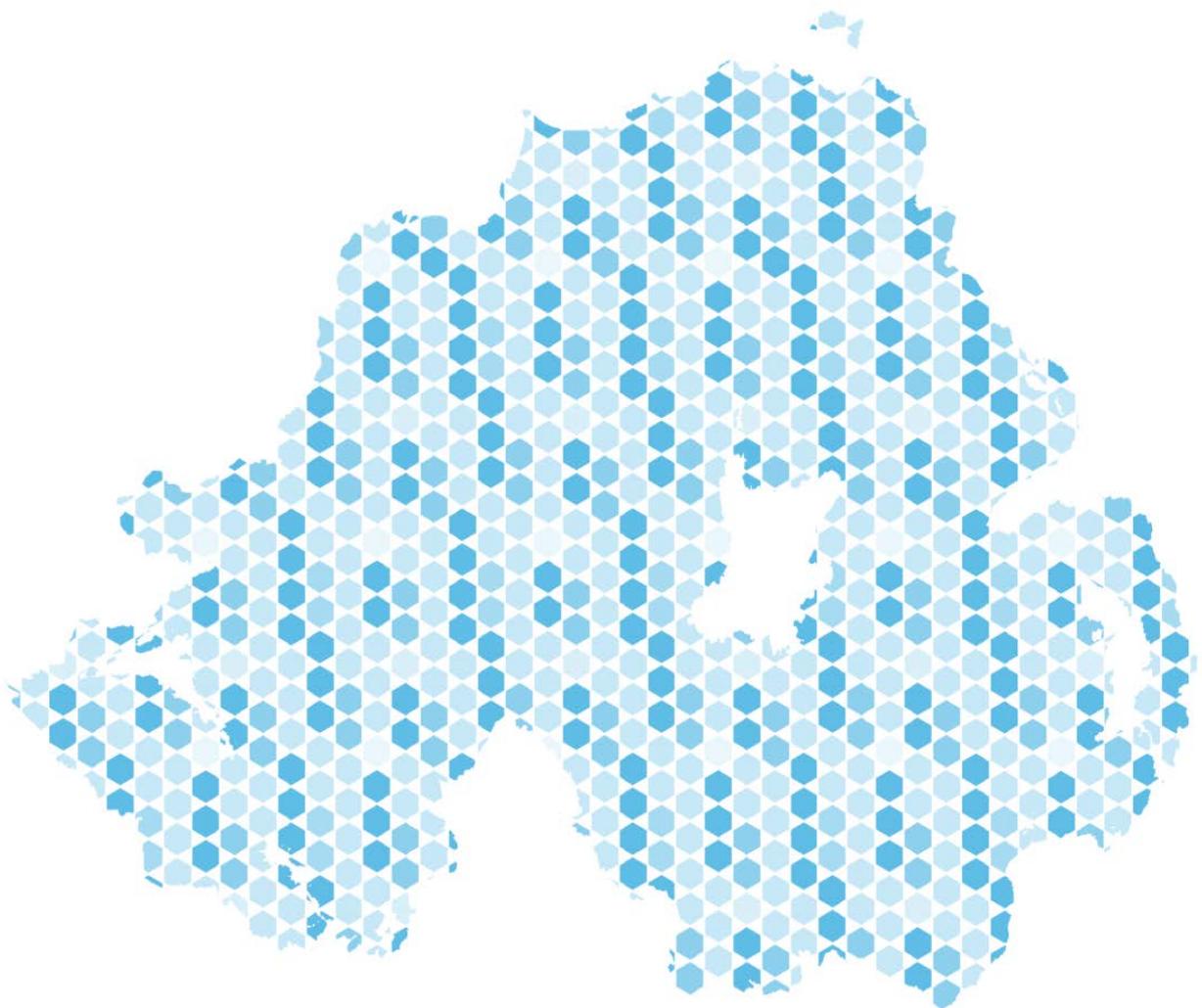


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Andrews Memorial Primary
School, Comber, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in
May 2015

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

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 in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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 Education and Training Inspectorate's (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 teaching and learning, 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 a confidential questionnaire.

