

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Ballinamallard Primary and  
Community Nursery School,  
Enniskillen, County Fermanagh

Report of an Inspection in  
June 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

## Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
Department for Communities

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



## Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

## Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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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 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 learning and teaching, 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 confidential questionnaires.

Twenty-seven percent of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. Their responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted: their appreciation of the approachable, hard-working and caring teachers and support staff; the high expectations of the staff for the children's learning; the range of extra-curricular opportunities available; and, the good progress their children are making. Forty-four percent of the staff completed the confidential questionnaire; their responses were also very positive. They emphasised the good quality of the working relationships, the supportive and collegial ethos across the school and their appreciation of the changes effected by the new leadership and management. The ETI has reported to the principal and the chair of the board of governors all of the views expressed in the confidential questionnaires.

## **2. Focus of inspection**

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning in the school including the nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

Ballinamallard Primary and Community Nursery School is a controlled primary school situated in the village of Ballinamallard approximately seven miles north of Enniskillen. The school has a nursery unit with one part-time session. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the local area. The enrolment of the school has decreased slightly over the last four years. Over the same period, the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has remained constant and the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of

their learning has increased significantly. The Education Authority appointed two interim principals for two consecutive terms, from September 2015 to January 2016. The board of governors, which has been recently re-constituted, appointed a new principal who took up position in January 2016. The school is developing its provision for shared education through curricular and pastoral links with two local primary schools facilitated by the Department of Education's Signature Project for Shared Education.

Ballinamallard Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	153	160	150	141
Enrolment in Nursery	25	25	26	26
% School attendance	96.2	95.8	96.5	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	18	19	19	22
No. of children on SEN register	34	37	42	49
% of children on SEN register	22	23	28	35
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	5	*	6
No. of newcomer children	*	5	8	13

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address an important area for improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Important area for improvement
<b>Nursery Unit</b>	Very good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- Almost all of the children have positive attitudes and dispositions to learning. They are articulate, friendly and mannerly; their behaviour in most instances is exemplary. The children are motivated and engage well in individual work or group tasks. They respond well to the learning activities which develop effectively and progressively their thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- The school's performance data shows that most children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics and achieve at or above expectation.
- Overall, the standards achieved by the children in literacy are good. By the end of foundation stage, the children are able to share ideas and feelings with each other and with adults, respond well to stories and rhyme and have positive attitudes to reading. They write with increasing independence and are mostly accurate in letter formation. The most able children in year 7 demonstrate a good range of reading strategies, make inferences and are enthusiastic and

<sup>1</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

articulate when discussing their reading preferences. The children write well in a variety of forms for real and imaginary audiences; however, there is insufficient opportunity to develop their writing skills across all areas of learning. In the children's books, there is too much variation in the quality of the children's handwriting and in the standard of presentation.

- Overall, the standards achieved by the children in mathematics are good. In the foundation stage, the children develop effectively their early mathematical awareness as well as mathematical language. Across the key stages, the children enjoy learning mathematics and engage well with practical activities. The standard of the work in the children's books shows good progression. By year 7, the most able children demonstrate a good understanding of mathematical concepts whilst solving mathematical problems and are able to justify their answers; however, they have limited understanding of the mental strategies.
- All of the children in the nursery, including the small group of pre, pre-school children, are making very good progress in relation to their age and stage of development. The children are happy and settle quickly to purposeful, concentrated play. The children demonstrate high levels of independence when making choices about the activities they engage in and the resources they use; they are particularly creative in initiating and sustaining imaginative role play activities in both indoor and outdoor play. The children communicate effectively with each other and can talk confidently to the adults about their learning experiences. During story time, the children listen attentively. They initiate spontaneous singing sessions and are developing a sense of rhythm using the musical instruments which are provided during indoor and outdoor play.
- The children develop well their skills in using information communication technology (ICT); they are confident and competent in using appropriately a wide range of ICT devices and applications to enhance their learning across all key stages, particularly in the foundation stage. As they progress through the school, by year 7, the children achieve good standards in ICT.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- Most of the lessons observed were good or better; a majority were very good. In the very good practice, the lessons are set within meaningful real-life contexts and resources, including ICT, are used well to support the children's understanding. The teachers build on the children's previous learning and use the plenary sessions to consolidate their understanding and evaluate the children's responses to their learning. The classroom assistants provide effective support for the children's learning and social skills. In the less effective practice, in a minority of lessons, there is a focus on the completion of activities rather than on the learning outcomes; the lessons are over-directed by the teacher, and the work is not sufficiently challenging or matched well enough to the abilities of all the children. The children's work is marked regularly and supportively; however, there is limited consistency in the teachers marking for improvement.

