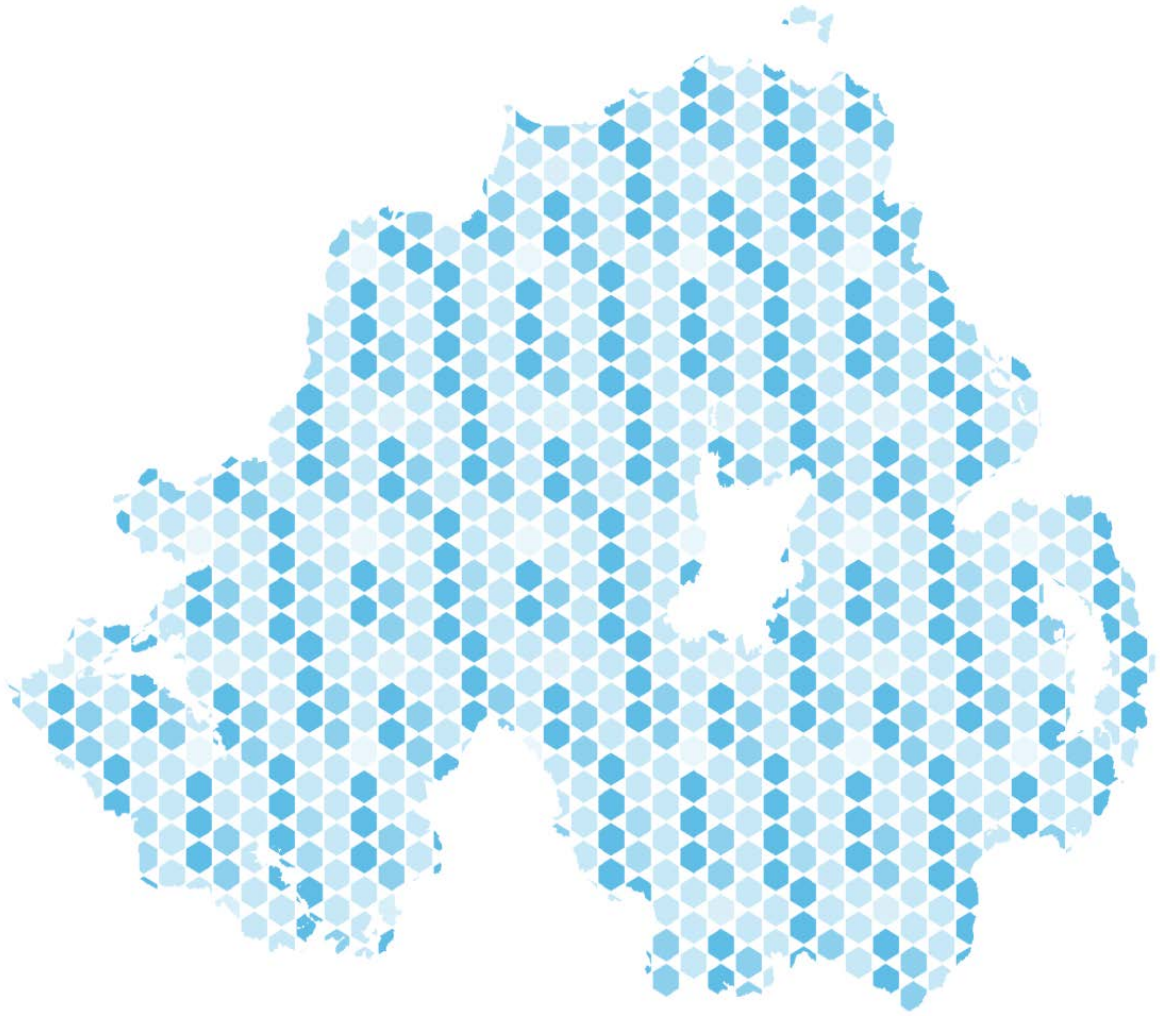
PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training Inspectorate

St Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan, Co Armagh

Report of an Inspection in January 2014

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 CSE

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 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
Parents	111	13	12%	6
Teaching staff	9	8	89%	*
Support staff	*	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

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 parent/carer questionnaires may be low.

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the identification and support provided for the children with additional learning needs, the strong emphasis on promoting the children's personal development, the community awareness of the dedicated and professional staff and they expressed their confidence in the school leadership. The teaching and support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were also very positive; they emphasised the whole-school approach to meeting the needs of the children.

