school is not adequately resourced for learning and teaching and a minority of staff would like greater opportunities to discuss the identification of the school's priorities.

In discussions held with the pupils, they talked enthusiastically about the many aspects of school life that they enjoy, including the extra-curricular activities and their involvement in decision-making through the school council. They reported that they feel safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns.

Six governors met with members of the inspection team on the first day of the inspection and they expressed their strong support for the work of the school and the good standards achieved by the pupils. They reported that the local community holds the school in high regard.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors, the areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires. Where relevant, these matters are commented on in the body of the report.

1.3 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels across the school and, in addition, on the provision for English, mathematics and technology and design. The provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and the arrangements for the inclusion of these pupils in all aspects of school life was also inspected. The provision for pastoral care, the arrangements for child protection, and the school's programme for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) were evaluated, as was the approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. As an additional evidence base for the inspection, lessons were observed across a range of other subjects.

A summary of the main findings for the subjects under focus can be found in Appendix 1.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

The pupils have a positive attitude to their learning; they co-operate well with their teachers and, when given the opportunity, engage collaboratively in their learning through group and paired work. When the quality of the teaching is good or better, the pupils achieve good standards across the ability range.

The pupils achieve high standards in the end of KS3 assessments. Over the past three years, the results are well above the Northern Ireland averages at both levels 5 and 6 in the teacher assessments for English and mathematics.

More details of the KS3 assessments can be found in Appendix 4.

The school has made good efforts to provide pupils with a breadth of learning experiences both integrated within the classroom and linked to extra-curricular activities. In particular, there is an innovative enrichment programme which encourages independence and a sense of responsibility for year 10 pupils. Importantly, the school has begun to develop curricular links with the KS4 provision within the Craigavon Area Learning Community.

2.2 THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

2.2.1 THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

In the majority of lessons observed, the quality of the teaching was good or better; in a significant minority of lessons it was very good or better. In the more effective practice, the lessons are well-planned and paced, the pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, and there is good use of information and communications technology. Throughout the lessons, the teachers use effectively a range of strategies, questioning and resources to make the learning relevant to the pupils and to connect the learning to other curricular areas.

In the less effective practice, over-direction by the teacher, reliance on low-level tasks and closed questioning limit the learning of the pupils. In addition, appropriate learning intentions are not shared with the pupils, the lessons lack challenge and the pupils are passive.

The quality of provision for those pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The special educational needs co-ordinator administers the process efficiently. The core targets of the Individual Education Plans are too general. As identified by the staff, the school needs to review the bureaucratic nature of the current system and to diagnose more accurately the specific needs of the individual pupils. There are several strands of support

including additional lessons with English and mathematics specialists and a small number of withdrawal classes for literacy. A short-term intensive reading support for selected pupils with trained classroom assistants and volunteer parents is raising the standards for the pupils involved. Furthermore, a number of youth providers deliver a beneficial programme to supplement the formal curriculum and build the pupils' self-esteem and their attitude to learning. The school, however, needs to ensure a more integrated approach to this provision across the school. The school has begun a limited analysis of the success of the different types of provision although there needs to be more coherence to the various strands of support.

2.2.2 PASTORAL CARE

The provision for pastoral care within the school is good. The Vice-principal for pastoral care provides effective leadership: he has overseen a number of important pastoral initiatives and has a clear vision for the ongoing development of the provision. Among the strengths are the supportive and inclusive ethos, the well-behaved and courteous pupils, the pupils' participation in an extensive range of extra-curricular and additional learning experiences beyond the classroom, and the pupils' mature response to carrying out responsibilities within the school council and the leadership and engagement programme. The school needs to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the effectiveness of the recent developments within the pastoral provision.

2.2.3 CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The school needs to ensure that all staff have a thorough understanding of the agreed code of conduct.

2.2.4 CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The provision for CEIAG is satisfactory. It is delivered through the learning for life and work programme by a small team of teachers who provide satisfactory opportunities to develop effective career decision-making skills. There is a series of visits by the schools and colleges to which the pupils may progress at the end of KS3, and by relevant personnel to provide the pupils with a greater understanding of the world of work and of the education, training and employment opportunities that are available locally and regionally. There is a satisfactory range of careers information available to enable the pupils to make informed and realistic career decisions. The school is developing and extending a pupil profile which will support the pupils in their learning and will inform the teachers' planning.

2.2.5 INCLUSION

There is a supportive and inclusive ethos for all pupils within the school regardless of ability. The newcomer pupils in the school are well integrated and the school provides appropriate language support for those who need it.

2.2.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the role of the School Nutrition Action Group in enhancing the healthy food provision in the canteen and the pupils' success in both local and national cookery competitions, which encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles.

3. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of the leadership and management of the school is good. The Principal sets high expectations for the educational experiences of the pupils under his care and he serves the school and its community well. He is provided with effective support from the Vice-principal and the staff. Under his leadership, the staff have been consulted about whole-school issues and have worked hard to take forward a number of important initiatives. These include the review of the KS3 curriculum, the development of more distributive leadership at middle-management level, the start to self-evaluation, the focus on a more cohesive and integrated pastoral care system and the greater involvement of the pupils in the decision-making processes within the school. It is appropriate that the school has identified the need to develop a more comprehensive strategic management team to lead school improvement further within the school.

A good start has been made to the process of self-evaluation, including good examples of departmental action planning which has led to targeted improvement in the pupils' learning. More needs to be done to embed a rigorous and systematic approach to self-evaluation in order to inform better the school development planning process and to ensure that the school's development plan complies fully with the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations Northern Ireland (NI) 2005 Order.

The school has managed well significant budgetary constraints and is now in a position to give greater priority to the provision of resources for teaching and learning.

The governors are hard-working and committed to the school community. Whilst they are kept well informed of the life and work of the school and are involved in the school development planning process, they need to be better informed about the alignment of the school's financial plan with the strategic priorities of the school.

4. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the well-behaved, courteous pupils who have a positive attitude to their learning;
- the good standards achieved by the pupils by the end of KS3;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, the majority of which was good or better;
- the commitment of the staff to provide good opportunities for the pupils to participate in a range of learning experiences beyond the classroom;
- the very good quality of the provision in mathematics and technology and design and the good quality of the provision in English; and
- the effective leadership of the Principal and Vice-principal.

The area for improvement includes:

- the need for a more coherent and strategic approach to all development work, including the systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the impact of this work on teaching and learning.

5. CONCLUSION

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

English

The quality of provision for English is good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the good working relationships which exist at all levels;
- the good standards achieved by the pupils at the end of KS3 assessments;
- the quality of teaching, all of which was satisfactory or good;
- the good start made to implementing the Northern Ireland Curriculum, particularly in relation to revised schemes of work for KS3; and
- the developing culture of reflection and self-evaluation which identifies appropriate areas for development.

The area for improvement includes the need to:

- ensure that all pupils get more opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes in an extended manner.

Mathematics

The quality of provision for mathematics is very good.

The strengths of the provision for mathematics include:

- the very good standards achieved by the pupils;
- the good or better quality of teaching in all of the lessons observed;
- the committed and hard-working teachers who prepare thoroughly for lessons;
- the range of strategies being used to promote an interest in mathematics;
- the very good leadership and management of the head of department; and
- the good start made in self-evaluating the mathematics provision.

Technology and design

The quality of the provision for technology and design is very good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the very positive ethos established within the department underpinned by the excellent working relationships between the pupils and the teachers;
- the very good standards achieved by the pupils in their design and manufacturing work;

- the quality of the teaching observed, which was consistently very good;
- the appropriately wide range of learning and teaching strategies used which engage the pupils actively in their learning;
- the very effective medium and long-term planning underpinning the work of the department; and
- the commitment and leadership of the head of department supported effectively by the departmental team.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A number of external doors require secure access systems fitted.

The two overhead service gantries in the systems room in the technology and design suite are too low and are a danger for tall pupils.

APPENDIX 3

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Killicomaine Junior High School v. Date of Inspection: W/C 26.04.2010
 ii. School Reference Number: 521-0054 vi. Area of Study: Standard - Achievement & Standards, Learning & Teaching, Leadership & Management
 iii. Age Range: 11-14
 iv. Status: Controlled

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Year 8 Intake	163	182	136	128	152	157
Total enrolment	505	500	481	449	420	443

1.3 Attendance

Year 2008/09	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2008/09	NI Average 2007/08
% Attendance	95.6	94.1	92	0	0	0	0	94	90

1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:	29.08	iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):	0.74
ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):	15.234	iv. Number of Teachers involved in Area of Study: (Focused only)	9

Year 2009/10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	81	78	70	0	0	0	0	229
Enrolment: Girls	76	76	62	0	0	0	0	214
Enrolment: Total	157	154	132	0	0	0	0	443
PTR	16.272	14.801	14.623	0	0	0	0	

1.5 Staying On Rate (2007/08) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	0.0	NI Av Year 13	N/A
Year 14	0.0	NI Av Year 14	N/A

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2007/08	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	0		0	N/A
Another School		11.3	N/A	N/A
Employment		8.7	N/A	N/A
Full-time Further Education		41.8	N/A	N/A
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training		30.3	N/A	N/A
Seeking Employment/Unemployed		4.4	N/A	N/A
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant		3.5	N/A	N/A

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table 1 showing the Key Stage 3 results for English and mathematics over the previous three years ending in June 2009, in comparison with the Northern Ireland (NI) averages for all post-primary schools.*

Table 1

KS3	More than 20 percentage points above	Between 10 and 20 percentage points above	Within 10 percentage points	Between 10 and 20 percentage points below
Level 5 and above	English	Mathematics		
Level 6 and above	English Mathematics			
Level 7 and above	Mathematics	English		

⁺ The school's results are based on teachers' assessments.

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