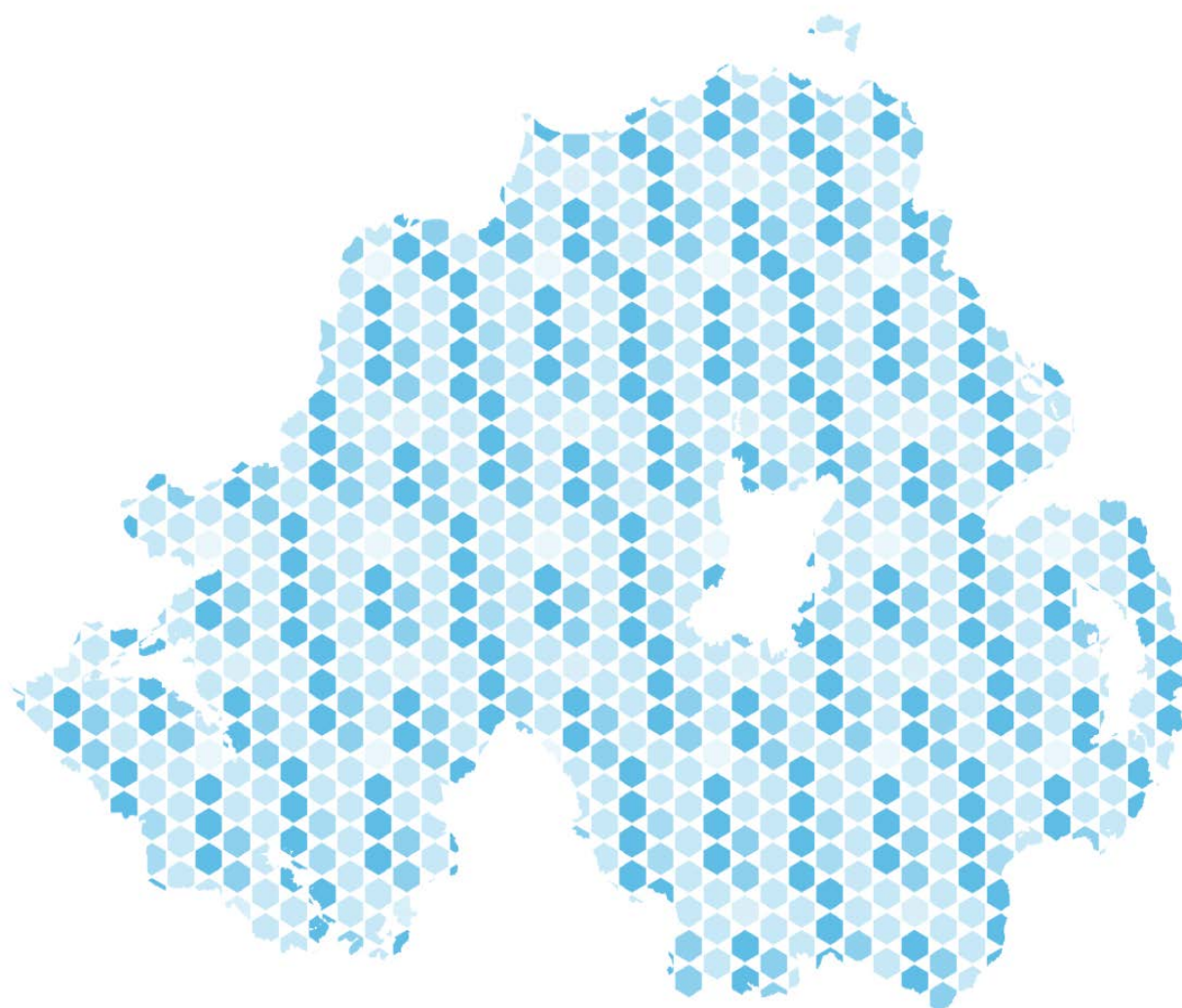


# PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Millquarter Primary School,  
Toomebridge, Co Antrim

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  
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

# Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision	3
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Conclusion	5
Appendix	

## **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.

Fifty-two percent of parents responded to the questionnaires. The responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the overall life and work of the school. In particular, they commented on the caring and dedicated teaching staff, supported well by the classroom assistants and the developing opportunities of inclusion for the parents and community in the life of the school. All of the teaching staff and nearly all support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive. They highlighted the respectful and committed working relationships that exist among the team. ETI has reported to the principal and the representatives of the board of governors the main issues emerging from the questionnaires, including a small number of comments relating to different aspects of the school's provision and procedures.

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

## **3. Context**

Millquarter Primary School is situated in a rural area four and a half miles outside of Toomebridge in the Parish of Duneane. The school shares its board of governors with another local primary school. There have been recent changes to the teaching staff including the appointment of a new principal and the establishment of core co-ordinators being appointed from September 2014. A significant minority of the teaching staff are

currently employed in a temporary capacity. The children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The enrolment of the school has remained fairly consistent over the past four years and stands currently at 139 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 7% of the children were entitled to receive free school meals and 22% of the children were identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

Millquarter Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	143	138	135	139
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.7	97.5	97.5	98.1
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	11.5	5	8.6	7.2
% (No) of children on SEN register	20	22	19	21.5
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

**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 friendly, courteous and their behaviour is exemplary; they are well motivated and demonstrate a very positive attitude to their learning. The working relationships between the teachers, the support staff and the children are respectful. The children are considerate of the ideas of others when working collaboratively and are developing a wide range of skills to help them become independent learners.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- By year 7, the children's acquisition of their spoken and written English is of a very good standard. The children are articulate and communicate their ideas and opinions with increasing independence and extended vocabulary. They read with fluency and understanding and the presentation of their written work is of a good quality.

