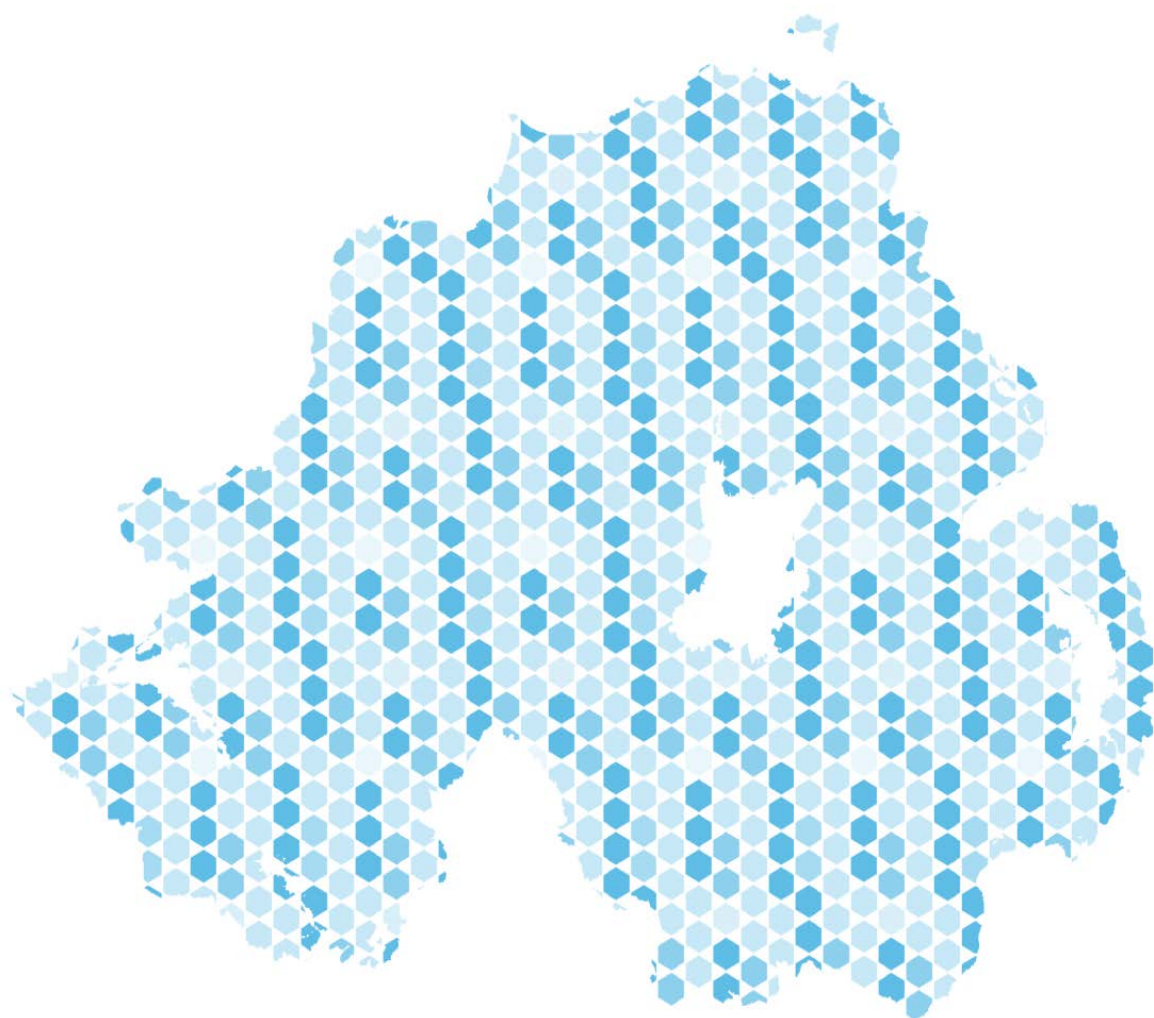


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Holy Family Primary School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
May 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
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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.