- There are well-established processes for the early identification of the learning needs of the children. The teachers' good knowledge of the children's social, emotional and educational needs in the nursery and the school informs the effective intervention programme of withdrawal and in-class support, for those who require additional help with aspects of their learning. Most of the targets on the individual education plans are realistic and clear, enabling progress to be measured and celebrated. More work is needed to ensure teachers and classroom assistants are working together to evaluate the extent of the children's learning to develop future planning more effectively. The impact of the intervention programmes are not monitored sufficiently.
- The long-term planning for literacy ensures progressive development of the children's communication skills; however, extended writing is not planned for sufficiently by the teachers. Guided reading is enhancing well the children's confidence and competence in reading for meaning and for pleasure. The library is not utilised sufficiently to improve the children's access to a wider range of reading material.
- Across all the key stages, the children access a broad and balanced range of learning activities across the core areas of number, shape and space, measures and handling data. In the most effective numeracy provision, in most of lessons observed, the work was matched well to the ability of each child, with suitably structured, enjoyable activities where the teachers assessed skilfully the children's understanding and challenged their thinking. The range of problem-solving tasks to extend the children's thinking and enable them to make connections between their mathematical learning and everyday life is underdeveloped.
- Overall, the quality of the long- and medium-term planning across the school is variable; there is limited coherence to planning across the key stages in all areas of the curriculum. In the best practice, in a majority of classes, the short-term planning is tailored effectively to meet the needs of all the children within the class and the teachers' regular evaluations of the planning guide well the next steps in learning and teaching. This best practice needs to be disseminated more widely across the school.
- The quality of the provision in the nursery is very good. The positive, stimulating learning environment in the nursery develops effectively the children's language development, creativity, decision-making and self-management skills. A particular strength is the provision of a range of carefully chosen natural and authentic resources, many of which are multi-sensory, which provide the children with imaginative role play activities that are contextualised to the rural location of the nursery unit and its proximity to the lakes and the local airport. The staff's interaction with the children is consistently very good; they listen attentively to the children and respond effectively to their interests and ideas. The assessment and observation approaches are used well to inform a planned programme that meets the needs and interests of all the children, including the pre-, pre-school children. An audit of outdoor play resources and provision has been undertaken and the staff are currently re-developing this area.

- The pastoral care in the school is highly effective. The welcoming ethos creates a caring learning environment and promotes good quality working relationships across the school. Of particular note, is the school's commitment to support and improve the children's personal, emotional and social skills with a range of age-appropriate programmes and by very good engagement with external agencies. The children develop leadership skills in their involvement in the school- and eco-councils and the playground 'buddy scheme'. Through a range of extra-curricular activities, which include sport, music and gardening, the children's interests develop and their learning advances.
- The nursery and school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The school is emerging from a significant period of change. The interim principals and the recently appointed principal have re-established clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the co-ordination of curricular areas and have adopted a collaborative approach. The principal has a clear strategic vision for the future of the school and has led and managed effectively a significant programme of improvement in recent months. The roles of the co-ordinators are still under developed and require the evaluation of the impact of the planning and teaching on the standards the children attain.
- The principal has put in place a comprehensive interim school development plan (SDP)<sup>2</sup> with appropriate key priorities which is guiding well the improvement work of the school. The school has started appropriately the consultation process to take account of the views of parents, children, and governors in the next cycle of school development planning. The teaching and support staff have engaged purposefully in continuing professional development opportunities aligned closely to the priorities identified in the interim SDP.
- The nursery team work very effectively together and are reflective in their work. The nursery action plan identifies appropriate areas for development which has led to ongoing improvement in the provision and the children's learning experiences.
- The links that the school has developed with parents, schools and organisations in the local community are well-established and are used effectively to enrich the children's learning experiences. There are valuable arrangements in place for consulting with parents and involving them in the work and life of the school. There are effective working relationships and curricular links between the staff in the nursery and in the primary school.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are involved in the life and work of the school and provide appropriate support in relation to the areas of resources, staffing and finance. Given the significant period of change, the governors have recognised their need to challenge further the leadership and management of the school regarding the achievements and standards and the quality of the provision of the children.

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<sup>2</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010



- 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 in year 6 reported that they are happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Ballinamallard Primary School needs to address an important area for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The area for improvement is to:

- develop the role of the co-ordinators to use the action planning process to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements across the school.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

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