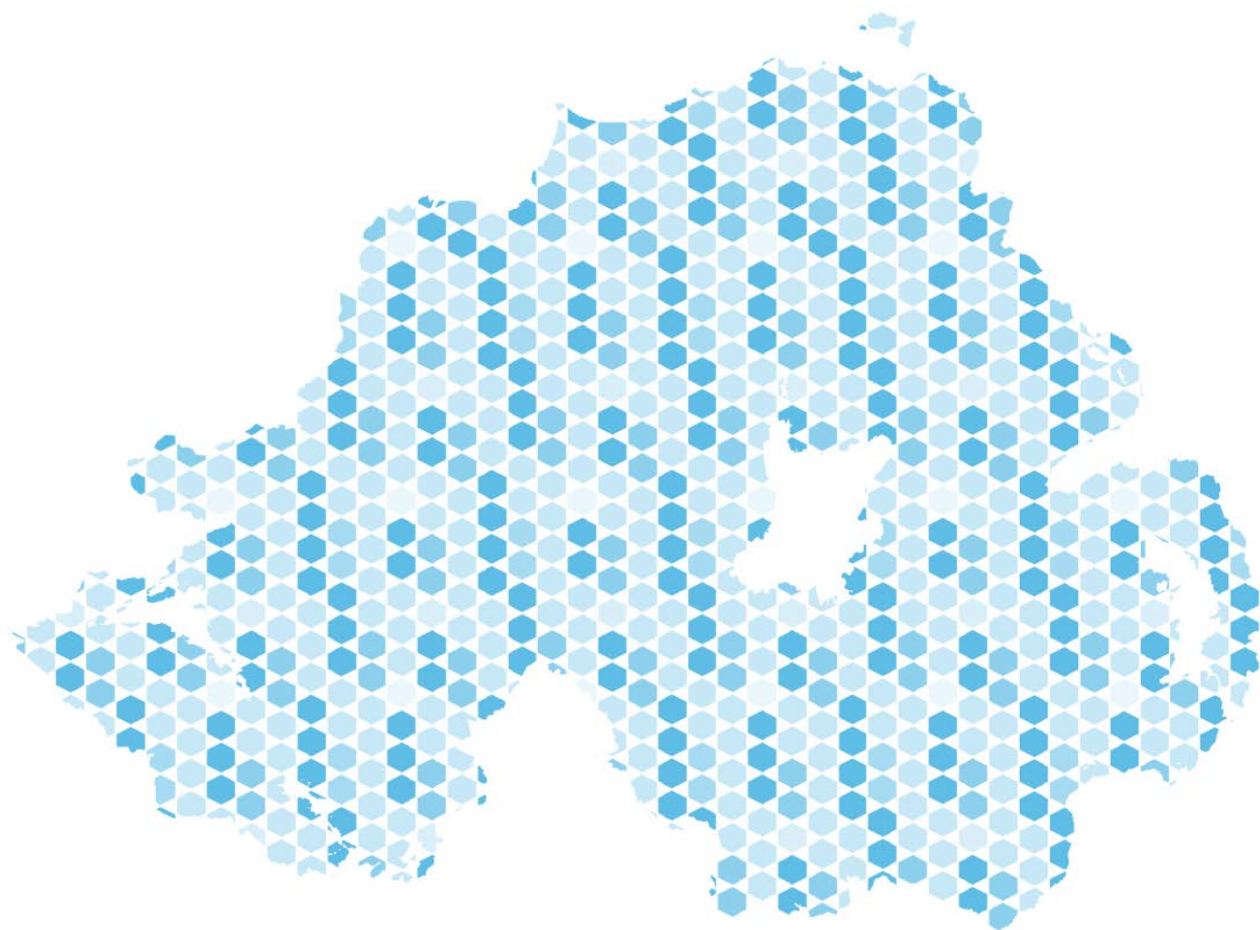


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballymacrickett Primary School,
Glenavy, County Antrim

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.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	3
7. Leadership and management	5
8. Overall effectiveness	6

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.

