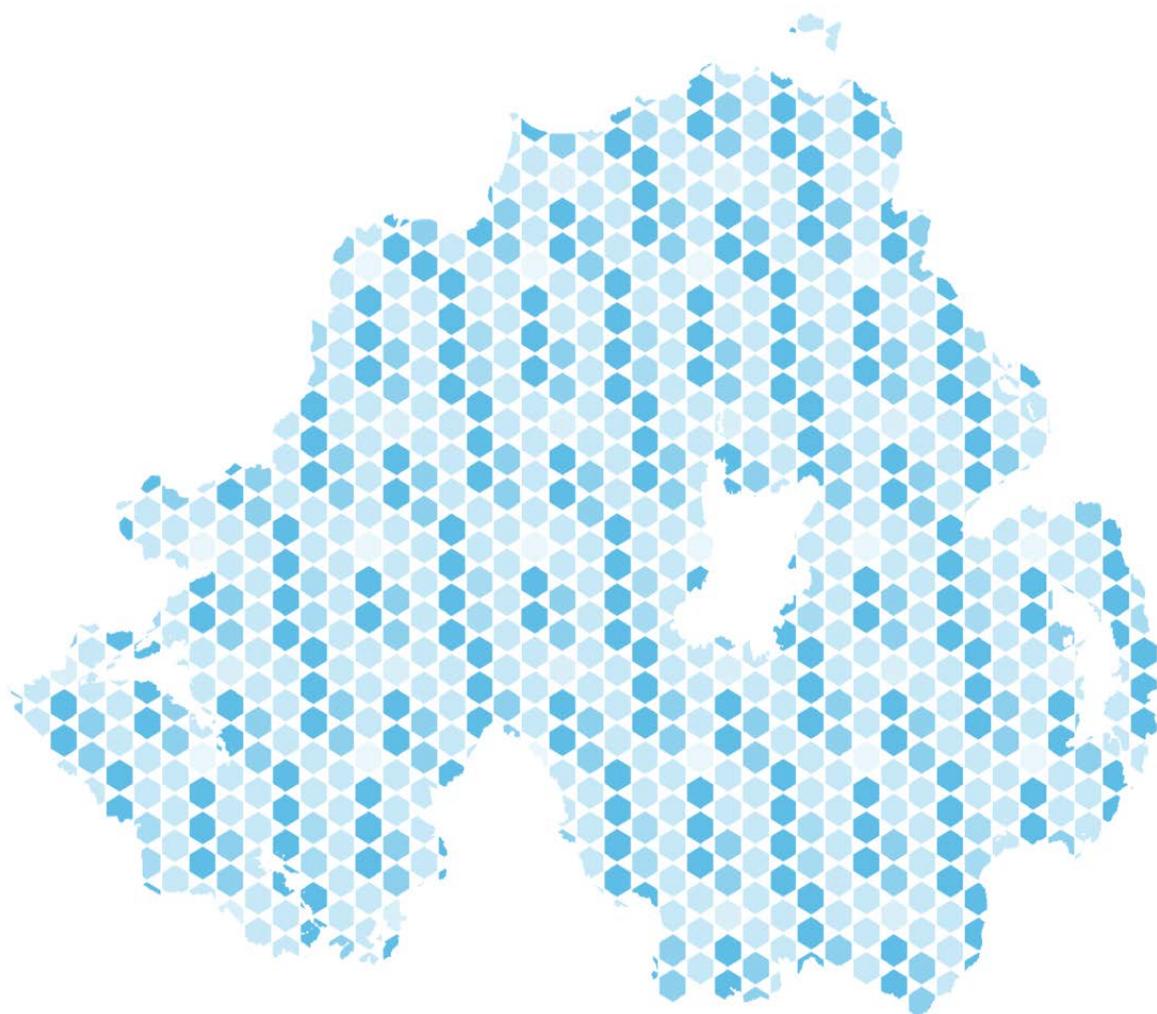


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Drumahoe Primary School,  
Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in  
February 2014



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



## 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 Inspectorate's 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. Almost all of the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision. In the written comments, the parents praised the highly committed and approachable staff, the school's caring community ethos and the opportunities for the children to participate in an extended range of learning experiences. The comments in the questionnaires were shared with the principal and the governors.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	182	21	11%	14
Teaching staff	11	11	100%	11
Teaching support staff	9	9	100%	7
Support staff	*	*	100%	*

\* fewer than 5.

The ETI is trialling a range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the response rate may be low.

## 2. Context

Drumahoe Primary School is situated in the village of Drumahoe, County Londonderry. Most of the children attend from the local area. The current principal has been in the school for 20 years, having served 17 years as principal. The school enrolment has risen slightly over the past 4 years and is currently 246. Approximately 26% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 22% require additional help with aspects of their learning.

<b>Drumahoe Primary School</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Enrolment	234	245	237	246
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.0%	94.0%	95.1%	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	15.8%	20.4%	20.3%	26.0%
% (No) of children on SEN register	20.5%	21.8%	18.1%	21.5%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	7	8	8	7
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 under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and,
- the quality of leadership and management.

