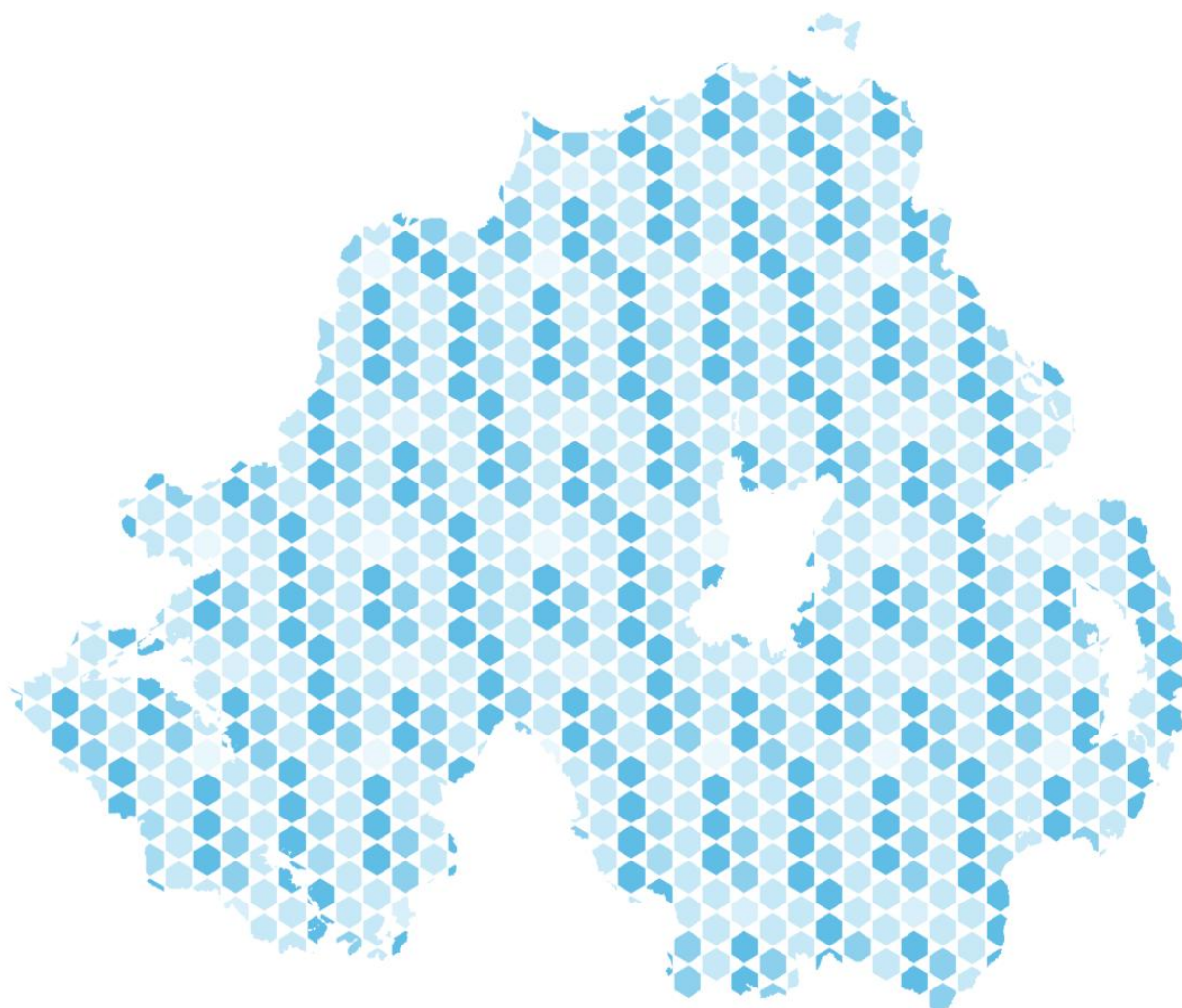


# PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Ballyhackett Primary School,  
Castlerock, Co Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in  
September 2014



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



## 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%

## Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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## **1. Inspection method and evidence base**

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.eti.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation and the children's written work and held formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with a representative(s) from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Thirty-three percent of the parents responded to the questionnaires. The responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of their children's good progress in learning, the caring, welcoming ethos where each child is treated as an individual, and the very strong sense of community within the school.

A majority of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive; they emphasised the high quality of the working relationships across the school and the good level of communication among the children and staff. ETI reported the main findings of the questionnaires and the discussions to the principal and a representative of the board of governors.

A group of year six and seven pupils met with the inspectors. They talked about the friendly atmosphere and their enjoyment of school activities such as sport and art. They reported that they felt happy and safe in school and know who to approach if they have any concerns; they enjoy taking on responsibilities through the eco council and being playground buddies.

## **2. Focus of inspection**

The inspection focused on:

1. the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
2. the quality of provision for numeracy in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

### 3. Context

Ballyhackett Primary School is situated on the Altikeeragh Road, Ballyhackett, Castlerock, seven miles west of Coleraine and overlooking the coast. All of the children who attend the school come from the villages of Castlerock and Articlave and the surrounding rural area. A majority of the children travel to school by the bus provided by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB).