Thirty-four percent of parents (90) and 97% of staff (35) responded to the questionnaires. Almost all of the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the caring and supportive staff, the high expectations of the staff for the children's learning and the strong links that the school has with the local community. Almost all of the staff responses were very positive. They emphasised the close working relationship between all members of staff and their appreciation of the support that they receive from the school leadership and the parents. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main issues emerging from the questionnaires and the 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 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

Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit is a maintained primary school situated one mile from the village of Glenavy, near Lisburn in County Antrim. The children come from the village of Glenavy and its surrounding areas. Over the previous four years the nursery unit has been operating at full capacity and the enrolment in the primary school has increased steadily. The school motto: Happy Together, Learning Forever is evidenced clearly in the welcoming, respectful atmosphere that permeates the school. The school has promoted shared education through a Community Relations, Equality and Diversity funded project with the neighbouring controlled primary school for the past four years. The two schools are currently working in partnership in the Shared Education Signature Project.

Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	333	338	368	379
% School attendance	96	96.9	96.3	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	12.3	14.5	16	11
No. of children on SEN register	72	74	73	69
% of children on SEN register	21.6	21.8	19.8	18.2
No. of children with statements of educational need	6	5	10	13
No. of newcomer children	*	5	*	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	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are respectful and engage well with visitors, staff and one another. Across all the key stages the children are articulate and motivated learners who take responsibility for the learning environment. When given the opportunity, in the majority of the lessons observed, the children think creatively, offering original responses that build on their learning from different areas of the curriculum.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics, in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The quality of the children's written work in the samples viewed is of a good quality including examples of narrative writing that can sustain the reader's interest. However, the children need a more expansive range of vocabulary to enrich further the quality of the writing. By the end of key stage 1 almost all of the children are reading at a level in line with their ability and by the end of key stage 2 almost all the children read with accuracy and confidence. When given the opportunity in class, through for example the effective questioning from the teacher, the children are able to supply reasoned and extended responses.

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

- In numeracy the children demonstrate a high level of competence when using key mathematical concepts, such as handling data, shape and space, number and measure. During discussions with the inspectors, the year 7 children engaged readily with problem-solving tasks, confidently applied mathematics to real situations and demonstrated mental flexibility when performing calculations. From foundation stage onwards the children use a wide range of mathematical language appropriately and demonstrate an awareness of how mathematics is used in a number of occupations.
- Almost all of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making very good progress. In particular, the children who receive specific literacy withdrawal support make excellent progress and almost all reach a standard in line with or above expectation in literacy. In class, the majority of the children meet the targets outlined in their individual education plans and make consistently very good progress.
- The children in the nursery unit are very well settled and are making outstanding progress in all aspects of their learning and development. They spend sustained periods concentrating on tasks with confidence and independence. All of the children participate fully in well-managed song and story sessions and show imagination and creativity in their use of materials at the art and construction areas, producing work of a very high standard. They have a keen interest in books and make very good, independent use of the wide range of books around the playroom. They join in play readily with others and can talk to the staff and one another about their work and learning experiences using appropriate, topic-related vocabulary.
- The children's achievements and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are good. In the best practice the teachers incorporate problem solving and investigative activities using a range of digital applications, which allow the children to develop further their thinking skills and personal capabilities.

6. Provision for learning

- The teachers and classroom assistants in each class plan and work together to provide a learning environment that supports the emotional and social development of the children. Most of the lessons observed were good or better, with the majority of lessons very good or better. The characteristics of the best practice include well-paced, engaging lessons in which the teachers extend the children's learning through planned opportunities to work together and learn from one another, the skilful use of questioning to develop further understanding and appropriately differentiated activities that provide support and challenge. In a minority of lessons there is a need for the teachers to develop further the children's thinking skills and capabilities by providing more opportunities for child-led learning.
- The children with special educational needs are supported effectively through a combination of in-class support, specialised small group withdrawal sessions and individual intervention programmes that match the needs and abilities of the children. The teachers and classroom assistants work collaboratively within clearly defined roles to support the children as they work towards their individual targets. The children's progress is tracked effectively both during and after the intervention to monitor the sustained effect of the support for each child.

