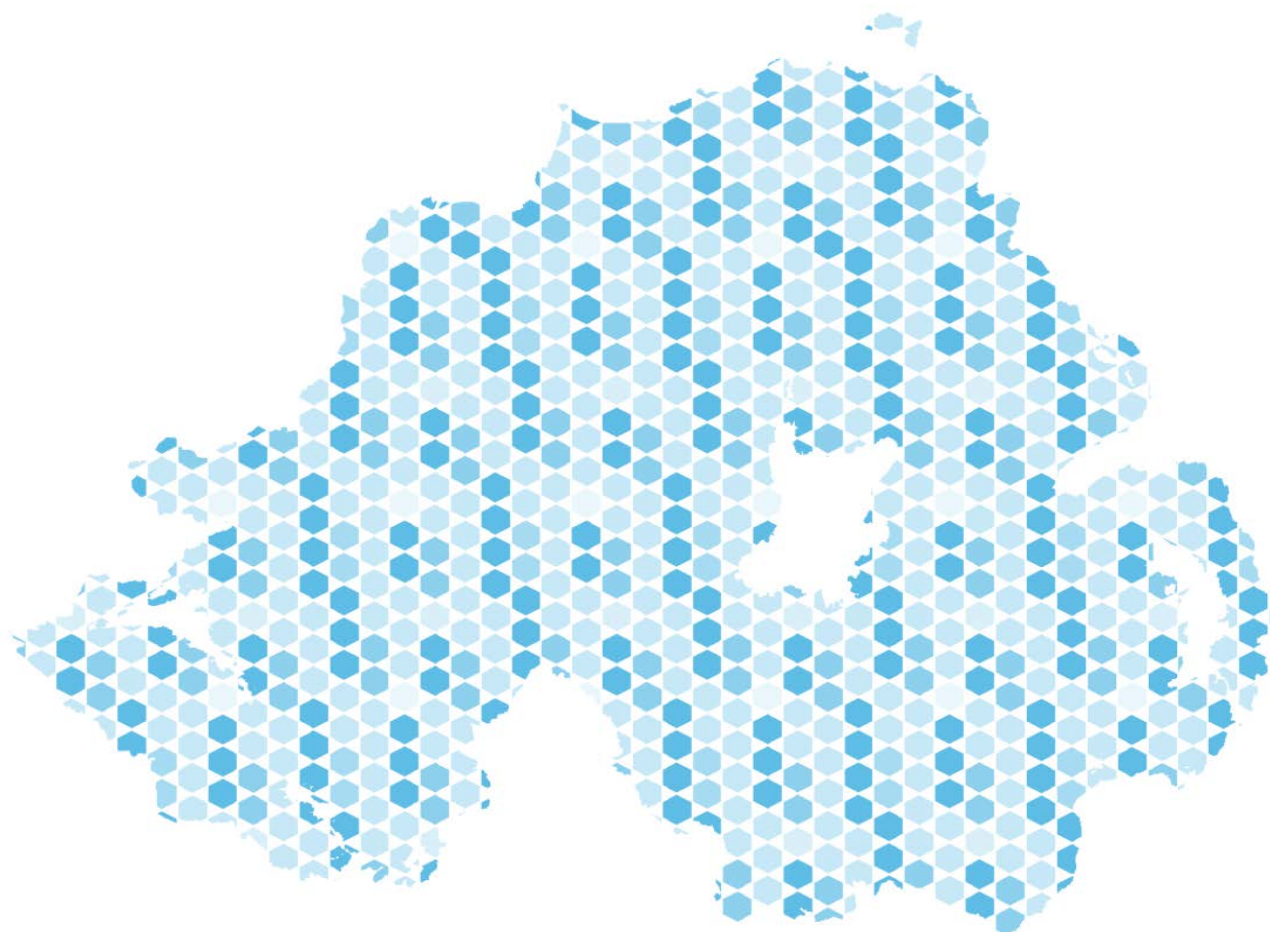


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,
Mullymesker, Enniskillen,
County Fermanagh

Report of an Inspection in
January 2016

eti

*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



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.eti.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 board of governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Sixteen percent of the parents responded to the questionnaire; their responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the good progress of the children, the welcoming ethos and the commitment of the staff to providing enjoyable learning experiences. All of the staff responded to the questionnaire; their responses were wholly positive. They emphasised: the range of staff development opportunities available to them; the excellent behaviour and the many talents of the children; the support from, and engagement with, the parents; and, the many links with the local community to help provide the children with meaningful learning experiences. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the governors the few issues emerging from the questionnaires and discussions.

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; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St Mary's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in the townland of Mullymesker in the village of Arney, five miles from the town of Enniskillen. Almost all of the children who attend the school come from the village of Arney and the surrounding rural areas. The enrolment has decreased slightly over the past two years and the school is currently over-subscribed. The school operates currently at 18% above the enrolment capacity. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has almost doubled over the past four years, while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has decreased over the same period. The school participates actively in a shared education programme with three other local schools; this collaboration enhances well the learning and development opportunities for the children and the staff.

