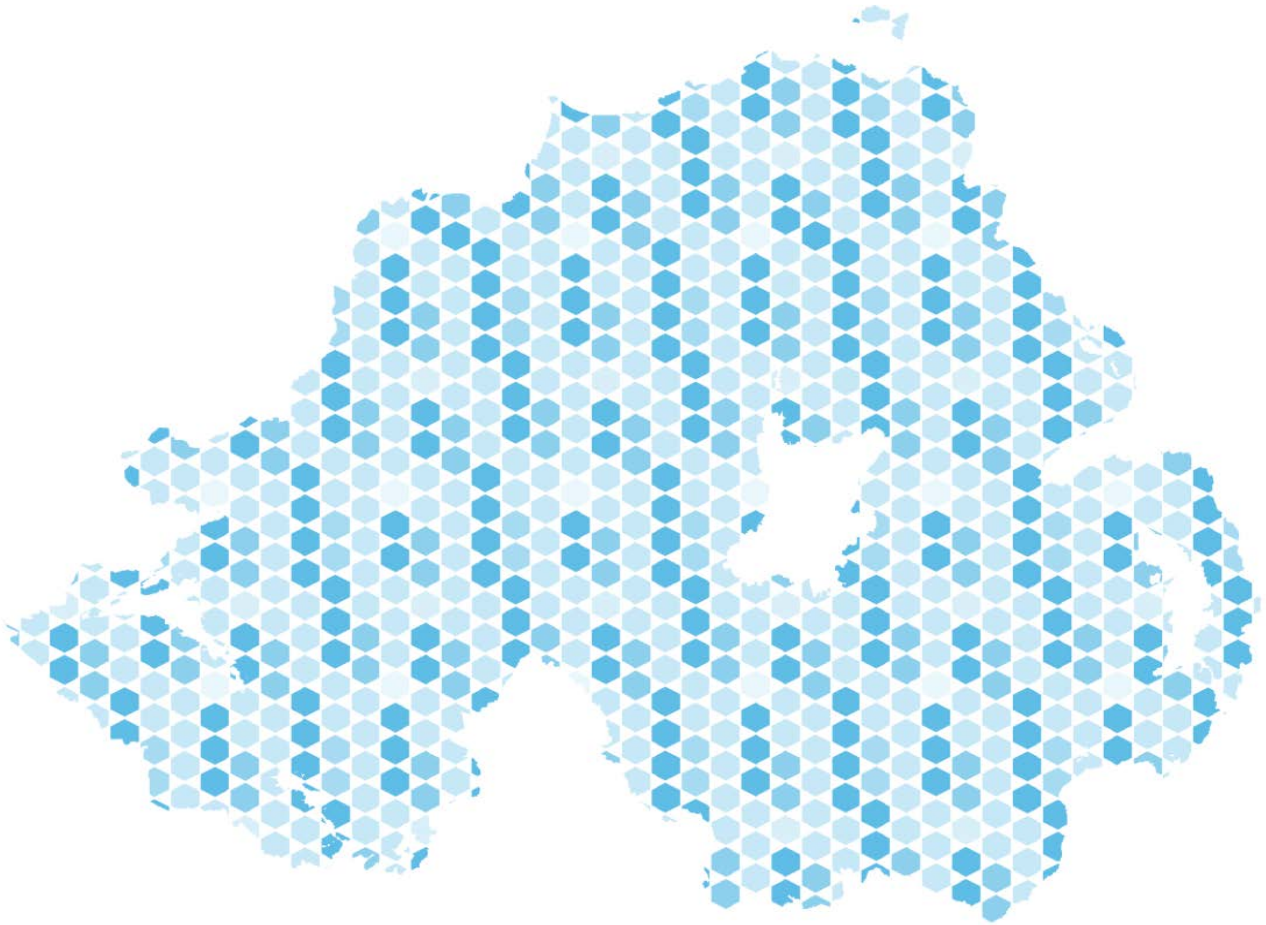


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Brackenagh West Primary
School, Kilkeel, County Down

Inspection completed 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 representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Twenty percent of the parents responded to the questionnaires. Almost all of the responses were very supportive of all aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents acknowledged the approachable and caring staff, the school's friendly, child-centred ethos and its positive reputation in the community. Over half of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were also highly positive; in particular, the staff highlighted the effective teamwork and the excellent leadership of the principal and vice-principal. The ETI has reported on the questionnaires to the principal and representatives of the board of governors.

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, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision for learning in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Brackenagh West Primary School was opened in 1972 and is situated near Kilkeel in County Down. The children come mainly from the surrounding rural area with a small number attending from Kilkeel and Annalong. The enrolment has risen slightly over the past four years and the school is operating at full capacity. In the same period, there has been a minor increase in the number of children entitled to free school meals and a reduction in the number of children on the special needs register.

An inspection of Brackenagh West Primary School was due to be carried out in June 2015. The inspection¹ commenced but was not completed due to the involvement of 55% of the teachers in action-short-of-strike in relation to pay, pensions and terms and conditions of employment and reductions in the educational budget. An inspection team revisited the school in June 2016 to complete the inspection. The following report contains the combined evaluations from June 2015 and June 2016.

