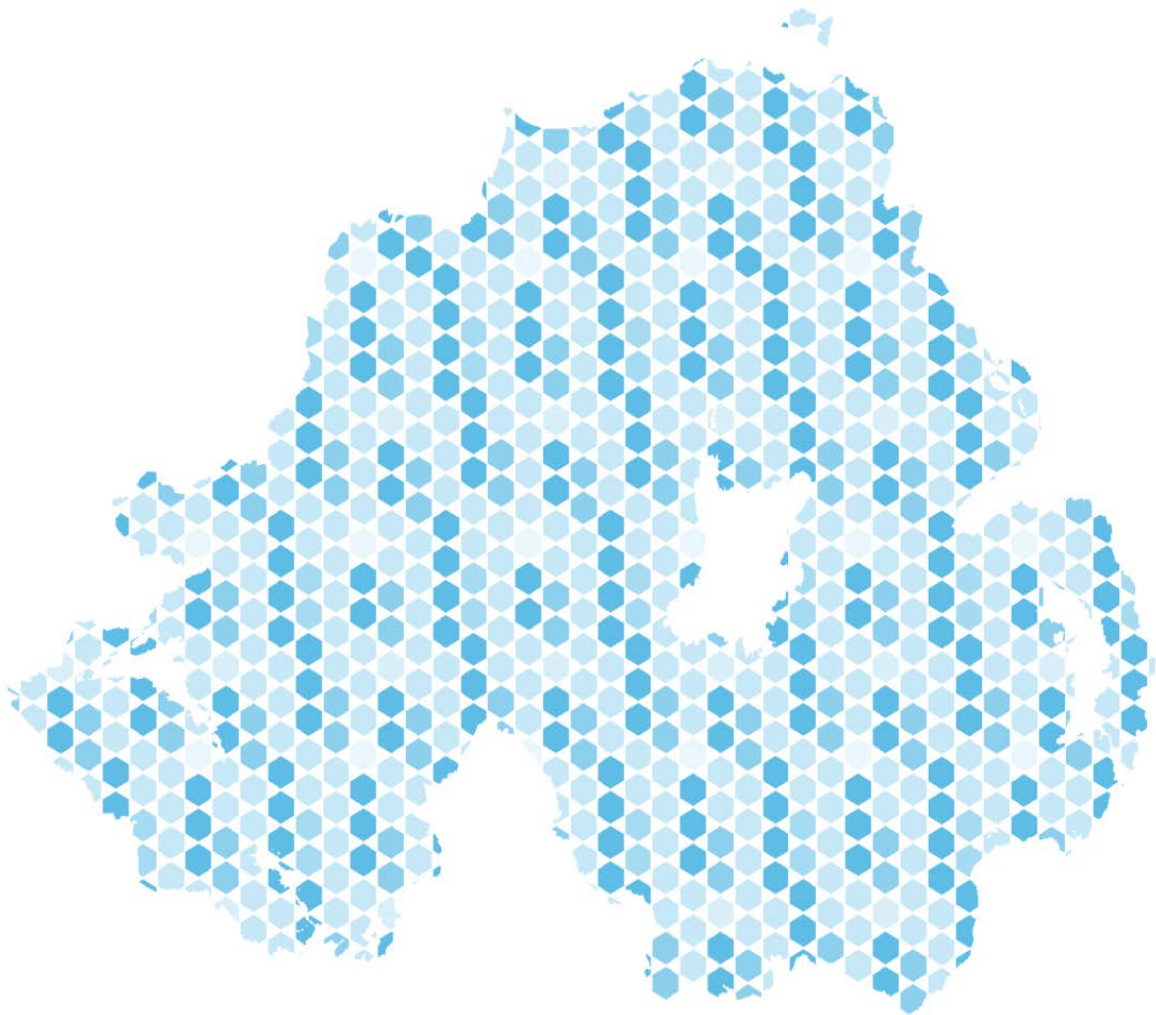


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Finaghy Primary School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in October 2012



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from lesson observations, from scrutiny of the children's completed written work and from a range of documentation including the school's internal performance data. In addition, the inspection team held discussions with groups of the children, with teaching and non-teaching staff and with representatives from the Board of Governors.

The views of the parents, teaching and non-teaching staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the principal and the governors. A summary of the outcomes from the questionnaires is included in section 6 of the report.

Quantitative terms

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%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

DE	Department of Education
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessments
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KS	Key stage
NI	Northern Ireland
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
FSM	Free School Meals
LSC	Learning Support Centre
IM	Irish Medium

1. School context

Finaghy Primary School is situated at the centre of a large seven acre site which also accommodates a wide range of community services which include a public library, sports facility, community playgroup and day-care. These additional services are all linked to deliver a comprehensive extended schools facility. The enrolment in the school has remained steady over the past four years rising slightly in the current year to 423 pupils. At the time of the inspection almost 27% of the children were entitled to free school meals and almost 13% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning.

2. Focus of inspection and overall finding

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management, including the arrangements for child protection.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection, were evaluated.

OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has the capacity to address.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards Quality of provision Leadership and management	Very Good Good Good
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and Standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards is very good.

- Almost all of the children display positive attitudes to and dispositions for learning. The younger children are independent, imaginative and creative during their play-based activity sessions. As the children progress through the school they can, when provided with the opportunities, engage effectively during group

and paired work. They are confident to take on roles and responsibilities through involvement in the pupil council, team sports, music and drama. The children are developing very good ICT skills. They use a very wide range of modern equipment, software and programmable devices with increasing confidence and independence as they progress through the school.

- An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that the school's performance in English and in mathematics has improved in the last two years when compared to the Northern Ireland (NI) average and when compared with schools in a similar free school meals category. When compared with schools in a similar free school meals band, the school's performance is in the median in English and slightly below the median in mathematics.
- Most of the children attain very good standards in literacy and good standards in mathematics by the end of year 7. The children listen attentively, read with fluency and can produce extended pieces of writing across a range of genre. The younger children would benefit from more consistent opportunities for independent writing in a range of meaningful contexts.
- There are inconsistencies across the classes in the effective teaching of mental mathematics. During the inspection, the younger children showed a knowledge of important ideas and concepts; they were more limited in demonstrating their use of mental mathematics strategies and flexibility in their mathematical thinking. By the end of KS2, the most able children talk with enthusiasm and very good understanding about their work in mathematics across a broad range of areas including number, measure, shape and space and data-handling.
- The children in the school who have been identified with special educational needs make good progress in their learning in line with their ability.
- Throughout the school, the children attain very good standards in ICT.

4. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- Most of the teaching observed was good or better with almost half of the lessons observed being of a very good or outstanding quality. The quality of teaching in just less than a quarter of the lessons while satisfactory, had room for improvement. In the most effective practice the teachers use skilful questioning which encourages the children to think clearly and give good quality, extended responses. In addition there are well-planned learning opportunities which engage the children fully and challenge them appropriately. In the less effective practice the teachers do not use their own evaluations and the assessment information available effectively enough to plan for sufficient differentiation in the teaching and learning to meet the full range of the children's ability. In the best practice, the teachers provide the children with good oral or written feedback to help improve their work and the children themselves are beginning to peer and self-assess their work. The teachers use ICT and digital media with increasing confidence to support teaching and learning.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. There is a caring and inclusive ethos throughout the school and a strong commitment by the staff to the welfare of the children. The dedicated staff facilitate an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which enhance the children's learning and development. The behaviour and attitude of the pupils is of a very high standard. The school actively promotes and celebrates the children's wide variety of cultural backgrounds.
- The quality of the provision for special educational needs is good. As a result of the Reading Recovery support, the small number of the younger children involved have all shown improvement in their reading. Daily withdrawal sessions in literacy for target groups of children from years 4 to 6 are of a good quality, and improvements are evident. The school recognises the need for more specific targets in the children's individual education plans in order to enable more effective evaluation and tracking of the children's progress.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children's involvement in environmental activities through the Eco garden and the wide range of sports available encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

5. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

- The leadership and management of the school is characterised by the high proportion of staff holding positions of responsibility, giving a shared approach to whole school improvement. A very good start has been made to gathering and discussing a range of assessment data and designing methods to monitor and evaluate aspects of the teaching and learning. The whole school approach to self-evaluation needs to be developed further to give a more coherent overview which is more sharply focused on the action required to raise standards and on providing first hand evidence of measurable improvement.
- The accommodation and resources in the school and the wider campus are outstanding. They are used extensively to enhance the experiences of the families within the school and are clearly valued by the wider local community.
- The parent-teacher association actively supports the school and parents are also encouraged to be involved as volunteers. The school continues to develop ways to keep parents informed through for example the school website and a text messaging service.
- The governors bring a wide range of professional expertise and enthusiasm to their work. They support the Principal effectively by sharing responsibility for aspects of the management of the extended services and through regular communication with the staff and the children.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. The Designated Governor is due to receive refresher training from the Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS).

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The key areas for improvement identified are as follows:

- the leadership and management at all levels need to develop further the methods for self-evaluation leading to whole school improvement; and
- the links between assessment, planning and teaching needs to be developed further to meet more consistently the needs of all of the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued to the school and nursery unit (Based on 09/10 Enrolment)	104
Number of Questionnaires Returned	45
Percentage of Returns	43.26%
Number of Comments	20

The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents expressed their appreciation of the extended services, the caring staff and the support for children identified with a range of additional needs.

In discussions with the governors they reported their appreciation of the hard work and dedication of the Principal and the whole staff team.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	13
Number of Comments	*

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	6
Number of Comments	*

* Denotes fewer than five

The responses from the teaching and support staff were highly affirmative of all aspects of school life.

The small number of concerns raised in the questionnaires and written comments has been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

In discussions with a small group of year 6 children, they talked enthusiastically about all aspects of school life. They indicated that they feel happy and safe in school and know what to do if they have any worries or concerns.

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