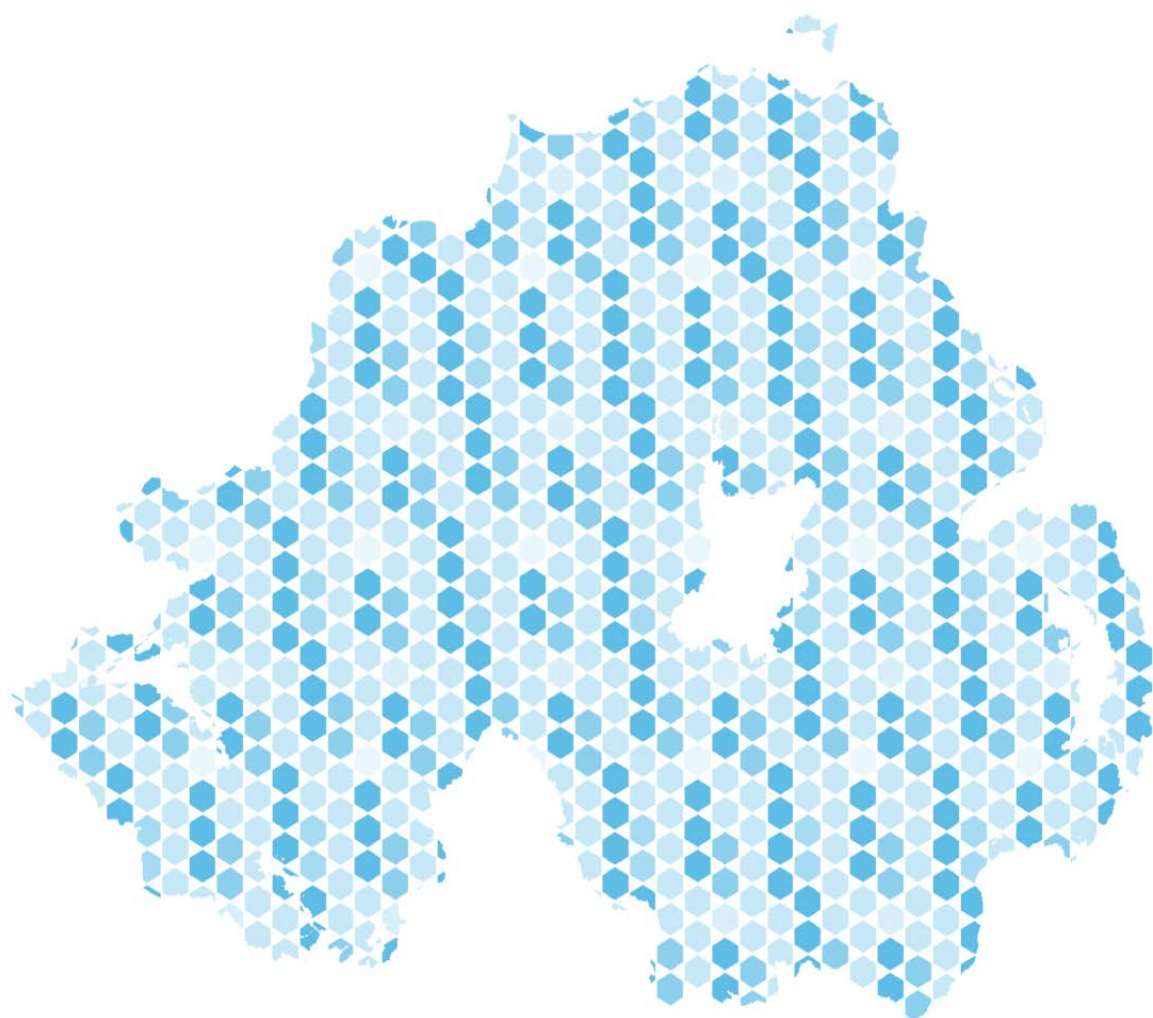


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Fort Hill Integrated Primary
School and Nursery Unit,
Lisburn, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
February 2014

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.