The enrolment of compulsory school age pupils has declined slightly from 43 pupils in 2011 to 40 pupils in 2014. A small number of children who are under compulsory school age join the composite reception, foundation stage class until lunchtime.

Since the last inspection a new principal has been appointed and took up post in January 2014 following a period of extended absence by the previous principal.

All of the children and the teaching staff participate in a longstanding shared education programme with Castleroe Primary School.

Ballyhackett Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	43	45	42	40
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.8	93.9	95.2	99.4
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	27.0	22.2	28.5	33.3
% (No) of children on SEN register	14.9	20.9	22.7	33.3
No. of children with statements of educational needs	0	0	0	0
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Good</b>

### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well-settled and attentive and display good personal and social skills. They can complete their work independently to a high standard and collaborate together to discuss their work and solve problems, when provided with the opportunity, in both paired and group work. The children respond creatively and with enjoyment when engaged in active, open-ended tasks.
- The younger children, and particularly those in the reception group, need to have more consistent opportunities to develop their independence, make choices and manage their own learning.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Most of the children make good or better progress in their understanding of number, shape, measures and data handling. The younger children use a range of practical materials confidently to count, sort and apply their knowledge during play to talk about their thinking. By Key Stage (KS) 2 the children are confident in number, including place value, shape and space, and can explore number patterns. The most able children can think flexibly and apply their knowledge to real life everyday situations.
- Most of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making good progress in their learning or working towards overcoming a range of specific identified barriers to their learning.
- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and with independence to consolidate aspects of their learning, for example, to redraft written work and manage information. There are plans to develop further the range of experiences in the coming year through, for example, video conferencing with other schools.

## **6. Provision**

- A majority of the teaching was evaluated as good with a significant minority being very good. In the most effective practice, the lessons were well planned, the children understood the learning intentions and how to judge whether they had been successful in their learning. The activities provided were relevant, interesting and set within a meaningful context, and the teachers made very effective use of questioning and plenary sessions to encourage the children to explain their thinking, consolidate their understanding and reflect on their learning.
- In the less effective lessons there was an over-emphasis on adult direction which minimised the opportunities for the children to make choices, self-manage and contribute their own ideas. In these lessons the work was less well-matched to the needs and interest of the children.
- The very small number of reception children limits the opportunity to deliver a quality pre-school learning experience in line with the pre-school curricular guidance.
- The staff have prioritised the development of aspects of the planning as a key priority for the coming year and the inspection findings endorse this as a key focus for further development.
- The staff are conscientious in gathering a wide range of information to track the children's progress and use this information to inform their teaching. Under the effective leadership of the principal the staff are making good progress, in more formally and systematically gathering, analysing and using the data to identify individual children who require additional support and intervention.

- Children with additional needs are identified early, and effective processes are in place for referral in conjunction with very good liaison with parents and other agencies. The individual education plans and records of the children's progress are thorough and detailed. It is important that there is effective monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice to ensure that the strategies to support the children's learning are implemented consistently on a daily basis. The school has introduced appropriately small group withdrawal sessions for literacy and numeracy support.
- The numeracy programme is broad and balanced with suitable progression as the children move through the school. In the best practice, the use of practical materials and active approaches are used to good effect to involve the children in their learning and to apply their knowledge in a variety of settings. The school has identified appropriately the further embedding of these approaches and the identification of cross-curricular links as a priority for development.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. There is an inclusive and respectful ethos where children and families from a diverse range of backgrounds are welcomed and valued. There are excellent working relationships at all levels and a clear commitment by the staff, governors, parents and volunteers to work collaboratively in the best interests of the school.
- There are good opportunities for the children to learn about healthy eating and a range of physical activities provided which the children clearly enjoy.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership and management have a shared vision for providing a high quality education which values every child. The principal, in collaboration with staff who hold positions of responsibility, has undertaken initial auditing of school provision, which is used effectively to identify relevant priorities for improvement. The action plans are well focused on improving the provision and further raising standards. Actions taken need to be rigorously and systematically monitored and evaluated to ensure that the school fully realises its vision of providing high quality education for all of the children.
- The high level of involvement from parents and community volunteers in the life and work of the school is a key feature. The volunteers bring a wide range of skills and experience which contribute to the effective organisation of the school and the quality of the children's learning experiences.
- The shared education programme is an exemplar of best practice. The rich range of experiences provided extend and enhance the shared learning experiences and development opportunities of the children, parents, governors and staff. The leadership and management have worked collaboratively with their partner school to plan for future sustainability of this work which is essential for broadening the children's experiences.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors communicated their intention to develop further their knowledge of the standards the children attain through enhanced communication with responsibility holders.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff. In particular, the leadership and management need to review the appropriateness of enrolling small numbers of reception children through the school year.

## **8. 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 key area for improvement is:

- to develop further the school self-evaluation process in order to include rigorous monitoring and evaluation at all levels, leading to continuous improvement.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.



**Health and safety/Accommodation**

1. The condition of the fabric of the mobile classroom has been identified as having potential risks. It is in the best interest of the children that these are resolved as a matter of urgency.
2. The arrangements for securing the access to the rear of the school building needs to be kept under review.

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