- The literacy policy and action plans have identified appropriately the need to plan for and supply more cross curricular opportunities to write in extended and creative ways. The school adheres to a literacy programme across all the key stages which develops well the children's ability to explore the structure of language; however, the opportunity to explore the meaning of words needs to be exploited more for example, through greater use of dictionaries. Throughout the school the children experience a variety of approaches to reading including shared, guided and independent reading and the children spoke enthusiastically about events such as the school book fair. The literacy co-ordinator is currently linking class novels to relevant cross curricular areas.
- Engagement with numeracy is promoted and celebrated through a comprehensive programme of activities such as 'maths week' and outdoor 'maths trails' which add to the children's enjoyment of mathematics. Robust analysis of internal data is ensuring specific mathematical needs are being identified and addressed early by teachers. Key strengths of the numeracy provision are the mental mathematics activities and the application of mathematics in real life settings, bringing greater relevance and purpose to numeracy lessons for the children.
- The positive, stimulating learning environment in the nursery unit develops effectively the children's decision making and self-management skills. The staff listen attentively to the children, take account of their ideas and promote skilfully the children's language development. The staff plan an interesting, varied and creative programme that provides appropriate challenge and progression for the children throughout the year. The consistently high quality of the staff interaction with the children ensures that the opportunities for learning through the play, daily routines and group story sessions are exploited fully. A particular strength of the nursery unit is the consistent, positive approach to behaviour management by the staff which helps all the children to engage with their learning. The staff use an appropriate range of methods to gather information about the children's progress and development; this information is used well to inform future planning to meet the children's individual needs.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care in the school is very good. The child-centred ethos is evident throughout the life and work of the school, where children are valued and their individual and pastoral needs are met effectively. The celebration of achievements is given a high priority across the school; during the pupil-led assembly the children are recognised and rewarded for their achievements in and out of class. The school promotes well the voice of the children through the active student and eco councils, the sensitive and effective playground buddies scheme and the high standards achieved through the UNICEF Rights-Respecting school award.
- The school promotes a healthy lifestyle through the curriculum and a varied range of extra-curricular physical activities available to the children. As a consequence, the children understand and enjoy the benefits of being active and involved in games and sports.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the school is outstanding. The senior leadership team plan and work collaboratively, drawing on individual strengths to promote improvement throughout the school using a strategic, pastoral approach through which the staff are valued and supported. A wide range of appropriate policies are in place which support a rich culture of review and development for school improvement. Ongoing staff development and capacity building are key priorities within the school. The subject co-ordinators are skilled and knowledgeable in their areas of the curriculum and are highly effective in providing regular and rigorous evaluations of the planning and teaching, focussing on the targets identified in each subject's associated action plan. Detailed, evaluative written reports are presented by the co-ordinators to the board of governors annually.
- The school development plan² is informed by extensive consultation with governors, parents, children and staff and by the efficient analysis of the school's internal performance data. The process of self-evaluation is well embedded with regular meetings scheduled for the school leadership team and the co-ordinators to discuss the progress of the targets on the school development plan, and the associated action plans, in order to monitor the success of the agreed strategies for raising standards.
- The nursery unit staff work very effectively as a team and are highly reflective; the processes for self-evaluation and continuous improvement are developing well. The very good links established between the nursery unit and the foundation stage ensure progression in the children's learning.
- The school has effective links with the parents who are well informed about their children's progress and the life and work of the school through for example, the well planned curriculum evenings and an informative web site. To enhance further the learning opportunities for the children, the school has established useful links with other pre-schools, primary schools and post-primary schools. The school is involved with local organisations that add value to the school curriculum and is effectively meeting the needs of the community.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are fully involved in the life and work of the school and are highly effective in providing both support and challenge through the senior leadership for all staff.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and nursery unit have comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the year 6 children spoke highly about the support they receive from their teachers and the wide range of sporting, cultural and social activities which they enjoy. They state that they feel safe and cared for in school and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

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

8. Overall effectiveness

Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit 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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2016

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk