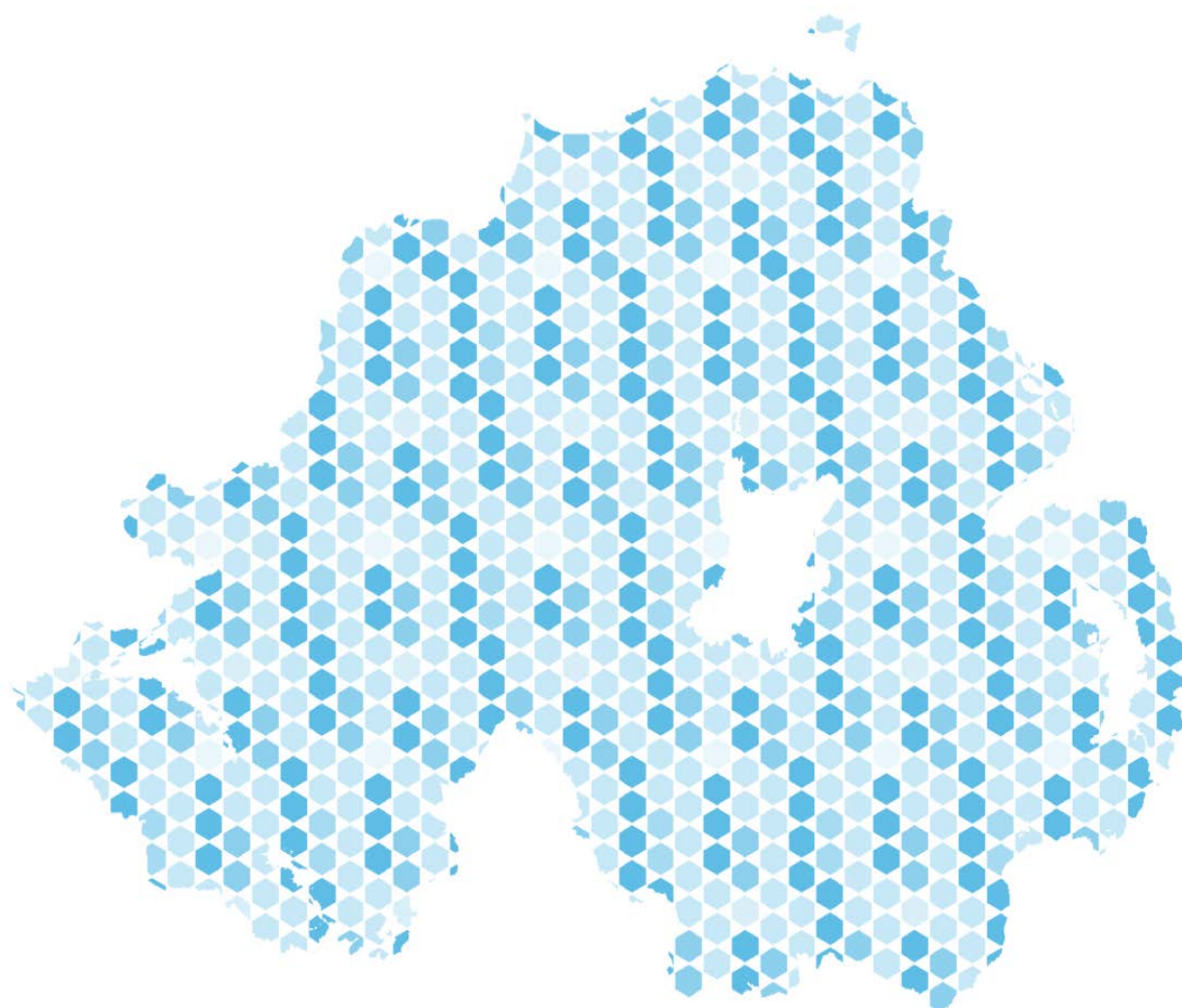


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Cavehill Primary School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
April 2015

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
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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.

Almost 7 percent of the parents replied to a questionnaire with most responses indicating high levels of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the life and work of the school. They highlighted the approachable, hardworking staff and the good progress their children make in learning and in their all-round development. Most of the teaching and non-teaching staff responses to a questionnaire were also very positive. In discussions with inspectors, the governors praised the care and support the staff give to all the children and the high standards which the children achieve. ETI reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main findings and some significant issues emerging from the questionnaires which have been commented on, where relevant, in the report.

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 literacy and numeracy in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Cavehill Primary School is situated off the North Circular Road in North Belfast, moving into new premises on the same site in 2004. The enrolment of the primary school has risen steadily over the past four years and is now 410 children, with 2 classes accommodated in mobile classrooms. The children attend from the local and wider urban area. Over the past four years the percentage of children entitled to free school meals (FSM) has increased to almost 25% and the percentage identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning has reduced to over 17%. The principal has been in post since September 2014 and the school is in the process of appointing a new vice-principal; a small number of the teachers are working in a temporary capacity.

Cavehill Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	381	396	404	410
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.2 (95.2)	95.1 (94.9)	95.6 (95.6)	-
FSME Percentage ¹	17.8	17.4	20.2	24.8
% of children on SEN register	20.9	19.4	18.8	17.5
No. of children with statements of educational needs	8	7	7	9
No. of newcomers	5	6	*	6

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are, from the earliest stage, friendly, enthusiastic and involved learners who express pride in their school and engage positively with their peers, the staff and visitors. They settle readily to the activities provided by their teachers and are mutually supportive of one another as they work, displaying very good teamwork skills in paired and group tasks. As they develop, the children talk about their learning eagerly and explain their thinking well. The quality of the presentation of the children's written work is nearly always good or better. The children's behaviour and manners at the time of the inspection were exemplary.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are achieving in line with, or above, their ability and expectations in mathematics. In English, almost all of the children, including those requiring additional support with their learning, achieve above, or in line with, expectations. Low achievement or potential under-achievement by the children is identified early and is addressed successfully by a range of appropriate intervention strategies which are monitored closely for impact.
- Across the key stages, the children demonstrate very good talking and listening skills, contributing to class discussions, reading aloud and presenting confidently to their peers. From the foundation stage (FS), the children develop well their ability to write independently and by Year 7, most produce very good pieces of extended writing for a range of purposes and audiences. The most able children in Year 7 read with understanding and expression and can justify their views on the literature they read, including adaptations of several of Shakespeare's plays.