Brackenagh West Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	169	169	176	177
% Attendance	95.7	96.1	96.6	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.3	95.7	96.8	N/A
FSME Percentage ²	18.9	19.5	24	23.2
% of children on SEN register	26.0	23.6	26	22.6
No. of children with statements of educational needs	0	*	*	6

Source: data as held by the school

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children in all classes are highly motivated and engage readily in the lessons. Most take pride in the presentation and accuracy of their work. The children listen respectfully and co-operate maturely with one another in pairs and in small groups. They respond particularly well when the planned learning activities contain sufficient challenge; for example, in practical problem-solving tasks where they have to work collaboratively with others.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics at or above expectation. A significant minority are achieving above the expected level in English and mathematics.

¹ <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-primary/inspection-reports-primary-2015/inspection-letter-brackenagh-west-primary-school-kilkeel.pdf>

² The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

* fewer than 5

- In all key stages, the children have a clear understanding of key mathematical concepts; their competence is developing effectively with the current focus on the numeracy within the play-based learning and the school's effective use of data to identify and respond appropriately to the specific areas where particular children may be underachieving. From the foundation stage, the children engage keenly with mathematical challenges and well-planned practical tasks and are encouraged to explain their reasoning using the appropriate mathematical language. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the children are very competent across most mathematical processes and key concepts and display flexible thinking when attempting unfamiliar problems and investigations.
- From the foundation stage, the children enjoy a broad and balanced literacy programme which develops well their reading, writing, talking and listening skills, as well as creating meaningful contexts for increasing their understanding of how language is used. The most able readers in year 7 are fluent and expressive. They speak enthusiastically about their favourite authors, use appropriate strategies to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words, and demonstrate inferential understanding of theme and character. Most of the children's independent written work across a range of forms is of a high quality.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making good progress; the continuous improvement in their all round development enables them to move successfully and confidently to the next stage of their learning.
- The children use competently and confidently a good range of information and communication technology (ICT) devices and software to support and extend their learning across the curriculum; the teachers track and record systematically the progress they make.

6. Provision for learning

- In a majority of lessons, the teachers' evaluations inform well future planning for individuals and groups. Across the key stages, the learning and teaching is consistently good in progressing the children's learning; most of the lessons observed were very good and a small number were outstanding. In these lessons, the teachers build effectively on the children's prior knowledge and provide well-planned open-ended tasks which contain appropriate challenge for the children to work together and learn from one another. Marking for improvement is a key strength of the provision with the teachers giving the children timely age-appropriate guidance about how to improve their work.
- The school provides effective, well-tailored support for the children identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. The additional in-class and withdrawal provision is matched carefully to the children's needs. The individual education plans are well-conceived and place appropriate focus on the children's learning and on their social and emotional development. The frequent and effective communication amongst the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), class teachers and the learning support staff ensures that the children's learning targets are specific and the learning interventions impact positively on the children's progress.

- The teachers employ a connected approach to developing the children’s literacy skills, blending meaningfully the children’s talking, listening, reading and writing. In the foundation stage, the teachers create an engaging child-centred literacy environment and use the play-based learning well to extend the children’s use of language and to develop further their early writing skills. In all classes, the children’s knowledge and application of spelling, grammar and punctuation are developed progressively through carefully planned activities. As they mature, the children experience a widening variety of writing activities across a range of forms. In reading, the teachers introduce the children to an engaging variety of text forms including popular novels, real-life reference books and digital media; as a result, the children are highly motivated to read independently.
- In the effective mathematics practice, the teachers ask probing questions and provide well-paced and stimulating mental mathematics and practical activities to extend the children’s thinking skills and mathematical flexibility. The teachers’ regular evaluation of the numeracy policy and the mathematics schemes ensures that the children experience a well-balanced blend of number, shape and space, measures and handling-data across the key stages, as well as securing appropriate continuity and challenge in the programme as the children progress. The current focus on developing the prominence of numeracy within other curricular areas, particularly in the play-based learning, enables the children to connect and apply their learning meaningfully in a wider range of contexts.
- The quality of the pastoral care in the school is very good. The outworking of the school’s motto, “building foundations for life,” permeates all aspects of school life. The strengths of the pastoral care include: the strong sense of family that exists in the school underpinned by a distinctive caring ethos; the very positive working relationships at all levels; the strong links with the parents; and, the extensive range of extra-curricular activities which enriches the children’s experience and develops well their interests, confidence and independence.
- The school promotes healthy eating and physical activity very well thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leaders are highly effective in leading and managing change and have a strategic direction for developing the school’s provision. The senior leadership is supported well in this work by the middle leaders who guide skilfully their respective areas of responsibility.
- Self-evaluation leading to improvement is well-embedded. The school development plan³ (SDP) guides very well the improvement work; the well-conceived and measurable action plans and the associated strategies for monitoring and evaluation are used effectively to focus closely on improving further the quality of the children’s learning experiences and raising further the standards they attain.

³ The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- The school has extensive and effective links with the parents, notably to enable them to support their children's learning through, for example, the home-school book in the foundation stage, the informative website and monthly newsletters. There are regular sporting links with other local primary schools and opportunities for the respective principals and co-ordinators to meet in clusters and share good practice.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of incomplete 2015 inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The board of governors is developing well its role in monitoring and evaluating the school's progress against the key targets in the SDP. In a significant development, the governors are now presented with a wider range of first-hand evidence from the curricular co-ordinators.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the incomplete 2015 inspection, the school had 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 safe and secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Brackenagh West Primary 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.

Health and Safety

1. The school needs to complete a risk assessment and keep under review the arrangements for keeping the children safe at drop-off and collection times.

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