### 4. Overall finding

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>

### Key findings of the inspection

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- From the earliest stage, the children are relaxed, confident and independent in their stimulating learning environment. They demonstrate excellent self-management skills and take responsibility for important aspects of their learning, working effectively in pairs and groups. Across the key stages, the children's behaviour is exemplary; the older children communicate and take a real pride in their school. The children in all classes engage enthusiastically with one another and adults, offering suggestions and ideas freely while showing genuine respect for the opinions and feelings of others.

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

- An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data, in three<sup>2</sup> of the past four years, shows that the school's performance is consistently well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in English and mathematics. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category (FSM), the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are consistently well above the average in the same three years.
- The school's internal performance data indicates that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics and are achieving standards in line with their ability or above expectation.
- In all key stages, the children listen actively and convey their ideas articulately in discussions. In the foundation stage (FS), the children are developing very well their early reading and writing skills. As they progress through key stages 1 and 2, almost all of the children read expressively and fluently and they write for a wide range of purposeful reasons across the curriculum. Almost all of the children are very secure in their knowledge of key mathematical concepts, they are highly competent in their application of skills to solve a range of mathematical problems and explain their reasoning logically and enthusiastically using appropriate vocabulary.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making very good progress in line with their ability. They are included fully in the various learning activities and participate confidently with their peers.
- Across the school, the teachers and children use a very good variety of information and communication technology (ICT) software and devices with ease to support and extend the learning in all areas of the curriculum.

## **6. Provision**

- The quality of the learning and teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding, with the majority being very good. In the very good and outstanding practice, the teachers use a wide range of varied strategies to engage the children actively and deepen their understanding, they ask well-targeted questions which extend the children's thinking and provide carefully thought-out activities with appropriate levels of pace and challenge for all.
- Literacy is promoted and developed comprehensively across the curriculum and the children are encouraged to build their competencies in talking, listening, reading and writing in meaningful and interesting learning contexts. The well-planned play-based learning sessions and routines provide the younger children with valuable and fun opportunities to use their language and apply their growing skills in both literacy and mathematics. In all classes, the teachers and classroom assistants support the children perceptively in developing their oral skills and structuring reasons for their thinking and opinions. The teachers are providing a broad range of mathematical experiences across the seven years, including in the play-based learning. Appropriately, the teachers are continuing

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

to develop and embed more open-ended problem-solving and investigative activities which are challenging and extending all of the children. Mental mathematics has been developed methodically throughout the school and as a result, the children, from an early stage, are flexible and assured in their mathematical thinking. The teachers integrate information and communication technology (ICT) adeptly into classroom activities to support, enrich and extend the children's learning.

- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning benefit from an appropriately-balanced combination of very effective withdrawal sessions and in-class support from their teachers and classroom assistants. The classroom assistants work skilfully with the teachers in supporting the children's learning and personal development. The children's individual education plans include suitably detailed learning targets and associated teaching strategies which correspond with and support their needs closely.
- Overall, the planning provides detailed guidance for the teachers' work with the children. In the best practice, the teachers' evaluations focus sharply on the quality of the children's learning and inform appropriately the future planning to match the children's individual needs.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. This is evident through the caring, supportive and child-centred ethos which permeates all aspects of the school's provision and the very positive working relationships at all levels. For example, the older children respond maturely to caring for the younger children through their 'playground pal' responsibilities. In addition, the children value greatly their active participation in the decision-making processes about aspects of school life through their contributions to the Kids' Forum.
- The school gives a high priority to promoting a healthy lifestyle through the curriculum and through the varied range of extra-curricular physical activities on offer. As a consequence, the children enjoy and understand the benefits of being active and involved in games and sports.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The principal provides outstanding strategic leadership. He inspires confidence among the staff, the children and their parents and sets a clear and realistic path for the work of the school centred on meeting fully the pastoral and learning needs of the children. Together with the vice-principal, the senior management team and the co-ordinators, they maintain a sharp focus on the continuous improvement of all aspects of the school's provision. The entire staff team is highly committed to meeting the individual needs of the children and to sustaining the high standards which they achieve.
- The school operates well-embedded and robust processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement; these processes make effective use of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data to identify and set suitable targets. As a result, the key priorities of the school development plan concentrate appropriately on improving further the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards that they attain.

- The school has developed a wide range of very close, purposeful and mutually beneficial partnerships with the local and wider community; these links enhance and enrich further the quality and range of the children's learning opportunities.
- The staff value the parents as partners in promoting their children's learning and encourage their active participation in all school events and programmes. The parents are given regular and appropriately detailed information about their children's progress and all aspects of school life.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are very well-informed and exercise their challenge function thoroughly and thoughtfully in supporting the principal and staff in the implementation of the school development plan (SDP).
- 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. During the inspection, the inspectors met with a group of children from year 6. The children spoke confidently and positively about all aspects of school life in Drumahoe. They conveyed that they enjoy and feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have any worries or concerns.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self- improvement.

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