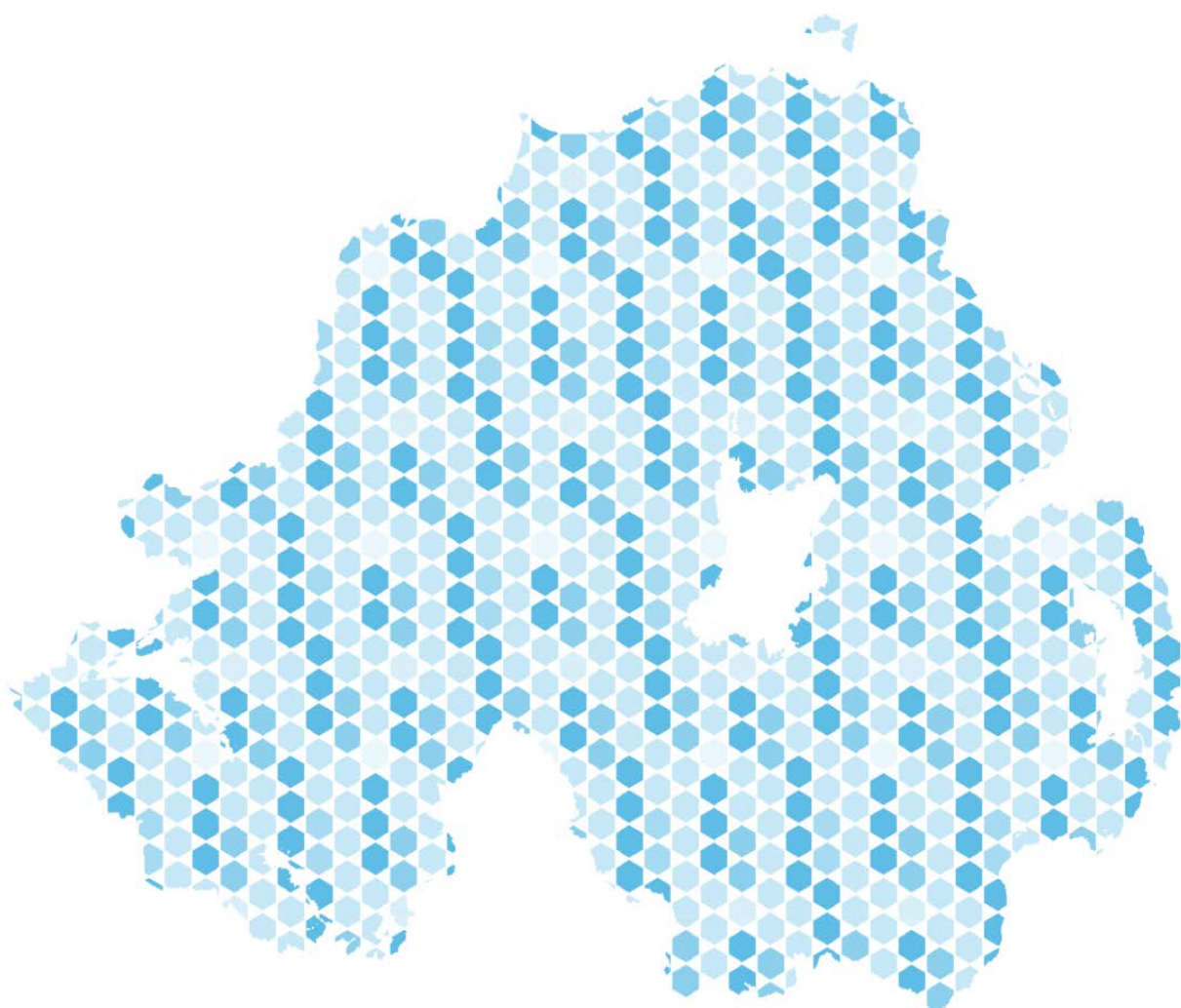


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Paul's Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Slievemore,
Derry

Report of an Inspection in
September 2014

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

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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 a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Six percent of parents and 90% of the staff (teaching and non-teaching) responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the primary school and nursery school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of: the work of the teachers and support staff; the improvements made in all aspects of the life and work of the school in recent years; the individual care given to the children; and the approachability of the principal and teachers. The responses to the staff questionnaires were very positive; they emphasised the quality of the working relationships across the school and the inclusive, welcoming ethos that exists for all members of the school community.