2. Context

St Teresa's Primary School is situated on the outskirts of the town of Lurgan, County Armagh. The current enrolment of 163 has fluctuated from 163 to 172 children in the last four years. Twenty-nine percent of the children in the school are entitled to free school meals and 22% of the children have been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

St Teresa's Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	172	168	173	163
% Attendance	95	95	96	96
% Attendance for those children on the SEN Register	94	94	95	95
FSME Percentage[1]	19	23	28	29
% of children on SEN register	23	22	21	22
No. of children with statements of educational needs	5	*	*	5
No. of newcomers	7	7	10	7

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	**Very Good**

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are articulate and confident to ask questions; they take pride in their work, are well behaved and listen attentively to their teachers. They use a range of effective personal capabilities and thinking skills to plan collaboratively and organise their learning. The children can use evidence from a range of sources and offer considered opinions based on reasoned arguments. Most of the children are able to read fluently and to comprehend the text. They are able to write with increasing confidence and accuracy across a range of genre. The children have a very good range of core mathematical knowledge and are able to use and apply a range of strategies to solve problems.

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

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data over three years[2] shows that in English, the school's performance is above in one year and it is below in two years compared to the Northern Ireland (NI) average and that of schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category. In mathematics, the schools performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and the free school meals (FSM) category in two years and below in one year. The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics and achieve in line with their ability or above expectation.

- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) to compose writing and to present their work using a variety of programmes. Last year a majority of the children achieved in line with the NI average for similar schools in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) information and communication technology (ICT) Accreditation Scheme.

6. Provision

- The staff are effectively developing the planning, teaching and assessment arrangements to provide the children with a breadth of learning experiences. In the best practice, the teachers use a range of planning and assessment approaches to evaluate the children's learning and apply effective teaching strategies to address low and underachievement. Marking of the children's work is regular, consistent and engages the children in improving their own work. Planning for literacy and numeracy is well-informed by lesson evaluations, assessment of the children's learning and individual education plans. The school has appropriately identified the need to embed the best practice in planning and ensure that differentiation to meet the children's individual needs is clearly identified in all classes. The planning of and provision for play is underdeveloped in the early years' classes.

- The quality of the teaching ranged from inadequate to very good with a majority of the lessons being good or better. In the best practice, the teachers value the children's contribution to the learning process and they use effective open-ended questioning to extend the children's thinking. The children enjoyed the learning, were well-involved in sharing the learning intentions in the lessons, and confidently articulated their learning at the conclusion of the lesson. In the less effective practice, there were missed opportunities to promote the children's ideas and to develop their thinking skills.

- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is very good. There is a positive reward system in the school. The children's personal development and self-esteem is nurtured in the inclusive ethos of the school. The children have a range of programmes to develop their sense of responsibility and awareness of the diversity within their local community. Their extended learning experiences are enhanced through planned activities and partnerships with community-based organisations and local businesses.

[2] 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.

- Almost all of the literacy and numeracy support for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is provided within the mainstream classes. The five classroom assistants, who are trained in the reading partnership programme, support effectively small groups of children with the development of their reading skills. The children's learning experiences, personal development and well-being benefit from the school's effective partnerships with parents and support agencies particularly the language and communication, and the sensory support services.

- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and provides a range of programmes on making healthy choices. The school makes effective use of sporting coaches and opportunities for physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The teaching-principal has a clear vision for school improvement. She oversees a wide range of pastoral and educational initiatives designed to effect change in policy and practice in order to raise standards. There is effective monitoring of the children's standards and achievements in literacy and numeracy. It is appropriate that the governors and the principal keep under review the current roles and responsibilities of the staff to reflect the leadership and management priorities of the school.

- The school development plan (SDP) partially meets the requirements of the Department of Education School Development Planning 2010 regulations. The improvement of the early years play programme is a priority area for development which the principal and the staff should manage through the school development planning process. The action-planning and target–setting arrangements need to link more effectively to the findings from the performance data analysis and the monitoring of the consistency in the quality of learning and teaching. The views of parents, the children, the governors and the staff are incorporated within the SDP.

- The board of governors is supportive of the principal and the staff. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in most aspects of governance evaluated. The financial and safeguarding arrangements are kept under review and the governors work diligently to ensure that the children are kept safe and secure. They need to develop a more rigorous cycle of review of the whole-school priorities and to ensure that the school development plan and the associated action planning process is leading to whole-school improvement.

- 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 year six children, they indicated 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 learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

APPENDIX

Accommodation

- There is an urgent need to ensure that the temporary classrooms have appropriate controlled access.

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