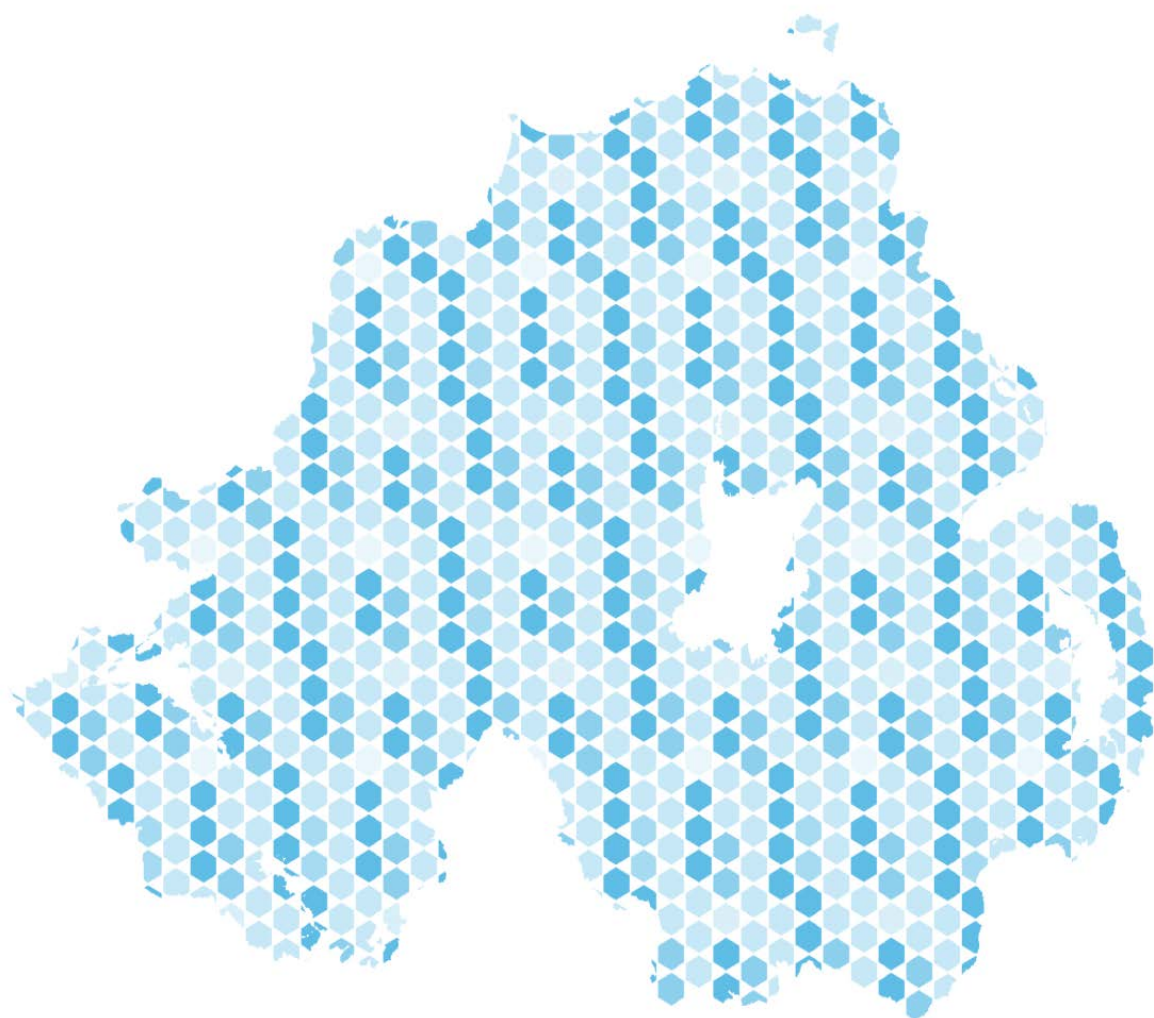


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Portrush Primary School,
Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
November 2013

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	143	33	23%	19
Teaching staff	9	9	100%	*
Support staff	8	6	75%	*

* 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.

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the warm, family ethos, the dedicated, caring staff and the approachability of the principal. A very small number of matters raised were discussed with the governors and the principal. All of the teachers and most of the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive.

2. Context

Portrush Primary School is situated in Portrush, Co Antrim. Almost all of the children attending the school come from Portrush and the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has fallen over the last four years from 199 in 2010 to the current enrolment of 189. At the time of the inspection, approximately 30% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals and around 14% of the children were identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

Portrush Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	199	191	188	189
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.3%	94.9%	94.9%	95.9%
FSME Percentage ¹	20.1%	25.7%	28.2%	29.6%
% (No) of children on SEN register	11.6%	20.9%	13.8%	13.8%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	7	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	16	12	11	12

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	Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are confident, highly motivated and display positive attitudes to their learning. Their behaviour is exemplary; they show respect towards staff, visitors and their peers. Almost all of the children settle quickly to their learning; they work productively in paired and group activities, listening and responding thoughtfully to the views of others. Across the three key stages (KS), the innovative use of collaborative learning approaches is developing well the children's thinking skills, independence and their ability to manage their own learning.