Questionnaire	Number issued (total number in the school per category)	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	298	59	20%	30
Teaching staff	22	22	100%	22
Support staff	16	13	81%	*

* 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 the responses from the parents were positive and praised the school for the welcoming and inclusive ethos, the attention placed on the welfare of the children, the wide range and high quality of the learning experiences available, the high standing of the school in the local community and the approachable and friendly staff and principal. The responses of the teaching staff, teaching support staff and support staff were wholly positive and praised the guidance and support of the principal and the senior leadership team, including the shared vision for high expectations of the children's achievements, and the opportunities for further professional development. All of the comments made have been shared with the principal and the board of governors.

2. Context

Holy Family Primary School, Newington Avenue, Belfast is a multi-cultural co-educational school set within a challenging inner city interface environment. The school is at the centre of the local community and provides a valuable extended school programme for the children and their parents. The staff work closely with neighbouring schools, local community groups, and support services to meet the educational, social and health needs of the children and their families. A key focus has been on developing cross community work in the area to enhance the educational and social experiences for the children. In addition, valuable links have been developed with schools across Europe and Africa and as a result

the school was recently awarded 'International School' status. The school enrolment has shown an upward trend over the last four years and currently stands at 435 children. The percentage of children entitled to receive free school meals has increased in the last four years and is currently 60%. The school has identified 30% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Approximately 6% of the enrolment are newcomer children. Almost all of the children attending come from the local area.

Holy Family Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	420	426	445	435
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.9%	95.3%	95.3%	95.8%
FSME Percentage ¹	47.1%	58.5%	60.0%	60.0%
% (No) of children on SEN register	33.1%	25.4%	22.7%	33.3%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	12	14	16	15
No. of newcomers	32	28	26	28

Source: data as held by the school.

¹fewer 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	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The school fosters a climate of tolerance and mutual respect and as a result the children are polite and courteous and display high levels of confidence and independence in both their work and play. They demonstrate outstanding personal and social skills, are well-motivated learners and respond positively to the wide variety of enjoyable learning opportunities provided by their teachers.

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 in three of the past four years shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the performance in mathematics is in line with the average; in English the performance is below the average.*
- The school's internal performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning and those children with English as an additional language, make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Based on the evidence gathered through lesson observations, scrutiny of the children's work and discussions with the children there is clear evidence of very good progress in their learning. The children's work in the class books is presented to a very high standard and shows close attention to detail.
- The children display a positive attitude to mathematics and demonstrate high levels of mental mathematics skills. By the end of KS2, almost all of the children have a very good understanding of place value, number facts, estimation, measures, and shape and space, and are flexible in their mathematical thinking.
- In literacy almost all of the children attain very good standards in talking and listening, reading and in writing. A particular strength is the children's ability to articulate with confidence their thoughts and feelings about the wide variety of purposeful experiences they have before, during and after school. By year 7, the most able children read with fluency and accuracy and show a keen interest in talking about their favourite novels and poems. The children produce very good quality writing for a range of audiences and purposes appropriate to their interests and stage of development.
- The support for children who require help with their spoken English and literacy is outstanding; all of these children make very good progress with their English, make friends and are able to participate well in class lessons and playtime.
- The leadership of the school and the staff give a high priority to the development of Information and communication technology (ICT) and they have invested heavily in up-to-date resources which the children enjoy. Across the year groups and the curriculum, the children use it confidently and appropriately to develop skills and to support their learning on a daily basis. In plenary sessions digital media is often used to revisit and reinforce the learning that has taken place in a lesson and to provide valuable opportunities for peer assessment. The standards the children achieve in ICT are very good.

6. Provision

- The quality of the teaching and learning observed was of a consistently high standard. Almost all of the teaching was good or better, with just over two-fifths of the lessons being very good and one-third were outstanding. The teachers had taken appropriate account of the children's prior learning and used effectively a wide range of strategies and questioning techniques to extend the children's thinking and language skills and to keep them focused and on task during their learning. The lessons were enjoyable and well paced and the teachers ensured that the children were aware of the learning intentions and had

sufficient time to consolidate their learning throughout the lesson and in the plenary session. Tasks were differentiated well to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children. The exceptionally able classroom assistants have access to a wide range of professional development opportunities which have broadened and enhanced their skills further; they are very well engaged with the teachers in the children's learning and support the children holistically with care and sensitivity.

