

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Lurgan Model Primary School  
and Nursery Unit, Lurgan,  
County Armagh

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



## 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 year 6 and year 7 children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Seventeen percent of parents and a half of the staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires were almost all positive. The parents indicated that the school is well-led, and that their child enjoys learning at the school. The staff responses were also positive and emphasised the inclusive, welcoming and pastoral ethos for all members of the school community. The ETI has discussed with the principal and representatives of the board of governors the small number of issues emerging from very few 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 with a particular focus on numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on numeracy including the nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

Lurgan Model Primary School is a co-educational controlled school with nursery unit, situated adjacent to Lurgan town centre. Most of the children attending the school come from the immediate area. Enrolment has been rising steadily in recent years and the school is now close to capacity. In the past four years, the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has risen by 10 percent and the number of children requiring additional help with their learning has risen by 40 percent. A new principal took up post in September 2015.

Lurgan Model Primary School and Nursery Unit	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment in the Primary	172	170	182	190
Enrolment in the Nursery Unit	26	26	26	27
% School attendance	90.05	93.1	92.8	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>[1]</sup>	39	39	41	43
No. of children on SEN register	36	35	42	61
% of children on SEN register	18	18	20	28
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	6	9
No. of newcomer children	41	20	31	46

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

N/A = not available

\* fewer than 5

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Good
<b>Nursery unit</b>	Good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are courteous, confident and communicate their thoughts and ideas in an articulate manner. They are enthusiastic learners when given stimulating challenges and are eager to take the lead when the opportunity arises. They listen well to one another and support and encourage each other when working in teams. They are knowledgeable about internet safety and are confident using information and communication technology. The children in the foundation stage are developing their independence and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The school's performance data and the work in the children's books shows that most of the children in mathematics and a majority of the children in English, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress at or above expectation.
- The children displayed confidence and contributed well during most of the mathematics lessons observed. They engage well with practical activities and use correctly mathematical vocabulary. The children are able to apply their learning in mathematics in a range of curricular areas and activities, and by year 7, the most able children demonstrate that they are able to apply their learning flexibly in mathematics across the curriculum. The children in the foundation stage demonstrate a clear understanding of mathematical concepts appropriate to their age.

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

- Most of the children in the nursery unit are well settled and can sustain their play in self-chosen activity for prolonged periods. They listen attentively during the group story, join in enthusiastically with the songs and rhymes and refer to books during play. A majority of the children are beginning to understand early mathematical concepts including shape, size and capacity. The language and communication skills are underdeveloped in a minority of children.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- In the very good practice, in a minority of lessons observed, the children were challenged and supported skilfully and resources were well chosen to stimulate thinking. This contributed to engaging experiences and high levels of achievement. In the less effective practice, in a significant minority of lessons, the focus was on the completion of activities that were overly directed by the teacher and had limited opportunities for independent thinking. There is undue variation in the teachers' planning; in particular, the short-term planning does not take explicit account of the range of abilities, specific needs and outcomes for each child.
- The provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is good. In the most effective practice, in a majority of the lessons observed, there was effective differentiation, enabling the children to progress in their knowledge and skills; the staff monitor closely the children's learning and assess regularly their progress. The lack of differentiation to meet the wide range of individual needs led to less effective practice. The children are identified for literacy, numeracy or English language withdrawal support through the use of assessment information and teacher observation. They are supported very well in mathematics through highly effective, small group withdrawal sessions. The intervention programme for the children's acquisition of English language skills is an area for further development by the staff.
- The children have good opportunities to use an appropriate range of practical learning experiences to develop further their understanding of key mathematical concepts. In the most effective practice, in a majority of the lessons observed, the teachers set the children's learning in meaningful contexts which reflect the children's interests and experiences. In the foundation stage, the teachers develop effectively the children's understanding and language of mathematics through a range of activities and play-based learning. Good progress has been made by the school leadership on the revision of whole school guidance for numeracy and progression in the children's mathematical skills. The school has a comprehensive system in place to observe lessons, and to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and the children's attainments for mathematics.
- In the nursery unit, written planning ensures there are good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The key strength of the nursery is the purposeful development of the children's awareness of rhyme and rhythm through opportunities to sing and perform during indoor and outdoor play. The children who require intervention are identified early and staff have developed effective links with a range of external support agencies. The quality of the staff interaction is often purposeful and questions are used to promote learning and encourage the children's imagination. In the best practice, the staff listen to, and build on, the children's own ideas and pose simple problems to develop the children's understanding further. This high quality interaction needs

to be more consistent among all of the staff. The well-developed links between the nursery unit and the foundation stage support the smooth transition of the children to year one in the primary school. The systematic evaluation of the children's learning is an area for further development in the nursery unit.

- The school participates in many effective educational initiatives to help build self-esteem and resilience in children and they can attend counselling sessions within the school. The children benefit from a rich variety of activities, such as, cricket tournaments and cultural dance which broaden their life experiences and help to develop interests. They participate in the school council and take responsibility for important decisions, such as, purchasing resources for the school playground; however, the children's voice requires further development throughout the school.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through activities that motivate the children to take personal responsibility for adopting healthy lifestyles. These include: a healthy break competition, cycling proficiency and pupils gathering data on their own physical fitness.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership team have introduced an appropriate range of strategies to address underachievement in the school. There is a school development plan<sup>2</sup> in place, with a new version being prepared following comprehensive consultation to address the core challenges of improving quality of planning, teaching, learning and raising standards. The associated action plans are limited, in that they require, clearer, well-defined and measurable targets.
- The governors have the appropriate expertise necessary to support the school and they share in the commitment to effecting improvement; particularly in raising standards. 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. There is an aspect of governance to review, namely to:
  - ensure that all pastoral policies are updated to include the nursery unit, where applicable.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following area needs to be addressed:
  - to ensure that arrangements for carrying out risk assessments are robust.
- In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 reported that they feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

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

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Lurgan Model Primary School and Nursery Unit 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, in particular, the need to:

- ensure that short-term planning is developed by all teachers to include effective differentiation.



**Health and Safety / Accommodation**

1. It is important to review the location of the ladies toilet, which is only accessible from the children's cloakroom.
2. To review the limited staff parking facilities which contributes to congestion and risk of accidents, at the front of the school.

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