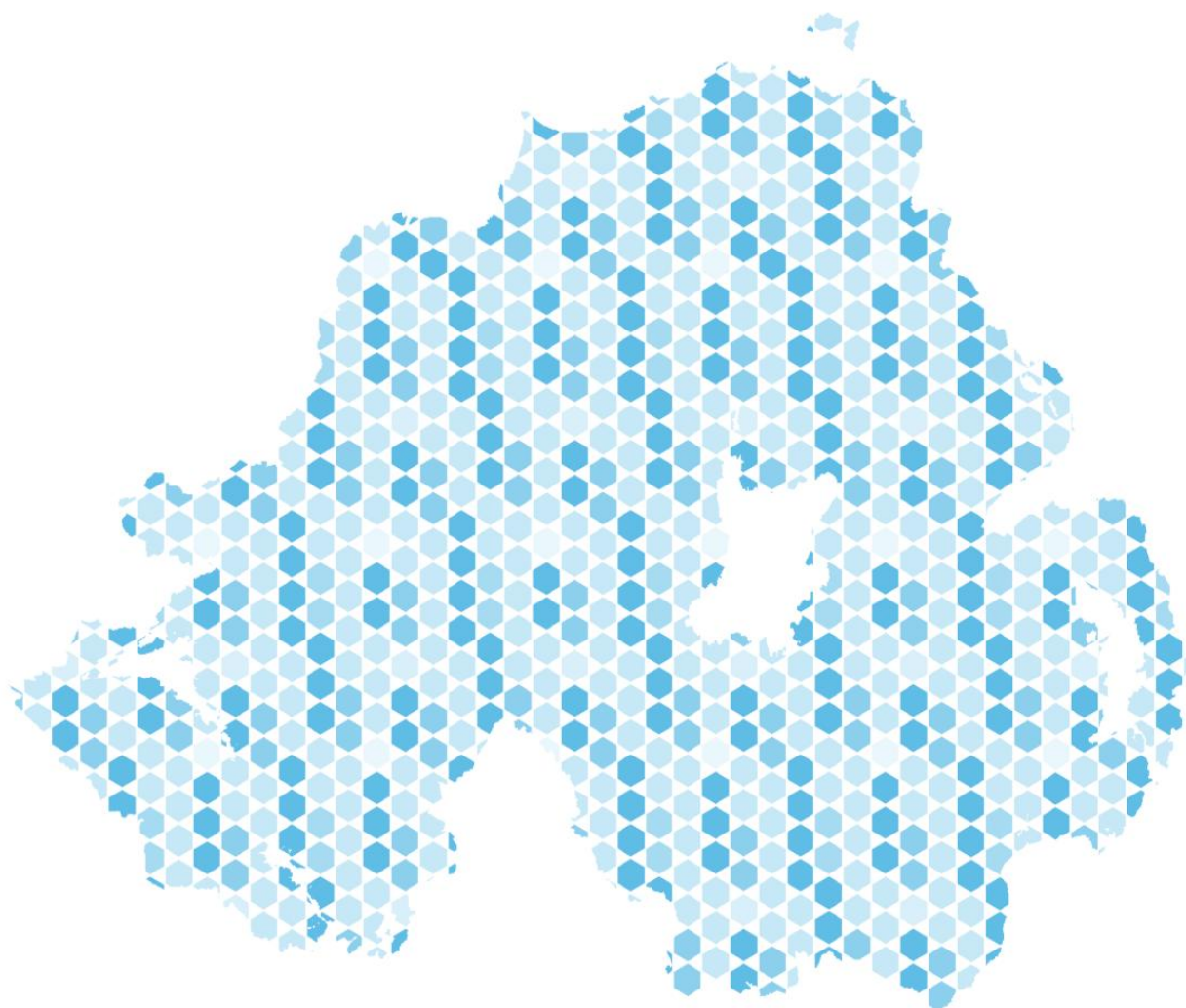


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Whiteabbey Primary School,
Newtownabbey, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
October 2014



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 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.

Twenty-five percent of parents and seventy-four percent of staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the overall life and work of the school. In particular, the friendly, compassionate and supportive family ethos of the school and the dedicated, staff who provide every possible opportunity for the children to excel. Most of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were also very positive including the respectful and enthusiastic spirit that exists among the team. In the discussion with the representative from the board of governors, he expressed their appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the principal and staff. ETI has reported to the principal and the representative of the board of governors the main findings emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions, including a small number of concerns that were raised.

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 literacy in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Whiteabbey Primary School is situated in a residential area close to Whiteabbey Village in south-east Antrim. The enrolment of the school is consistently oversubscribed; hence all of the children come from the immediate surrounding area. During the past two years there have been significant changes in the roles and responsibilities of the middle management.

Whiteabbey Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	419	417	418	421
% Attendance	97.2	96.8	97.4	
FSME Percentage ¹	*	*	*	*
% (No) of children on SEN register	12.5	12.6	9.6	7.4
No. of children with statements of educational needs	7	7	6	*
No. of newcomers	12	9	7	8

Source: data as held by the school.

*fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are courteous and happy, engage readily with their peers and are respectful towards staff and visitors to the school. They are highly motivated to learn, organise themselves well and settle quickly to their work with independence and good levels of engagement in their learning. They work well together collaboratively in pairs and small groups.
- The school's performance data shows that most of the children are achieving in line with their ability, or above expectation, in English and mathematics. The progress made by those children who require support with aspects of their learning is more variable. Their progress and achievements need to be tracked more systematically.
- The most able children in year 7 read with very good fluency and expression and talk enthusiastically about a wide range of authors and personal reading preferences. Across the curriculum, the standard of writing is very good and the children write competently in a range of styles. Almost all of the children are articulate and readily discuss their learning in pairs and small groups.
- The children use confidently a range of appropriate information and communication technology (ICT) devices and software to support well their literacy and numeracy, as well as other aspects of their learning. For example, the children can present, record and critique their own work.

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

6. Provision

- In the most effective practice, the teachers use well focused and purposeful questioning to promote the children's language and thinking and they present appropriately challenging and creative activities to extend the children's learning with a sense of fun.
- The teachers have developed a good shared, consistent approach to planning; they reflect effectively on the extent of the children's learning and use this well to inform future planning. They plan effectively a range of topics and themes which are clearly focused on connecting the children's learning across the curriculum with meaningful real life contexts. In the best practice the weekly plans are detailed with strategies, questioning and differentiation, clearly focused on the learning. The school has identified appropriately the need to revisit planning systematically to clarify how the full range of children's needs can be better met. In the less effective practice, the lessons were too teacher-directed and there was a lack of pace.
- The children's work is marked regularly and positively. In the best practice, the teachers provide meaningful guidance to children to enable them to improve the quality of their writing. The school has appropriately identified the need to embed this more consistently across the curriculum. The teachers make creative use of ICT as a tool to enable the children to assess the quality of their own work and that of their peers.
- Children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are provided with small group or individual withdrawal for literacy and numeracy. In the best practice, the individual education plans (IEP) are focussed on attainable, clear and measureable targets for improvement. The coordinator, in collaboration with the class teachers, needs to plan a more detailed programme of support, linked to addressing effectively the IEP targets. There is a need for more rigorous evaluation of the full range of programmes and initiatives, in order to ensure that they are effective in helping to raise the attainments for all of the children.
- The children develop their language and literacy skills through well-connected topics and creative learning experiences. Across the school, ICT is used very effectively as a tool to support, enrich and extend the children's learning in literacy. The children develop their confidence in talking and listening through well-planned drama activities and opportunities to take part in local speech and drama festivals. Reading is given a high priority with a strong focus on developing a love of reading through reading themed events, such as, book week. Timetabled access to a well-stocked central library encourages the children to browse and handle books appropriately. Enjoyment of reading is promoted further by sustained silent and independent reading.
- The high quality pastoral care provision in the school is a key strength. This provision is characterised by the welcoming, child-centred culture and the very good working relationships amongst the staff and children at all levels. The children are encouraged to take on roles and responsibilities, through, for example, the student council and the buddy system. The recent review of the

positive behaviour policy and the reward system have impacted well on the classroom practice and learning experience for all of the children. In discussions with the year six children, they spoke very positively about their learning experiences, the wide range of after-school activities and the sports offered to them.

- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, the children are encouraged to bring in a healthy break and lunch, and there is a suitable range of sporting initiatives within the curriculum. Through the personal development and mutual understanding programme, the children have good opportunities to present their knowledge of healthy habits.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management have a clear vision in providing high quality education for all children. The principal shows very effective leadership and has strong support from the whole school community. The staff work well collaboratively as a team in identifying appropriate whole school development priorities. It is timely that the school has prioritised the need to further develop the role of the coordinators to inform more effectively the self-evaluation processes in the school.
- The staff analyse a broad range of assessment data to identify potential underachievement. In taking this work forward, the school has identified the need to build on this work further by using the information to set targets and track individual children's progress to ensure that they all reach the standards of which they are capable.
- There are effective arrangements in place for communicating and consulting with parents to involve them appropriately in their children's education. The parent-teacher association provides considerable financial assistance to the school, for example to purchase resources such as interactive white boards and tablets, as well as organising social events. The school has very good links both locally and internationally, for example, they have raised significant funds to support the work of charities. The children benefit from the links with the local special and post-primary schools to provide wider learning opportunities, for example, from projects such as 'Dare to Dream'.
- The governors carry out their roles conscientiously and supportively, and understand the challenges and opportunities facing the school. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors have identified appropriately the need for them to further enhance their self-evaluation role.
- 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. During the inspection, the inspectors met with a group of year six children. They

spoke articulately about the good support provided by their teachers and the classroom assistants, the reward system within the school and their enjoyment of activities both inside and outside of the classroom. The children state that they feel safe and cared for in school and are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. This is:

- to review and improve the provision for children identified with additional learning needs.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

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