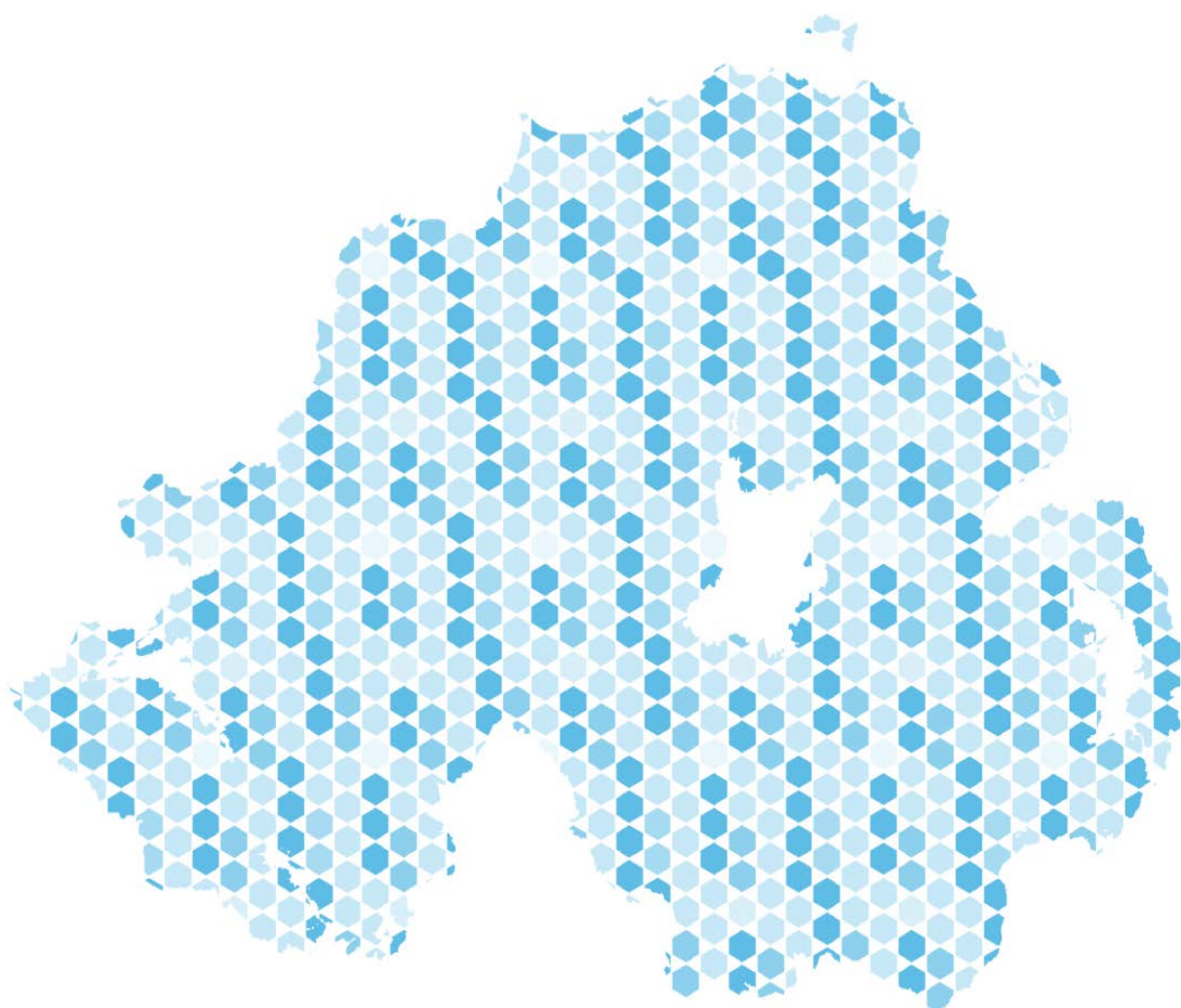


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Millburn Primary School,
Coleraine, Co Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
January 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
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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.etini.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.

Fourteen percent of parents responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the approachable, friendly staff and principal and the wide range of extra-curricular experiences on offer to the children. Almost all of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive. ETI has reported to the acting principal and representatives of the board of governors the outcomes of the questionnaires.

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

3. Context

Millburn Primary School is situated in the neighbourhood renewal area of Millburn and Ballysally, in Coleraine. The school is the lead school in the Coleraine Education Community Project. Most of the children attending the school come from the immediate area. The enrolment has decreased over the last four years and currently stands at 372 children. Approximately 52% of the children are entitled to free schools meals and 18% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school leadership has undergone significant changes with the appointment of the acting principal and acting vice-principal in September 2014 and a new senior leadership team in December 2014.

Millburn Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	413	393	370	372
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.9	96	93	98
FSME Percentage ¹	38.9	40.3	46.8	51.8
% (No) of children on SEN register	12.8	16.8	20.8	18.2
No. of children with statements of educational needs	15	15	14	14
No. of newcomers	10	16	18	24

Source: data as held by the school.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- Throughout the school, the children are well-behaved and are keen to learn. They are respectful of their teachers and each other, listen well in class and settle quickly to their learning tasks. When given the opportunity, the children work well in pairs and small groups, where they self manage and can take on different roles and responsibilities.
- The standards achieved by the children in literacy are good. By year 7, the highest achieving children read with fluency, expression and enjoyment and discuss their favourite novels and authors. Throughout the school, the children have good talking and listening skills. As the children progress through the school, they display good standards in writing; they write in different forms and for a variety of purposes and in the most effective practice they plan, edit and redraft their work.
- The standards achieved by the children in mathematics are good; they gain appropriate knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts and are successful in applying the associated skills. By year 7, the highest achieving children can apply a range of strategies and explain their thinking using the correct mathematical language; however, they are inconsistent in demonstrating flexibility in their thinking when attempting challenging and unfamiliar problems.
- Most of the children identified as requiring additional support with their learning are making good progress in meeting the targets identified on their individual education plans.

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

- The children make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning; they develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills progressively across the curriculum, including skills in desk-top publishing, working with images and animation.

6. Provision

- In the most effective practice, the lessons observed were stimulating, challenging and well structured. The teachers used effective questioning to extend the children's learning and provided good opportunities for the children to work and play collaboratively. In the less effective practice, in a minority of lessons, there was insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all of the children. In these lessons, over-direction by the teachers restricted the opportunities for the children to develop their language and self-management skills and to take responsibility for their learning. The teachers make good use of the cross-curricular planning to connect the children's learning. However, there is a need to ensure that the medium- and short- term planning is evaluated with a greater focus on the children's learning in order to inform future planning and to meet more effectively the learning needs of all the children.
- The teachers all mark the children's work regularly with positive comments and, in the best practice, they provide clear indications of how the children can improve further the quality of their work. In the most effective practice, the children are given structured opportunities to evaluate constructively their own work and that of their peers. The school has recently introduced a system of internal assessment which comprises half-termly tests in English and mathematics which are moderated but not standardised. The school's current analysis of this performance data is too narrow and results in limited conclusions. It will be important that this system is kept under rigorous review, as the school proceeds with the longitudinal study, in order that it provides relevant information on the progression of individual children and the overall standards achieved by the children.
- The school's literacy programme ensures good progression as the children move through the school. In the most effective practice, the children have opportunities to develop their oral and written communication skills through meaningful open-ended activities. They write in a range of genres and for a range of audiences. However, in most of the classes, there is an over reliance on tasks which limit the children's opportunities to extend their learning and to work collaboratively. The teachers use a range of appropriate strategies and resources to develop the children's reading skills. The staff have appropriately identified the need to develop further the teaching of reading in all key stages in order to improve further the children's standards.
- The whole-school guidance for numeracy takes the format of half-term planning, which provides a broad and balanced coverage of the key concepts and skills, but places less emphasis on the development of mathematical processes. The numeracy lessons are well-structured with many starting with appropriate mental mathematics activities. At times during the inspection, ICT was used effectively to enhance the learning and teaching of mathematics. However, opportunities were missed at times to extend the challenge for the children. It is appropriate that the staff have identified the need to broaden the children's mathematical experiences to include more open-ended problem-solving tasks and problem-posing activities.

- The children who are identified with an increasingly broad range of additional needs are well integrated and well supported within the very inclusive school environment. The two teachers, who share the role of special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), work closely as a team. They liaise effectively with the class teachers, parents and a wide range of other agencies and health professionals to ensure there is a collaborative approach to meeting the children's needs.
- The pastoral care provided by the school is very good. It is characterised by the welcoming and inclusive ethos, underpinned by the core values of the school. The taught pastoral programme provides the children with good opportunities to develop personal and social skills. This provision is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities, in particular sport, where children compete at district and national level. The children's successes in all areas of school life are valued and celebrated. Through the School Council, the views of the children are sought and the children make a positive contribution to areas of school life which directly affect them. The House System effectively promotes positive behaviour, engagement with learning and provides opportunities for the children to develop confidence and leadership skills.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the healthy eating policy and the range of sports activities provided for the children thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The recently appointed senior leadership team is highly committed to the well-being of the children and staff and to the ongoing improvement of provision within the school. There has been a reorganisation of the leadership and management of almost all the curricular areas. It will be important that the roles are developed further in order to enable the senior leadership, co-ordinators and teachers to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of the children's learning experiences and attainments.
- There is a comprehensive school development plan in place which identifies key priorities for school improvement. The associated action plans need to be more closely connected to the school development planning process and more focused on the learning needs of the children in order to guide better the process of monitoring, evaluation and improvement.
- The school has a strong partnership with the community it serves. Since 2010, the school has been one of ten involved in the Coleraine Education and Community Project that supports parents to become more involved in their children's education. The school places high value on its working relationship with parents and works hard to ensure teachers are accessible and approachable to them. The school has recently developed wider cultural links through the development of a Confucius Hub in the school in which every class is taught Mandarin by visiting teachers from China.

- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are actively involved in the school development planning process and provide a challenge function in relation to achievements and standards, finance and the curriculum. There is an aspect of governance to review, namely, to ensure that the school development planning processes are informed by rigorous self-evaluation which is monitored and reviewed.
- 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.

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 an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The area for improvement is:

- to develop a more rigorous approach to the process of action planning which is focused on the learning needs of all the children in order to guide better the process of monitoring, evaluation and improvement.

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

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