St Mary's Primary School, Mullymesker	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	134	140	135	129
% School attendance	95.5	95.3	95.6	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	13	20	21	25
No. of children on SEN register	43	34	31	26
% of children on SEN register	32	24	23	20
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	6	6	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children enjoy their learning. They work well in pairs, groups and independently. From an early stage, they are encouraged to manage and reflect on their own learning and to work collaboratively and cooperatively with one another. A particular strength is the children's skilful and creative use of language. By year 7, the children are articulate and express their views with maturity and confidence. They have high levels of resilience and perseverance when given extended tasks that are appropriately challenging. The children use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support their learning and to enhance the quality of their work.
- The school's performance data and the first-hand evidence from the children's books show that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Across all of the key stages, the children display a positive attitude to, and enthusiasm for, mathematics. The key mathematical concepts in all areas of the mathematics curriculum are embedded progressively as the children advance through the school. The children use ICT well to support their learning, for example, through the use of programmable devices and applications on the tablet computers to consolidate mathematical concepts. By year 7, the most able children have a sound understanding of important mathematical ideas and concepts and complete computations with accuracy.

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

- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make excellent progress. The appropriately challenging targets set in their individual education plans provide the children with regular opportunities to experience success and to reach very good standards.

6. Provision for learning

- In the most effective practice, in three-fifths of the lessons observed, the children benefit from well-paced lessons in which the teachers use skilfully open-ended questioning to provide opportunities for the children to give extended responses to explain their thinking. The teachers have high expectations of the children's contribution to the learning in an ethos where they are encouraged to present regularly and confidently their knowledge, understanding and ideas. The teachers make good use of observations and assessment to inform future planning. Literacy and numeracy planning is clear and provides an effective guide to ensure progression; it is important that this level of planning is replicated across all areas of the curriculum.
- The provision for children with additional educational needs is outstanding. The pastoral and learning needs of the children are identified at an early stage and a wide range of strategies are deployed to ensure these, at times complex, needs are met very effectively. There is meaningful, collaborative engagement with parents and external agencies to empower, and utilise the expertise of, all involved in supporting the child's pastoral and learning needs. The individual education plans guide well the work of the teachers. Through regular and well-targeted staff development opportunities, the expertise of the classroom assistants is deployed effectively to support and guide the children's learning.
- There is a consistent approach to the planning of numeracy which provides the children with a balanced coverage of all aspects of mathematics. Throughout the school, mental mathematics activities are used as an enjoyable introduction to support the main learning in the lesson. Teachers plan regularly to match the work and activities to the abilities of the children. In the most effective practice, this differentiated approach provides suitable challenge for the more able children. It is appropriate that the school has identified the need to provide more opportunities for the children to engage in problem-solving activities and open-ended investigative work through which they can demonstrate the use and application of mathematics in relevant contexts.
- There is a welcoming ethos and the working relationships between the children, the staff and members of the local community are excellent. Positive behaviour is promoted effectively through the fostering of excellent dispositions to learning and the recognition and celebration of each child's talents and abilities at regular assemblies and public events. The parents and children have the opportunity to express their views on aspects of school life through, for example, their participation in the active parent association and school council respectively. The children are encouraged to develop a keen sense of empathy and social justice, and to develop their role as responsible citizens in their local community.
- The 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 senior leadership team has a clear strategic vision for the future development of the school's provision, with a focus on improving the learning experiences and outcomes for the children. Significant improvement work has been undertaken, particularly in regard to the literacy provision and in developing the effective use of data to support the school's self-evaluative processes. The school's three-year development plan² is in its final year of implementation; regular consultation has been undertaken to support robust self-evaluation and to inform the next cycle of school development planning. The associated action plans are currently of a good standard and identify appropriate actions for further improvement.
- The development of the role of co-ordinators within the school is at an early stage and has been identified appropriately as a key priority for the next cycle of school development planning. At present, improvements in key aspects of provision are not being progressed sufficiently and in a timely manner. It will be important for the senior leadership team, including governance, to develop further the role of co-ordinators to effect more timely improvements in the quality of the whole-school provision for learning.
- The school has excellent links with parents and the local community. The parents are provided with comprehensive reports of their child's progress on a regular basis. Curriculum information evenings and guidance materials are used to help parents support well their child's learning at home. The effective links with the feeder nursery school and the local post-primary schools help provide a smooth transition and appropriate progression.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors support well the work of the school, with a clear focus on effecting improvement for the children. The range of expertise and experience they bring supports the effective governance of the school and they demonstrate commitment to the school's improvement agenda through: regular attendance at meetings and school events; participation in appropriate training; scrutiny of the school's performance data; and, regular monitoring of the outworking of aspects of the school development plan. To enhance the governance of the school, the governors need to monitor more closely the co-ordination and development of all aspects of curriculum provision.
- 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 areas need to be addressed:
 - to ensure all staff, including ancillary staff, undertake appropriate training in the school's own child protection procedures and are aware of the school's reporting arrangements; and
 - as identified by the school, to review the arrangements for playground supervision to create an environment more conducive to safer play.

² The school development plan meets fully the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 reported that they generally feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

St Mary's Primary School demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. In particular, there is a need to:

- develop further the role of co-ordinators to effect more timely improvements in the quality of the whole-school provision.

The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

Accommodation

1. Given the school's enrolment, the school's accommodation is insufficient in size. This deficiency is impacting negatively on the learning experiences of a minority of the children.

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