Eleven percent of the parents and 94% of the teaching and non-teaching staff responded to the questionnaire. The parental responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, they highlighted the caring and supportive nature of all staff under the leadership of the principal and the range of extra-curricular activities offered to the children. Staff responses were very positive; they emphasised the pastoral ethos and community spirit and their respect for middle and senior management. Members of the staff and parents expressed concern about the financial challenges facing the school, due to the funding formula, which restricts the range of resources available in the classrooms. The main messages and a small number of issues arising from the questionnaires were shared with the principal and representatives of the board of governors.

2. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

1. the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
2. the quality of the provision of literacy and numeracy in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Andrews Memorial Primary School occupies a semi-rural location on the western edge of Comber, County Down. The school draws its children from a wide geographical area, including the town, surrounding countryside and neighbouring towns. The enrolment has increased steadily over the last four years and currently stands at 351 children. At the time of inspection, 10% of the children were entitled to free school meals and just under 12% were on the special educational needs register.

Andrews Memorial Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	320	329	340	351
% Attendance	97.6	97	96.7	94.5
FSME Percentage ¹	4.4	7.6	9.1	10.0
% of children on SEN register	11.9	11.9	15.0	11.7
No. of children with statements of educational needs	3	3	2	3
No. of newcomers	3	3	6	6

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are very welcoming, independent and well motivated. They engage enthusiastically with the learning process and, when given the opportunity, the children demonstrate well their ability to make decisions, solve problems and be creative. The children take great pride in their achievements and are kind and courteous in their dealings with each other and with adults.
- The school's internal performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make steady year-on- year progress in English and mathematics.
- Throughout the school, the children listen respectfully to one another and articulate clearly their ideas and opinions. The most able children in year 7 enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They are enthusiastic, fluent readers who empathise with characters and show a mature understanding of context and theme. As the children progress through the year groups, they write with increasing competence and accuracy.
- By year 7, the most able children are secure in their knowledge of the key mathematical concepts and are confident and flexible in their thinking across all the areas of mathematics. They use mathematical language precisely and can apply their mathematical understanding in real and relevant contexts.
- The children achieve very good standards in information and communication technology (ICT). They are confident in, for example, managing information by using a database and researching the internet. By year 7, the children can apply editing and creative techniques to express their learning across the curriculum.

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

6. Provision

- In the very good practice, in almost one-half of the lessons observed, the teaching is well paced and built on prior learning. The children work effectively on well-structured activities, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) sessions and in their World Around Us lessons. In those lessons, the teachers' effective questioning enables the children to develop thinking skills and make confident, extended oral responses. Well-planned plenary sessions help the teachers and the children to assess and consolidate the learning. The provision for play -based learning is effective and develops well the children's confidence and provides good opportunities for decision-making and collaborative learning. This practice is extended well through activity and skills-based learning in key stage (KS) 1 and KS2. Across the school, the children use confidently a very good variety of ICT software and devices to support and extend their learning in all areas of the curriculum. In the less effective practice, the work is insufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all the children, in particular, to challenge the more able children. There are inconsistencies in how the teachers mark the children's work. In the most effective practice, there is regular and consistent marking which highlights the strengths and provides children with clear guidance for improvement.
- The teachers' planning for literacy provides a good framework for the development of the children's oral skills through, for example, regular, well-structured discussions with their peers and opportunities to present their learning. The programme for shared and guided reading is being developed appropriately to enhance further the children's higher-level comprehension skills. Through their connected learning, there are well-conceived opportunities for the children to write for a range of purposes and audiences across the curriculum. In order to raise further the standards they attain, the most confident writers would benefit from greater opportunities to write independently and to produce extended responses.
- The numeracy programme is comprehensive and ensures the progressive development of mathematical processes, number, measures, shape and space and handling data. The teachers make effective use of a range of practical materials, outdoor activities and mental mathematics strategies to engage the children in authentic and relevant contexts, build on the children's prior knowledge and to reinforce their mathematical thinking. When given the opportunity, in almost one-half of the lessons, the children benefit from well-planned differentiated group work which enables them to work collaboratively on well-chosen tasks to develop further their mathematical language, problem solving and decision-making skills. This effective practice, which is a particular strength in the foundation stage, needs to be disseminated further to ensure consistency across KS1 and KS2.
- To improve further the provision in literacy and numeracy, the co-ordinators and teachers need to monitor and evaluate more closely the children's work and progress, and the effectiveness and impact of any planned intervention strategies designed to raise further the standards they attain.

