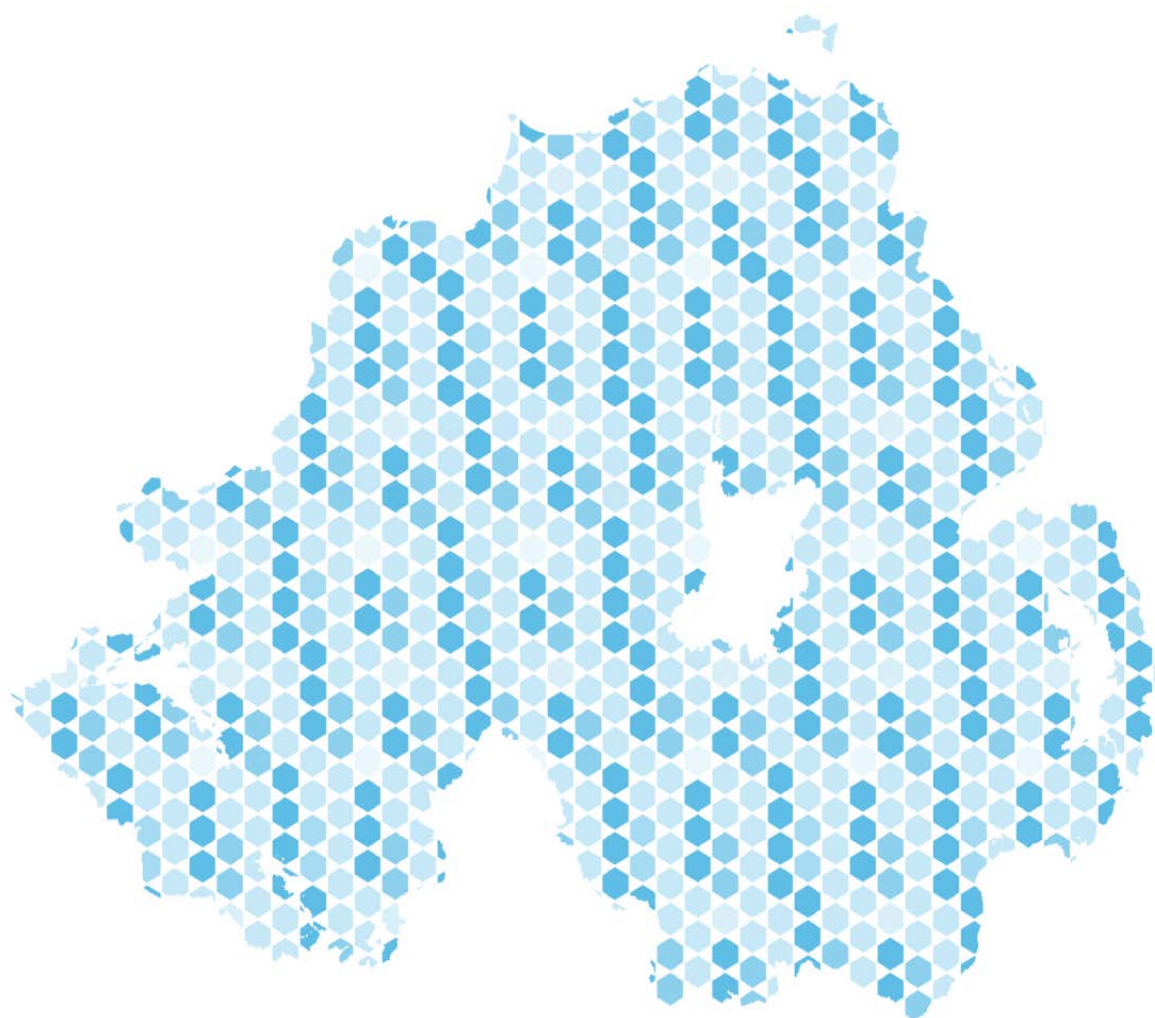


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballyholland Primary School,
Newry, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in
May 2014



*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
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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.etini.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.

Questionnaire	Number issued (total number in the school per category)	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	151	40	26%	19
Teaching staff	10	*	*	*
Support staff	11	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents about the life and work of the school. As a result, the response rate to the parental questionnaire may be low.