- There is a coherent, whole-school approach to the planning which is comprehensive, varied, challenging and progressive and guides very well the teaching and learning. All areas of the curriculum are equally valued and weighted and a particular strength is the close matching of the learning experiences to the children's ability, individual needs and interests. The planning is well informed by the thorough evaluation of the children's responses to planned lessons and activities, the teachers' knowledge of each child's individual needs and the opportunities for the teachers to share best practice.
- The teachers employ a wide range of assessment approaches to evaluate the children's learning and use the data discerningly, together with their professional knowledge and observations, to inform the teaching and to challenge the children and to develop their learning. Marking is regular and consistent and the teachers provide effective feedback to the children both orally and in their books.
- The provision for special educational needs is outstanding. The children identified as requiring additional help with their literacy and mathematics benefit significantly from the withdrawal sessions and support within class lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), and the vice-principal, provide highly effective leadership of special educational needs and make very good use of a wide range of internal data to inform group and individual planning. The individual education plans are well written and are used and evaluated regularly with input from the parents and the children. The children's baseline assessments in mathematics and English, and the very good progress they make is reviewed and recorded systematically by the SENCO and the assessment co-ordinator using a wide range of diagnostic and assessment materials to inform teaching and learning.
- The children's literacy skills are developed very effectively by the staff across the three key stages. The children make and review digital videos of their work to assess themselves and their peers and to improve their work further. They respond with creativity and flair to the very well planned and innovative writing tasks which are drawn from topical and historical events, as well as their experiences in music, drama, art and design. An important feature of the provision is the purposeful use of clear success criteria, indicating to the children the features of very good practice.
- Throughout the school, the children experience a range of very well-planned numeracy activities through which they develop mathematical language, concepts and understanding appropriate to their age and ability. They have frequent opportunities to develop problem-solving skills in a variety of contexts. Many of the mathematical learning opportunities make very good use of a broad range of practical equipment to help consolidate the children's understanding. A particular strength of the provision is the differentiation of the learning activities for the more able children to provide greater challenge and extension in their mathematical experiences.

- The quality of the provision for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. This is evident in the inclusive, child and community centred ethos which permeates all aspects of the school's provision. Throughout the school the quality of the working relationships in support of the children's learning is outstanding. The consistent encouragement of each child to achieve success and the continuing professional development of all staff are central to the work of the school. In discussions with the inspection team, the children talked extremely positively about their contribution to making changes to the school through their participation in the pupil management team, the prefect team and the school Eco council. The children's behaviour throughout the school is exemplary.
- The school provides extensive after-school care and extra-curricular activities to facilitate the children and their families. Visitors to the school and trips to places of educational interest enhance the quality of the children's overall learning experiences and contribute significantly to their personal development.
- The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The quality of the leadership provided by the principal is outstanding. She has worked in innovative ways and very effectively to develop important links with the parents and the local community. The principal leads by example and has inspired the commitment and confidence of the wider school community towards a shared, strategic vision for the school, based on a clear and perceptive understanding of the current and future needs and interests of the children, and the local and wider community. A particular feature of the work of the principal is her commitment to developing staff in their leadership roles through, for example, higher level degree programmes which draw upon the latest educational research to inform teaching styles and improve further the quality of learning and teaching. As a result, and with the diligent work and dedication of all of her team, she has overseen significant improvements in the quality of the provision and the standards the children attain.
- The embedded culture of self-evaluation and action planning for improvement underpins all levels of school leadership; a particular strength is the use of a wide range of evidence, including the meticulous analysis and use of all available data, both quantitative and qualitative to identify and address low and underachievement. Account is taken of the views and opinions of the parents, children, staff, board of governors and the community in order to improve the quality of the provision for the children.
- The school values highly the role the parents play in the education of their children and the work and life of the school, and provides outstanding opportunities to inform and involve them at all levels. Highly effective links have been established with a wide range of educational, health and statutory agencies in order to support individual children. The excellent links within the local community and with other local and international schools and the many other educational experiences on offer greatly enhance the children's learning beyond the classroom. The school makes excellent use of and provides services to the community by utilising its resources, particularly outside normal school hours.

- 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 have a broad range of skills which are appropriately deployed to ensure effective governance and management of the school; they apply their challenge function, support and advise the principal and the staff in the best interests of the children.
- 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 confidently and enthusiastically about all aspects of school life and reported that they felt secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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