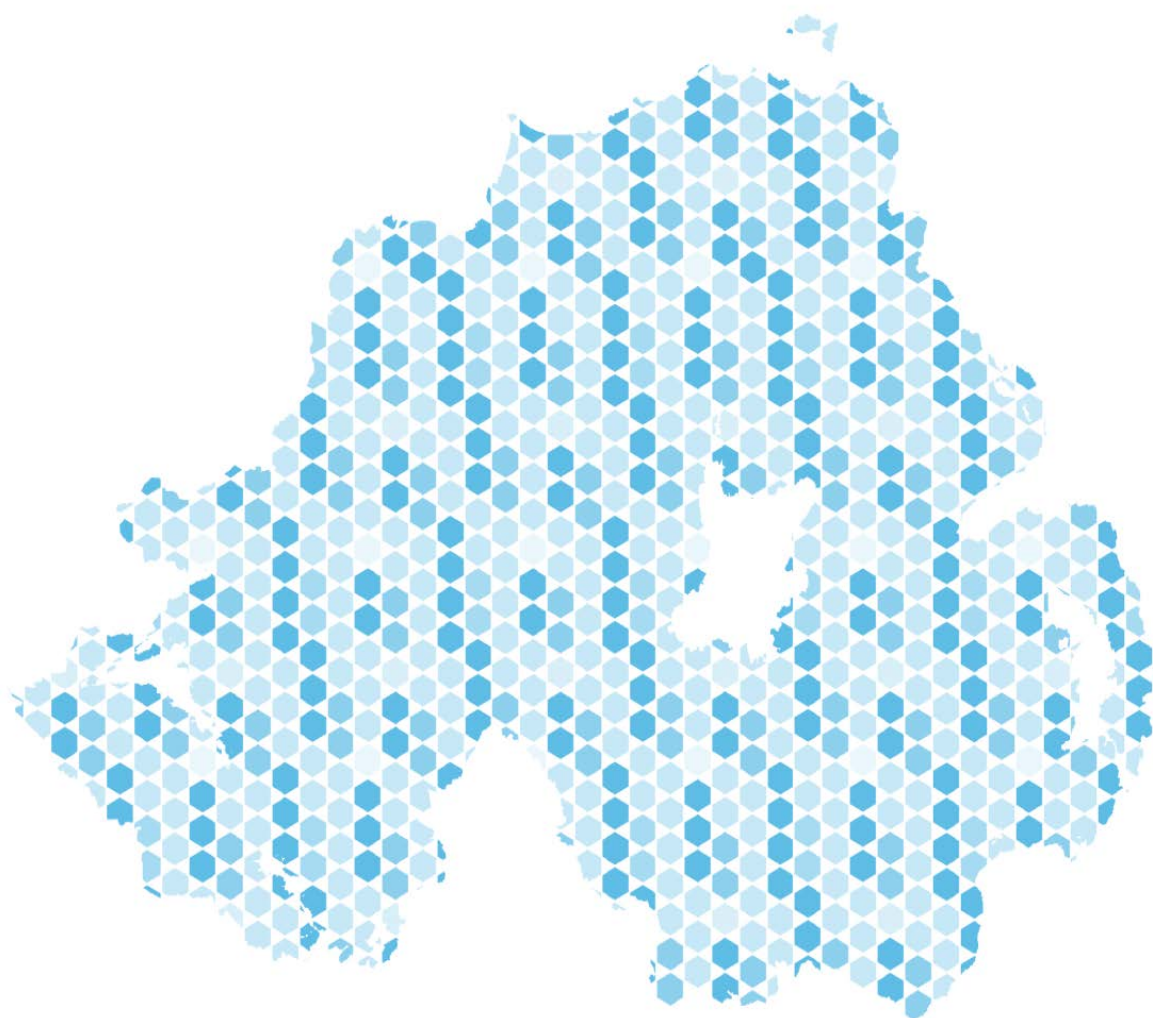


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballyhenry Primary School,
Newtownabbey, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
February 2014

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

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

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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

Questionnaire	Number issued (total number in the school per category)	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	133	11	8.27%	*
Teaching staff	8	5	62.5%	*
Support staff	10	5	50%	*

* fewer than 5

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents about the life and work of the school. As a result, the response rate to the parental questionnaire may be low.

Almost all of the responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the caring approach of the staff.

The majority of the teachers and the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive.

In discussions with the inspectors, the year 6 children talked with enthusiasm about their school and in particular, the subjects and extra-curricular activities they enjoy.

