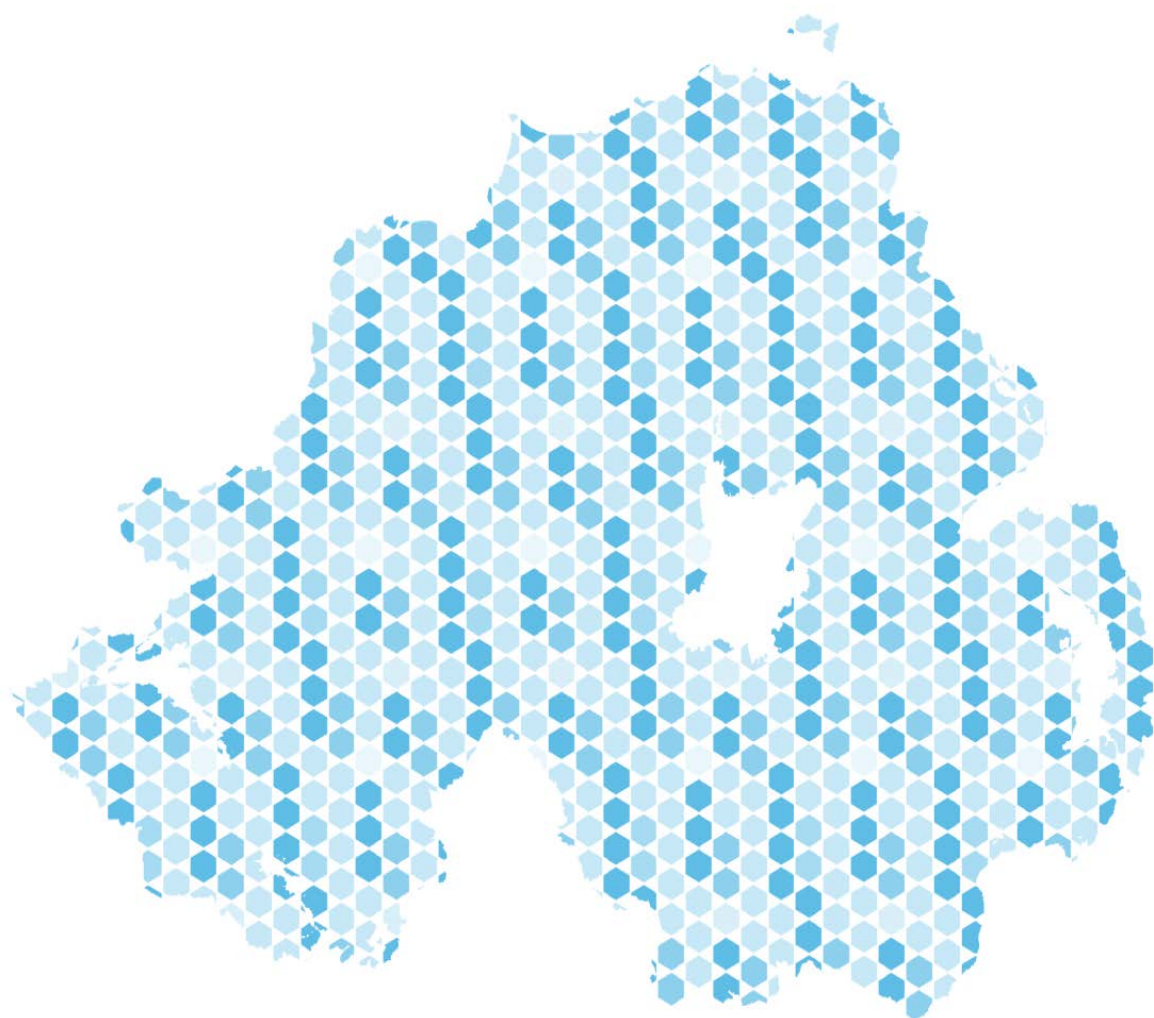


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School,
Maghera

Report of an Inspection
in September 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	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parent	108	29	26.8	18
Teacher	8	8	100	*
Support staff	*	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

The Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents/carers about the life and work of the school. As a result, the response rate to the parental and support staff questionnaires may be low.

2. Context

St Patrick's Primary School, Glen, sits at the foot of the Glenshane Pass on the outskirts of Maghera town. It is a rural primary school that draws its children from Maghera and from the surrounding town lands. As a result, it is served by a dedicated North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) bus service. The school has been oversubscribed in the last two years and the enrolment currently stands at 176.

?? Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	170	170	169	176
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.5	96.7	96	-
FSME Percentage ¹	7.6%	14.1%	16.5%	16.5%
% of children on SEN register	23.5%	26.5%	22.5%	22.5%
% of children with statements of educational needs	*	3%	4%	3%
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 underachievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings

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

- A key feature of the work of the school is the focus on developing the children's oracy skills, resulting in the children's confident and extended use of spoken language. The children's behaviour is exemplary. They respond very well in class and participate willingly in group and paired activities. They show a keen interest in their learning and all are enthusiastic to engage in the tasks set for them. They are able to work with a high degree of independence from an early age and are competent in managing their own learning.
- An analysis of the end of key stage(KS) 2 performance data* in three of the past four years shows that in English the school's performance is consistently well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average, and, in mathematics, it is consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the school's performance in English is consistently above the average, and, in mathematics, it is in line with the average. The school's internal performance data shows that most 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.

* Due to the current transition period in the arrangements for statutory assessment, this analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data is based on the outcomes up to but not including the 2012/13 school year.

- The standards achieved in literacy by most of the children are very good. Across the curriculum, the children's talking and listening skills are very well developed and most of the children display high levels of confidence when expressing their ideas and opinions. By the end of year 7, most of the children read well and display consistent levels of interest in reading for enjoyment. The quality and accuracy of the children's written work is very good, across the three key stages
- The standards in mathematics achieved by most of the children are good. The most able children display a sound understanding across a range of mathematical concepts and show flexibility in their mathematical thinking. Most of the children use a good range of strategies when explaining the processes they use to solve problems and their method of calculation. Across key stage (KS) 1 and 2, the children's mathematical thinking is well developed.
- The children in the school who have been identified with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning.

6. Provision for learning

- The quality of the planning, teaching and assessment for learning is very good. The quality of the learning and teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding; a majority was very good. Features of the best practice include the teachers planning effectively for the varying ability groups in the class and providing a range of enjoyable and challenging experiences to engage all of the children. The teachers' well-focused evaluations of the children's learning inform very well the future planning. They mark the children's work regularly and supportively with a focus on how the children can improve further the quality and standard of their work.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are supported very well through activities in class that are matched appropriately to their abilities, as well as highly effective withdrawal sessions in both literacy and numeracy. Regular assessments are made of individual progress and the parents are well informed about the progress their children are making. The school has well-established multi-agency links which support well the children's learning. The teachers have identified appropriately the need to include more specific learning targets in the children's education plans.
- The children have excellent opportunities to develop their language in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum through activity-based learning and through the challenging and practical activities and investigations provided for them by the teachers. The children's reading and writing skills are developed effectively through the well-considered use of contexts, including the recent school focus on a local poet.
- The well-planned mathematical experiences allow the children to make extensive use of practical resources to develop their understanding, and to establish mathematical concepts. Across the key stages, mental mathematics activities are integrated well into the mathematics lessons and are often used as a challenging starting activity for a lesson, building on the children's prior knowledge. Throughout the school, good use is being made by the staff and the children of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in both literacy and mathematics.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. There is a caring, supportive and inclusive ethos throughout the school, and a high priority is placed on celebrating the children's work and achievements. The children are supportive of one another and take on roles and responsibilities, for example, as school prefects, with maturity and confidence. They are attentive, confident and respectful and interact politely with their peers and the adults.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through a good range of sporting activities and programmes to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a clear vision for the work of the school which focuses effectively on improving learning and teaching and on the pastoral development of the whole-school community. A particular feature of this work is the staff's commitment to developing the school as a centre of the community. They have made a good start to using teacher observation and performance data to identify low, under and high achievement and to prioritise areas for improvement. The current action plans and monitoring methods require additional detail and rigour to guide sufficiently the development work of the school. The staff need to focus more sharply on the actions which will bring about continued improvement in the children's learning, and to include effective and systematic methods for monitoring and evaluation.
- The school enjoys excellent links with the parents who are well informed about their children's progress and the life and work of the school through, for example, monthly newsletters and the informative school website. To enhance further the learning opportunities for the children, the school has established excellent links with a range of other schools, including the local pre-school and the post primary school, with people in the community and with various 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.
- 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, they indicated that they feel proud of their school, have very good working relationships with their teachers and that they know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their well-being.

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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