Almost all of the parents praised highly the welcoming and caring environment, the children's enjoyment of learning and the community spirit in the school. The teachers and support staff praised the positive working relationships and the effective communication throughout the school. The ETI shared the small number of concerns raised in the questionnaires with the principal and the representatives of the board of governors.

2. Context

Ballyholland Primary School is situated in a rural area approximately two miles outside Newry. The children come from the surrounding town lands of Ballyholland.

Ballyholland Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	224	219	232	224
% Attendance	94.6%	93.9%	95.4%	96.7%
FSME Percentage ¹	11.6%	17.35%	18.53%	24.55%
% of children on SEN register	21.8 %	23.7%	20.25%	17.41%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	6	6	5	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

Source: data as held by the school.

*fewer than 5

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

4. Overall finding

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

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They enjoy working in pairs and small groups to support each other and share and develop their ideas. The children demonstrate good levels of responsibility in managing their learning. They take pride in their work and the quality of presentation is of a very good standard in response to the high expectations of the teachers.
- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data* in three of the past four years shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is below both the Northern Ireland (NI) average and the average for schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category.

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

* Due to the current transition period in the arrangements for statutory assessment, this analysis of the end of KS2 performance data is based on the outcomes up to but not including the 2012/13 school year.

- The school's internal performance data indicates that in English, almost all of the children are achieving standards that are in line with or above their ability or above expectation. In mathematics, most of the children achieve similar standards.
- The children's achievements and standards in English are outstanding. Across all the key stages, the children write with increasing accuracy and proficiency in different forms for a variety of purposes, and, in particular, in key stage (KS) 2, the children can edit and refine their work independently. In discussion with the year 7 children, they talk confidently and knowledgeably about a range of reading and authors. In mathematics, the children have a very good understanding of key concepts across all areas of the mathematics curriculum. Increasingly, they are developing their mental strategies to solve a range of mathematical problems and to explain clearly the processes they use in their reasoning.
- Almost all of the children with statements of special educational need and those who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making very good progress.
- From an early age, the children use information and communication technology (ICT) with developing confidence and independence across a range of digital media, including iPads.

6. Provision

- Most of the teaching was good or better and in almost one-half of the lessons it was very good or outstanding. In the most effective practice, the lessons are paced appropriately and the teachers build well on the children's prior learning and link the activities to meaningful real-life contexts. The teachers use questions well to extend the children's responses and value the children's views and opinions.
- The detailed planning guides effectively the work of the teachers. The principal and staff have identified appropriately the need to review the planning for play-based learning. In the best practice, the teachers' evaluations focus closely on the extent of the children's learning and are used purposefully to inform future planning and practice. The teachers mark the children's work regularly with personalised and positive feedback. In the most effective practice, the teachers identify the children's strengths and suggest actions to improve the quality of their work.
- The children requiring additional support with aspects of their learning are fully involved in all aspects of school life. They benefit from a well planned programme of support and a wide range of interventions which enables them to progress further in their learning.

- The quality of the pastoral care is outstanding. The school has a welcoming and inclusive ethos where the teachers and support staff provide high levels of care and support. There is an appropriate focus on promoting positive behaviour and developing the children's sense of fairness and respect for each other. Working relationships at all levels are outstanding and there is a sense of pride in belonging to the school community. The children take part in a range of activities which develop well their sporting, cultural and musical skills, and promote self-confidence and self-esteem. The children have a well-developed sense of place and belonging within the 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 school improvement plan identifies appropriately the priorities for development. The board of governors and the principal have made significant changes to the leadership model and they are developing the capacity of the middle management to support school improvement. The school's internal performance data is used very effectively to identify underachievement, track the progress of individuals and target groups of children, and highlight whole-school curriculum areas for development.
- The principal, the senior leadership team and the staff work collaboratively to bring about school improvement. They develop and sustain purposeful links with other schools and the local community to enhance the curriculum provision and prepare well the children for their next stage of education.
- Based on the evidence at the time of the inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The board of governors have a wide skills-set and they provide challenge and support to the school team. They are fully aware of the financial resources of the school and hold the principal and staff accountable for continued improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has 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 reported that they feel safe and secure and know who to go to if they have concerns about their well-being. They children value the role of the recently formed school and eco-councils and their evolving participation in decision-making in the life and work of the school.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of the education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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