2. Context

Ballyhenry Primary School is located in Newtownabbey, Co Antrim. Over the past four years the enrolment has decreased and currently stands at 133 children. The percentage of children entitled to receive free school meals has increased in the last four years and is currently 46%. The school has identified 19% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Almost all of the children attending come from the surrounding area. The principal has been in post for just over two years.

Ballyhenry Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	151	141	139	133
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.1	93.8	93.1	96
FSME Percentage ¹	19.2	32.6	33	45.1
% of children on SEN register	15	16	16	18%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	6

Source: data as held by the school.

*fewer than 5

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

4. Overall finding

Overall Performance Level	Very good
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Very good
Leadership and Management	Very good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children in the school are well-motivated learners who are polite and courteous and display high levels of independence; their behaviour is exemplary. The children respond positively to the varied learning opportunities provided by their teachers and demonstrate very good personal and social skills. They display enjoyment in the learning tasks and the ability to apply a range of strategies to problem-solving activities in real-life contexts.

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

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data over three years² shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance was below the NI average and that of schools in the same FSM category in one year, and well above in two years³. 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 and achieve outcomes in line with their ability or above expectation.
- From an early stage, the children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and appropriately to support their learning. Their standards in ICT, including the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT Accreditation, are consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average.

6. Provision

- The teachers' planning is comprehensive and guides well the teaching and learning; a particular strength is the matching of the learning experiences across the curriculum in meaningful contexts. The planning is well informed by thorough evaluation of the children's previous learning, the teachers' knowledge of each child's individual needs and the opportunities for the teachers to share best practice through peer evaluations. In the foundation stage, the planning for play-based learning needs to be developed further to take more account of the learning potential in the planned activities.
- The quality of the teaching and learning observed was of a consistently high standard. The teaching ranged from good to outstanding, with the majority of lessons being very good. The teachers take appropriate account of the children's prior learning and use a wide range of questioning techniques effectively to extend the children's thinking and language skills. The lessons are well-paced and the teachers ensure that the children have sufficient time to consolidate their learning throughout the lesson and in the plenary session. Tasks are differentiated well to meet the needs of individuals and groups.
- The teachers employ a wide range of assessment approaches to evaluate the children's learning and use the data discerningly, together with their observations, to inform the teaching and to challenge the children and promote their learning. The staff are aware of the need to develop further the methods of observation and record-keeping in the foundation stage. Marking is regular and consistent and the teachers provide effective feedback to the children both orally and in their books.
- Over the last two years the school has developed a rigorous and coherent approach to the development of literacy and numeracy skills which facilitates continuity and progression in the children's learning. The children benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities which meet their needs and interests and supports their learning.

² Due to the current transition period in the arrangements for statutory assessment, this analysis of the end of KS2 performance data is based on the outcomes up to but not including the 2012/13 school year.

³ The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is very good. The holistic development of each child is central to the work of the school and the school environment is nurturing, inclusive, safe and secure. The children's achievements are recognised at class level and celebrated in regular assemblies. The KS2 children are encouraged to support their younger peers through the mentoring system. The children have very good opportunities to contribute to decision-making in the school, including for example, through the school council.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- The school has reviewed recently the provision for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning and provides effective literacy and numeracy support through well-informed in-class and withdrawal sessions. The children benefit from the processes for early identification of their needs and the detailed and effective individual education plans which guide well their learning. The sensitive and highly effective work of the teachers and the classroom assistants has a positive impact on the children's learning and on their self-esteem.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management are clearly focused on realising the school's ethos statement of 'achieving potential in a caring environment'. In the relatively short period since his appointment, the principal has demonstrated outstanding leadership; he leads by example, is an excellent role model, and has a strategic vision for the future development of the school. The recently-appointed senior leadership team supports very well the development work of the school. All of the staff are highly motivated and work collaboratively to continually improve the provision for the children.
- The school places a very clear focus on improvement. There is a comprehensive school development plan which is informed by rigorous self-evaluation; a particular strength is the analysis and use of all available data, both quantitative and qualitative, including, importantly, the views of all the stakeholders. The associated action plans have a clear focus on improvement and raising standards.
- The school has very effective links with the parents and the local community. The parents are actively encouraged to support their children's learning and the parent teacher association makes a significant contribution to the life of the school.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated; the governors are very well-informed about the school and they carry out effectively their key functions.

- 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. In discussions with the inspectors, the children reported that they felt very secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.
- 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.

8. Conclusion

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.

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