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

- An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 performance data in three of the past four years shows that in English the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in two of the three years. In mathematics, the school's performance is below the NI average in two of the three years. Compared with schools in the same FSME category, the performance in English is above the average in two of the three years and in mathematics the performance is below the average in the three years.* The school's internal performance data shows that almost all of the children are achieving standards in English, and most of the children are achieving standards in mathematics, in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Across the curriculum, the children's talking and listening skills are very well developed. They listen to, reflect and interact confidently with others and express their ideas articulately. The children enjoy reading and read with fluency, expression and understanding. Throughout the school, the children's creative and written work is of a very good standard. In mathematics, the children work with enthusiasm and respond well to the high level of challenge presented by their teachers. By the end of KS2, the children demonstrate a very good working knowledge of important concepts across the areas of mathematics and are skilled, confident and flexible in their mathematical thinking.
- Those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning progress, attain and maintain consistently high standards in their work. Most demonstrate a good ability to work independently or engage cooperatively with others.
- Throughout the school, the children attain very good standards in information and communication technology (ICT). They are confident and competent in using a range of software and digital media to support their learning.

6. Provision for learning

- The teachers' medium term planning is comprehensive and makes effective use of opportunities to connect the children's learning across the curriculum. It is informed well by evaluations of the children's previous learning and indicates clearly how the learning activities will meet the needs of the range of abilities within each class.
- The quality of the learning and teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding; just over half was very good or outstanding. In the most effective practice, there is good pace, challenge and progression, and ICT supports well the learning and teaching. The children understand clearly the learning intentions and the teachers use skilful questioning to extend the children's thinking and their oral and written responses. In the less effective practice, there is insufficient focus on learning and consequently the children make little progress. The children receive constructive feedback throughout their lessons; their work is marked regularly and written comments in the books acknowledge the children's progress and provide clear guidance on how to make further improvement. The teachers are well supported in their work by the classroom assistants.

* 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.

- The school identifies at an early age, through teacher judgement and the appropriate use of performance data, those children who require additional support with their learning. The individual education plans (IEP) reflect an in-depth knowledge of each child and the strategies and targets, both long and short-term, are well conceived and matched accurately to the needs of each child. The in-class support is consistently of a very high standard.
- The school has a coherent and systematic approach to the development of the children's literacy and numeracy skills. In the foundation stage (FS) and KS1, the children have enriched opportunities to develop their language in literacy across the curriculum through play, visits, and activity-based learning. Across the school, the emphasis on creative writing, on purposeful reading and on the development of language to communicate clearly is developing effectively the children as confident, competent readers and writers. There is balanced coverage across the areas of mathematics, with well-staged progression through the school. Mental mathematic activities are used to provide an enjoyable start to numeracy lessons and the teachers make good use of a range of practical materials and strategies to engage the children's mathematical curiosity and to develop their mathematical language and understanding. In a majority of classes, the teachers provide the children with creative and motivating opportunities to use and apply their mathematics and to develop problem-solving skills.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. This is evident in the inclusive, child-centred ethos and the high quality of working relationships amongst all members of the school community. The school council provides the children with an opportunity to contribute to the decision-making processes within the school. The Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) programme, focusing appropriately on the children's personal, social and emotional development, provides very good opportunities for the children to develop empathy and express their thoughts and ideas.
- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the whole school physical education programme and the provision of healthy breaks, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The Principal has been in post for four years and has focused sharply, and with some success, on raising the profile of the school in the wider community. In this work, he has been supported well by the governors and the staff. The curriculum coordinators provide good direction for the cohesive development and improvement of provision in their respective areas of responsibility. In collaboration with coordinators and staff, the principal has developed a system to track each child's progress through the levels of progression for English and mathematics. This system needs to be developed further to include more thorough use of the available internal performance data.

- The school improvement process is at an early stage of development. Currently, the school development plan (SDP) is not fully compliant with the Education (School Development Plan) 2010 regulations, and lacks evaluation. There is a need for the leadership team to review the SDP to ensure that it is informed fully by all available data and that there is more meaningful consultation with the children and their parents. The current action plans need to focus more sharply on the actions which will bring about continued improvement in the children's learning, and to include systematic methods for evaluation.
- The school has appropriate arrangements to keep parents informed about the life and work of the school, including, for example, a website, a texting service and a regular newsheet giving updates on school events. To enhance further the learning opportunities for the children, the school has established very good links with a range of other schools, with people in the community and with various external agencies.
- 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 carry out effectively their support and challenge functions.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following minor areas need to be addressed: to ensure that there is full consultation with the school community when reviewing policies; and, that a full report on safeguarding/child protection is made to the governors, at least annually. In discussions with the inspectors, the year six children spoke with enthusiasm and confidence about their experiences in school. They reported that they feel very happy and safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns.

8. Conclusion

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

Health and Safety/Accommodation

- The fencing around the perimeter of the school is incomplete.
- There is a gap in the CCTV coverage /controlled access at the rear door to the school building.

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