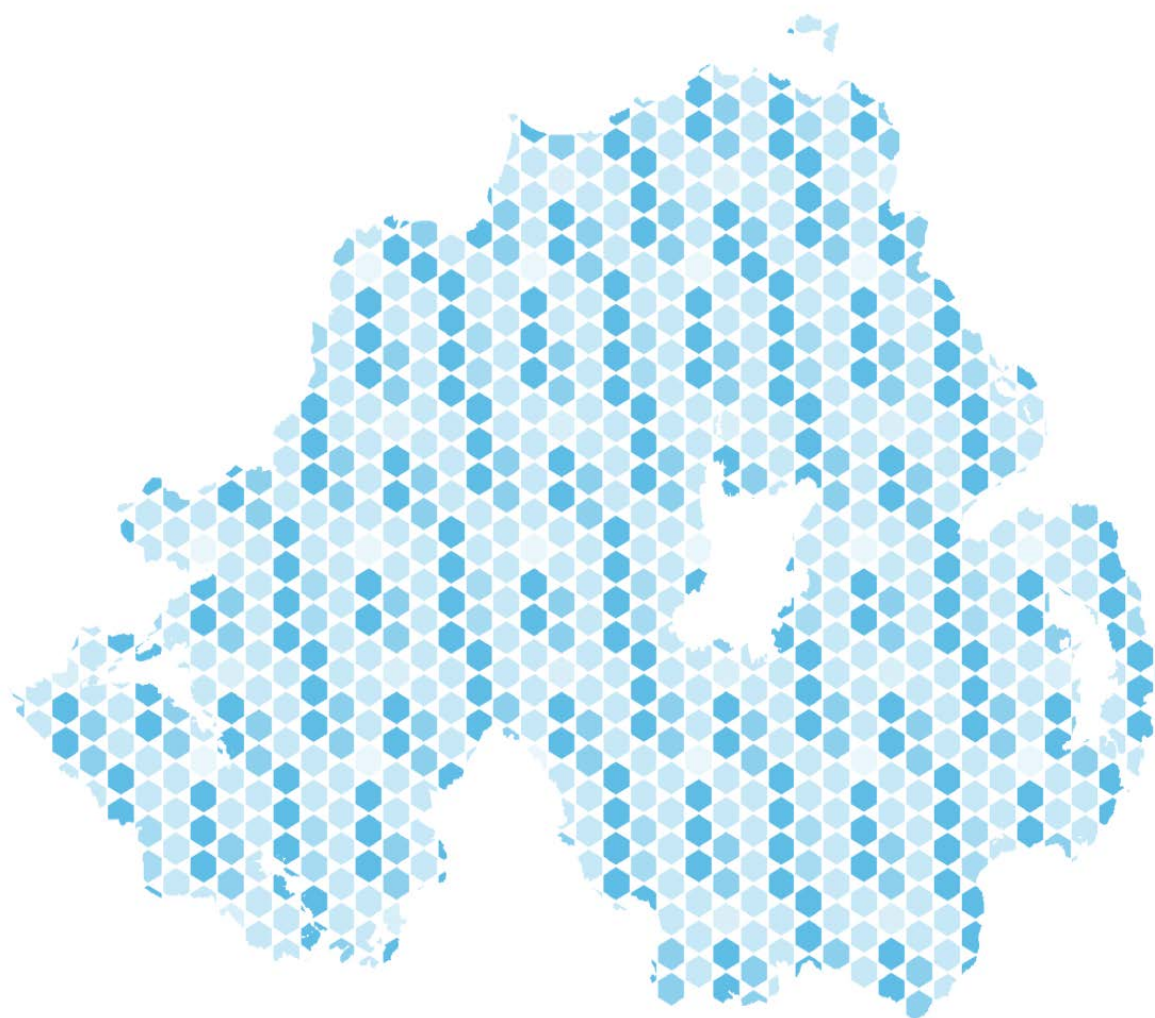


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Matthew's Primary School,
Magheramayo, Castlewellan

Report of an Inspection
in September 2013



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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 Inspectorate's 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.

| Questionnaire | Number issued | Number returned | Percentage returned | Number with comments |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Parent | 45 | 6 | 13 | * |
| Teachers | * | * | * | * |
| Support Staff | 7 | 6 | 85 | * |

* fewer than 5

The ETI is trialling a range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the response rate may be low.

2. Context

St Matthew's Primary School, Magheramayo is situated in a rural setting approximately four miles west of Castlewellan County Down. Most of the children come from the surrounding rural area; 28% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

| GhA Uth Yk fuj Primary School | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|--|---------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Enrolment | 48 | 56 | 59 | 68 |
| % Attendance (NI Average) | 96 | 95 | 97 (94.7) | |
| FSME Percentage ¹ | 25 | 26 | 30 | 28 |
| % (No) of children on SEN register | 8 (4) | 10 (6) | 12 (7) | 12 (8) |
| No. of children with statements of educational needs | * | * | * | 1.5 |
| No. of newcomers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

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

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 under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children, and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Overall Performance Level | Very Good |
| Achievements and Standards | Very Good |
| Provision | Very Good |
| Leadership and Management | Very Good |

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are highly motivated, enthusiastic and engage actively in their learning; they interact confidently with one another during paired and group work activities and are able to apply their learning in a variety of contexts. As they progress through the school they develop a wide range of thinking, personal and social skills and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with their learning make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. An analysis of the end of Key Stage (KS) 2 assessment data* shows that in the past four years, the school's performance in English and mathematics has been at or above the Northern Ireland Average. When compared against schools in the same free schools meals category, the performance in English has been consistently at or above the average and in mathematics, it has been at or above the average in three out of the last four years.

* 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.

- Throughout the school the children's talking and listening skills are well developed enabling them to engage well in whole class discussion and give reasons for their opinions. The children read with confidence, fluency and expression, and as they progress through the school write for an increasing range of audiences and purposes. The children have a good understanding of the key mathematical concepts. They are able to complete calculations accurately, are flexible in their mathematical thinking and are able to explain confidently a variety of strategies they use for problem-solving.

6. Provision for learning

- There is a coherent, whole school approach to the arrangements for planning, teaching and assessment throughout the school. The teachers build effectively on the children's prior knowledge and experiences. They provide clear instructions about the planned learning activities and make skilful use of open ended questions to develop the children's understanding, extend their learning and challenge their thinking. The quality of the learning and teaching in all of the lessons observed was always good and in the majority it was very good.
- The school provides very good support for those children identified as having difficulty with aspects of their learning. The staff know the children very well and the in-class support is provided in a sensitive, discreet manner. It is effective and has a positive impact on the children's self-esteem and learning. The support staff make a valuable contribution to this work.
- The pastoral care within the school is excellent. This is evident through the inclusive family ethos which permeates the school, the very positive working relationships at all levels and the exemplary behaviour of the children.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy lifestyles through the emphasis placed on healthy breaks and the importance of physical activity.

7. Leadership and management

- The Principal provides very effective leadership and a clear realistic direction for the development of the school. She is highly committed to the pastoral and academic needs of the children; in this work she is supported by all the staff including the co-ordinators who lead well their respective areas.
- The school meets the requirements of the Northern Ireland School development Plans Regulations 2005-2010. The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well constructed school development plan (SDP) underpinned by very good evaluation.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of the inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance of the relevant department. The children report that they feel safe and secure in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children, and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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