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

- The children have a positive attitude to mathematics. By the end of Key Stage (KS) 2, most of the children achieve very good standards. For example, their understanding of number is firmly established and most children exhibit flexibility in their approach to solving mathematical problems. The children's knowledge of concepts in shape and space, measurement and data is developing well. During the inspection, examples of lessons incorporating data handling effectively were observed; the children are able to construct and interpret accurately complex statistical diagrams and graphs as they progress through the school.
- The children are very skilled in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) devices and software to support and extend their literacy and numeracy and other aspects of their learning such as the World Around Us.

6. Provision

- In the most effective practice, in almost half of the lessons observed, the learning activities were very well paced, providing both challenge and progression in learning. The teachers took careful account of the children's individual needs and responses to adjust how the lessons progressed. In these lessons, the use of effective open-ended questioning extended the children's thinking about more complex concepts and ideas and deepened their understanding, enabling them to produce well-reasoned, expanded responses.
- When the practice was less effective, the planned learning did not meet the needs of all of the children, particularly the most able, and there were missed opportunities for learning within activities.
- The school needs to plan in more detail, over a longer-term and, in particular, to improve planning for the development of thinking skills and personal capabilities and for progression in the children's learning. Appropriately, the teachers have already identified that this work is required.
- The teachers assess and mark the children's work regularly and positively. They need to develop a more consistent whole school approach to assessment for learning, which is at an early stage of development, including marking for improvement and self- and peer-assessment, to progress the children's learning further. The effective strategies already in use need to be shared and embedded fully across the school.
- Both in the FS and in KS1, the purposeful opportunities for literacy within play- and activity-based learning enable the children to develop well their oral and written communication skills. In literacy at KS1 and KS2 there are well-planned collaborative and independent opportunities for learning, which engage and challenge the children. The school has developed a daily strategy to build the children's vocabulary and to improve their grammar as part of literacy teaching at KS2, to add pace and variety to the lessons and improve the accuracy of the children's written work. The children's enjoyment of, and competence in, reading develops very well through the use of a varied range of texts, including, at KS2, the detailed study of stories and novels.

- The younger children are introduced to key mathematical concepts through practical activities and problem-solving and investigative tasks. Throughout the FS and at KS1 there is an appropriate emphasis on developing the children's understanding of mathematics through discussion. Overall, the children experience a good breadth of learning activities across the main aspects of mathematics. In the best practice, in most of the lessons, the children are given opportunities to work in more challenging problem-solving and practical investigations which extend their mathematical proficiency and flexibility. This effective practice is not consistent across all of the classes and needs to be shared further.
- The provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is highly effective. There are clear procedures in place for the early identification of the children's needs, and the school liaises purposefully with parents and relevant agencies to plan for meeting this need. Prioritised, measurable targets are outlined in the individual education plans and are thoroughly monitored. Children who are identified for withdrawal support in literacy and numeracy are supported well by skilled teachers and assistants. Dyslexia expertise within the school is a particular strength.
- The pastoral care provision is of a high quality. There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos in the school with high levels of respect among all members of the school community. The promotion of positive behaviour is very effective and the children's personal and academic achievements are recognised and rewarded regularly, for example, through the 'Star of the Week' award. The children have very good opportunities to take on roles of responsibility through the school council, the eco-committee and the Year 7 Buddy scheme. A high priority is given to the children's well-being with the provision of a counselling service within the school.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles through, for example, the focus on healthy breaks and lunches and the wide range of sporting activities both in-school and as after-school activities.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership has a clear, strategic vision for school improvement and is focused sharply on securing the highest possible standards in learning, teaching and pastoral care. Since his appointment, the principal has established curricular teams and introduced collegial leadership across the school. The co-ordinators understand their roles and, increasingly, are working collaboratively to define and develop the links across the curriculum. It is timely that the school is appointing a new vice-principal and has identified the need to build further the leadership capacity of middle managers.
- The school needs to develop more robust and systematic processes for self-evaluation to identify and prioritise the areas for development, including consultation with the staff, parents and children and the analysis of internal assessment data. The associated action plans are not sufficiently strategic and need to provide further specific detail to guide the improvement actions and indicate how the school will measure their impact on the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards that they attain.

- There are effective arrangements in place for communicating with parents to involve them in their children's education. The school has developed a wide range of meaningful initiatives, courses and social events for the children and parents both within and beyond the school day. The dedicated parent-teacher association is proactive in supporting generously the work of the school and providing additional learning resources. The school has productive working links with the local community, a range of other primary and post-primary schools, and with various external support agencies which enhance further the range and quality of the children's learning opportunities.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are very supportive and challenge the principal to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the standards achieved by the children and of the priorities for school improvement.
- 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 year 6 children spoke enthusiastically about their learning and the many after-school activities they enjoy. They reported that they feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the primary school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management and learning and teaching which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The areas for improvement are the need:

- to develop further the strategic role of the co-ordinators; and
- to develop the effective use of assessment for learning strategies and disseminate more consistently the good practice within the school.

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

Health and safety

1. The employing authority and board of governors need to address urgently the provision of safer access arrangements to the mobile classrooms.

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