- The provision for the small number of children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is satisfactory. There is variation in the quality of the individual education plans. The less effective individual education plans include too many targets and, in some classes, they are not specific enough to inform the teachers' planning or support the children's progress. While teachers and assistants work diligently to provide support for individual children within their classes, guidance in writing effective individual education plans is required to ensure a more consistent approach to supporting the children across the school. It will be important for the staff to establish a robust system to monitor, track and review the children's progress and the effectiveness of the interventions in place to support them.
- The school has established extensive partnerships with the local and wider community. It has particularly effective and proud links with the history of the Titanic and its designer, Thomas Andrews. The Andrews Memorial Hall, which recently celebrated its centenary, is within the school grounds and the local study associated with the hall is used well to motivate the children and enhance their understanding of history. Significant emphasis is placed on balancing tradition with innovation in the school, through the active promotion of both the World Around Us and the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related learning opportunities.
- The pastoral care provided by the school is very good. The staff know the children and their families very well and they are committed to the children's welfare. The children benefit from a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities that develop their confidence and social skills, most notably through music, sport and drama. Their successes, within and outside school, are valued and celebrated through the displays around the school and in the well planned school assemblies. The school council and Eco-council provide effective opportunities for the children to make a positive contribution to areas of school life which directly affect them. The children in year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their experiences in school and the range of enjoyable after-school sports, such as, rugby blitz competitions.
- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through the promotion of healthy breaks and energetic physical activities, encouraging children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the school are effective and very committed to meeting the pastoral and academic needs of children. The principal and vice-principal have worked strategically to develop a collegial approach to school improvement, putting in place curricular teams that are well placed to support the further development of the school's provision. The school leadership team have identified the need to review and broaden the current range of assessment of learning strategies to ensure there is sufficient and robust qualitative and quantitative assessment information to monitor and evaluate the children's progress in line with their ability. The inspection endorses this as a key priority for the senior leadership to take forward with the staff.

- The school development planning draws on extensive consultation with parents, including a parent focus group, governors, staff and children and sets out clearly a number of key priorities for development. The associated action plans need to focus more specifically on the children's learning needs and they require more measurable targets through which to monitor and evaluate progress.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school; they are actively involved in the school development planning process, finance and the curriculum. It will be important for the governors to continue to support and work with the school in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the report.
- 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 important areas need to be addressed:
 - the draft risk assessment policy for school trips needs to be agreed by the staff, ratified by the board of governors and implemented consistently by all staff; and
 - the principal and chair of the board of governors to attend, as planned, the next available child protection-training course.
- In discussions with the inspectors, the children reported that they feel very secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the 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 Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

The areas for improvement are the need to:

- address the variation in the quality of the individual education plans and ensure a more consistent approach to supporting the children with additional learning needs;
- review and broaden the assessment information gathered and use the data more rigorously to identify under-achievement and track the children's progress in line with their ability; and
- address the safeguarding and, health and safety matters as identified in the report.

Health and safety/accommodation

1. There is a gap in the fencing just inside the main gates of the school beside the playground. To ensure the children are safe and secure, the fencing in this area needs to be extended and, in addition, a secure gate to be provided between the end of the fencing and the main school building.
2. The electronic security system at one external door to the main school building is not working and needs to be repaired as a matter of urgency.
3. The room used currently for additional support withdrawal classes requires a glass vision panel in the door.
4. The vision panels in the “quiet room”, in the foundation stage area, need to be replaced with transparent panels.
5. The current practice of using two small rooms for ICT whilst supervised by one teacher should be reviewed. Measures need to be taken to provide a room of adequate size to accommodate a class and ensure children can be supervised at all times.
6. The electric cooker located in the dining area should have a secure isolation system fitted to prevent unauthorised use.

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