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

- During the inspection, the children in year 7 demonstrated high levels of knowledge and understanding of number facts, shape and space, estimation and measures; the more able children showed flexibility in their mathematical thinking. They are competent in their use of mathematical language and are able to employ a range of thinking strategies when presented with a mathematical problem.
- The children who receive additional support with their learning make very good progress. By year 7, almost all are achieving standards in literacy and numeracy which are in line with their ability.
- The children achieve high standards in information and communication technology (ICT). They have well-planned opportunities to use an increasing range of digital media to support and enhance their learning in all areas of the curriculum. For example, the children are able to use the internet to research topics and survey the opinions of others.

## **6. Provision**

- In the most effective practice, in a significant minority of lessons, the teachers and classroom assistants use skilfully questioning techniques that develop the children's confidence, independence, social and thinking skills within a secure and nurturing learning environment. The lessons are well structured and clearly build on the children's previous learning; the use of self and peer evaluations are used well to assess the children's learning and to effectively plan for future lessons. The assessment for learning strategies are used effectively to extend the children's thinking and learning. It will be important that this good practice is disseminated to all teachers to ensure greater consistency in learning and teaching. In the less effective practice, in a small number of lessons, the learning is limited through over-direction by the teacher and the children are not being given sufficient time to think, reflect and respond to the teacher's questions.
- The medium and long-term planning outlines appropriate progression in the development of the children's skills. There are interesting activities planned in meaningful real-life contexts. As the teachers continue to develop their short-term planning, they need to focus more clearly on the children's learning to raise further the standards achieved by them. The co-ordinators need to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of the learning and teaching in each of their areas of responsibility.
- The children with statements of special educational need benefit from early identification and appropriate intervention to support the progress in their learning in literacy and numeracy. Their learning is incrementally developed and consolidated through multi-sensory approaches, writing aids and memory games. The classroom assistants provide high levels of support to these children and the teachers. Several of the classroom assistants have recently completed further professional development in 'Reading Partnerships'. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed further her teaching strategies by implementing her training effectively from the special educational needs capacity building programme.

- The integration of talking and listening, reading and writing is carefully differentiated within the best practice to meet the wide range of language needs. The teachers are effectively extending the younger children's vocabulary by modelling words and phrases, story-telling, songs and rhymes. By year 7, the children are fluent, expressive and confident readers. The teaching of reading consolidates the children's reading skills to comprehend, recall, and sequence their favourite stories and ideas. As the children progress through the school, they effectively explore a range of fiction and non-fiction books. In the foundation stage, the staff need to develop progression in the children's language and learning through the play programme and provide more opportunities for all of the children to develop their creative writing and flexibility in mathematical thinking.
- The children use mathematical language with increasing fluency and demonstrate a good understanding of number, measure, shape and space and handling data. In the most effective practice, problem-solving tasks, the use of real-life contexts and links to other curricular areas are used well to promote more meaningful learning for the children. The staff need to extend and challenge mathematically the more able children and to broaden further the problem-solving activities to include the development of investigative and reasoning skills.
- The very good quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is a significant feature of the school. The learning environment is attractively presented with examples of the children's work and photographs of their experiences being celebrated throughout the school. The teachers use well a variety of award systems which the children understand. Through the personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU) programme, the children have good opportunities to explore culture and diversity. The school has recognised the need to further embrace diversity by establishing links with other schools.
- The year 7 children are currently being taught in the school hall, which is also used as the dining hall. Whilst the teacher has worked hard to create a stimulating and attractive learning environment for the children, their education is disrupted by the setting up for dinner. It will be important that the situation is addressed as a matter of urgency.
- The promotion of healthy breaks and the children's participation in a range of outdoor physical activities encourages them to adopt healthy lifestyles. The children participated recently in a 'Farmer's Dinner' event and they use the multi-sensory garden to grow vegetables. However, there is at present no indoor space available for physical education; this issue needs to be addressed in order to ensure that the children have more regular opportunities to engage in energetic physical activity during periods of inclement weather.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership team has appropriately identified the need to develop a more coherent and strategic approach to whole-school planning, monitoring and self-evaluation processes in order to ensure that all the learning and teaching is consistently of a high standard within and across the school. The principal has been in post for approximately five months and has taught in the school for seven years. In the short period, since her appointment, she has been

instrumental in leading improvements in the work of the school, ensuring that essential school policies and procedures have been reviewed and she has begun to establish distributed leadership through the development of three new co-ordinators' roles and responsibilities.

- The co-ordinators have made a useful start to promoting improvement within their respective areas of responsibility. They use performance data well to identify low and underachievement and to prioritise appropriate areas for improvement within the school development plan. The co-ordinators have started to monitor the provision through lesson observations and the sampling of the children's work.
- Effective communication with parents is maintained through regular newsletters and meetings. The parents are encouraged at every opportunity to become more involved in school events and in supporting their children's learning.
- In the discussion with the representatives from the recently constituted board of governors, they expressed their appreciation of the work of the school, the commitment of all the staff to the children and the leadership provided by the principal. 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. It will be important that they use their challenge function to ensure that the staff inform them of the quality of learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- 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 children in year 6, they reported that they feel very safe and secure in school and they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. They talked enthusiastically about many aspects of school life including the care provided for them by the teachers and all other staff. They are very happy in school and report that they are involved in the decision-making processes of the school.

## **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.

These include the need:

- to develop further the teachers' planning to focus more clearly on the children's learning; and
- to develop further the rigorous approach to self-evaluation at all levels.

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



**Accommodation**

1. There is inadequate classroom space to accommodate all of the children.
2. The school hall is used as a classroom and a dining hall.
3. There is no indoor provision for physical education.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2015

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)