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 for numeracy in the school including the nursery school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St Paul's Primary and Nursery School is situated in Slievemore, in the residential area of Galliagh in Derry City. All of the children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The enrolment of the school has increased gradually over recent years and currently stands at 133 children in the primary school and 27 in the nursery. At the time of the inspection, approximately 79% of the children were entitled to receive free school meals and 38% of the children were identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

St Paul's Primary and Nursery School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	129	119	127	133
% Attendance (NI Average)	91.9	92.1	92.6	-
FSME Percentage ¹	79.4	82.1	74	79
% (No) of children on SEN register	35.5	37.2	41	38
No. of children with statements of educational needs	6	*	6	7
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good
Nursery Unit	Very Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children's behaviour is very good. They understand what is expected of them and respond positively to the range of creative and stimulating learning opportunities provided by their teachers. The children engage well with each other in paired and group activities and most are developing effectively confidence and independence in their own learning. Their work is presented to a high standard.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children in mathematics and almost all of the children in English make good progress, in line with their ability or above expectation. The majority of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make good progress in mathematics and most make good progress in English, in line with their ability or above expectation.
- In numeracy, the children demonstrate a good understanding of key mathematical knowledge and concepts across all areas of the mathematics curriculum. They participate fully in challenges relating to mental mathematics activities and work well together to discuss problem-solving strategies; they use appropriate mathematical language with increasing confidence and fluency across all key stages.

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

- At this early stage in the settling in period, the children in the nursery are adapting very well to their new environment and are becoming familiar with the various routines of the nursery. A majority of the children already show good levels of confidence and independence in their work and play and engage readily with the staff. A significant minority produce good representational work and can spend lengthy periods in sustained and purposeful play.
- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and appropriately across the key stages to enhance their learning.

6. Provision

- The teachers' individual planning is comprehensive and rigorous and, in the best practice, is informed well by thorough evaluation of the children's previous learning and the teachers' knowledge of their individual needs. The school has recently carried out a whole-school review of planning which has informed the development of a shared planning format which the teachers use to good effect. The school has identified appropriately the need to monitor this and to ensure the dissemination of the most effective practice throughout the school. In the best practice, the lessons observed were well planned and suitably resourced to engage and stimulate the children; they met effectively the range of individual needs within the classroom and were well paced and challenging; and the teachers used skilful questioning to develop further the children's thinking and to consolidate their understanding. In a small number of lessons, the teachers did not allow sufficient time for the children to expand upon and extend their responses, thereby missing opportunities to enhance further their learning and develop further their oracy skills. The teaching assistants worked effectively in partnership with the teachers in supporting the children with their learning.
- The quality of the provision for special educational needs is very good. The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early through, for example, the close links with the nursery, the effective use of teacher evaluations and internal assessment data. A range of effective intervention strategies are in place to support the children, including: well-planned withdrawal sessions; in-class differentiation; and the structured, supportive nurture provision in the 'Sunflower Rooms'. The impact that this range of additional support is having on the children's learning is monitored and evaluated regularly. The individual education plans focus on the needs of the children, are evaluated regularly and guide well the learning and teaching. The school has recently updated the format of the individual education plans to develop further the partnership with children and parents. The school has identified the need to focus on developing further the support and provision for the more able children.
- A key characteristic of the numeracy provision is the focus on mental mathematics which is developing effectively the children's thinking and their use of mathematical language. In the foundation stage, the children's play-based learning experiences provide them with very good opportunities to develop their language and enrich their mathematical understanding. A recent initiative in the school is the introduction of the Signature Project in key stage (KS) 2 to support further those children identified as underachieving in numeracy. The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children involved in this initiative make very good progress in mathematics; teacher evaluations report that this intervention is having a positive impact on the children's attitude towards mathematics.

- The staff in the nursery provide an interesting, varied and progressive programme that takes account of the children's differing needs and interests. The staff are friendly and caring in their approach and the quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently of a high standard. The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified at an early stage and appropriate support is put in place to address their individual needs. Very good links have been established with the parents and appropriate procedures are in place to keep them informed about their child's progress and how to support their learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for the pastoral care provision in the school and nursery is outstanding. There is an inclusive and supportive ethos throughout the school and very good working relationships at all levels. The children feel valued and are motivated to learn and reach their full potential; they respond well to the high expectations of all of the staff for them and their successes in all aspects of school life are celebrated.
- The school and nursery give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the school is clearly focused on meeting the individual needs of the children and on maintaining close connections with the local community. The school leadership has a clear vision for school improvement based on a well-informed knowledge of the whole-school community and is underpinned by professional knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. The recently appointed co-ordinators are effective in leading and managing their areas of responsibility and are developing effectively a range of monitoring and evaluation strategies to support ongoing improvement. The staff have introduced a wide range of appropriate pastoral initiatives into their curriculum and it will be important that the impact of these on the learning experiences of the children is evaluated.
- There is a rigorous school development planning process in place. Effective and appropriate action plans have been informed by consultation, performance data and the needs of the children. The effective teamwork among the staff, including the teaching assistants, supports well the self-evaluation process and appropriate identification of areas for improvement.
- The development of links and partnerships with the local community, in particular with parents, has been a priority over recent years and is impacting positively on the life and work of the school and on the learning experiences of the children. These links include the regular provision of information about the school and school events through an informative weekly newsletter, and the FAST² (Families and Schools Together) programme which is now in its second year in the school.

² FAST is an international programme recommended by the United Nations in 2009 aimed at strengthening families and communities.

- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be 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 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 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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