Questionnaire	Number issued (total number in the school per category)	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	154	30	19% ¹	9
Teaching staff	13	13	100%	5
Support staff	12	7	58%	*

* fewer than 5

The responses from the parents indicated that they are content with the friendly school ethos, the provision for children with special educational needs, and the progress in learning of the children. Any issues raised have been discussed with the school leadership. Almost all of the teachers and support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive.

2. Context

Fort Hill Integrated Primary School is situated in the City of Lisburn. Almost all of the children who attend the school come from Lisburn and the surrounding area. The enrolment has remained steady over the past four years and there are currently 236 children, including 26 in the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection 44% of the children were entitled to free school meals (FSM) and 28% of the children have been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

¹ 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.

Fort Hill Primary School and Nursery Unit	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	232	239	235	236
% Attendance	91.1%	93.6%	93.3%	-
FSME Percentage ²	26%	41%	43%	44%
% (No) of children on SEN register	24%	23%	21%	28%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	7	*	6	6
No. of newcomers	17	11	16	19

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 nursery unit; 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
Nursery Unit	Very Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children engage very well with their learning; they enjoy talking about their work and take pride in their achievements; their behaviour, personal and social skills are very good. The children respond positively to the learning opportunities provided by their teachers, work collaboratively in pairs and groups and become more independent in their learning as they progress from year group to year group.

² The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data in three of the last four years³ shows that in English the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in two years and below in one. In mathematics, the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in one year, on the average in one, and below in one. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the school's performance is above the NI average in English and mathematics in two out of the three years and is well above average for one of those years. The school's internal performance data shows that by the end of KS2, all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics and achieve in line with their ability; almost half of the children achieve above expectation.
- The standards achieved by the children in English are very good. By the end of year 7, they read with fluency and expression and are able to give their opinions about characters and plots from their reading books and novels. Across the key stages, the children display high levels of interest in reading for enjoyment. The quality of the children's writing is good with most of the children confident in using a variety of written forms and attaining a very good standard of handwriting. The children listen well and are confident in expressing their opinions and asking questions to extend their learning.
- By the end of KS2, the children have a very good mathematical understanding and demonstrate enjoyment and flexibility in applying mathematics to problem solving and investigative activities. The children use mathematical vocabulary appropriately when working with numerical facts and operations.
- Almost all of the children in the nursery unit are well settled, motivated and engage in purposeful play for sustained periods. The children collaborate effectively in the imaginative play, use a range of materials creatively and explore their outdoor learning area with curiosity and demonstrate a very good sense of responsibility for the animals and the outdoor gardening area. Most of the children have a very good understanding of early mathematical concepts and language such as, number, shape and position. The staff support skilfully and sensitively a small number of children who need to engage more fully in play with their peers.
- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and their standards in ICT including the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), ICT Accreditation Scheme are very good.

6. Provision

- The quality of the teachers' planning is very good, with clear, detailed plans and policies which guide effectively the work of the teachers throughout the school. Nearly all of the teachers' short-term planning identifies clearly the intended learning and differentiated activities for the range of ability within each year group. The clear and comprehensive transfer of information from year group to year group is very effective in ensuring coherent planning for learning throughout the school. The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory; over three-quarters was very good or better. In the best practice,

³ 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 teachers use a very good variety of learning and teaching strategies, paced well for the needs of the children together with clear learning intentions. The skilled classroom assistants support well the work of the teachers and the individual needs of the children.

- The teachers apply a wide range of assessment approaches to evaluate the children's learning. They use classroom observations and performance data to inform well their planning for learning. The teachers' marking is regular and consistent and, in the best practice, provides effective and constructive feedback to the children both written in their books and orally enabling the children to reflect on their learning and to improve further their work.
- The school has developed a comprehensive approach to the development of literacy skills which ensures measured progression for the children. Handwriting and reading skills are taught systematically and the provision of a broad range of reading material for school and home use extends well the children's reading experiences and nurtures their enjoyment of reading. The school has identified the need to extend further the teaching of extended writing and have planned appropriately for this focus.
- The school provides a broad programme of mathematics and the teachers have placed appropriate emphasis on the integration of practical approaches and investigations. The use of interactive whiteboards stimulates the children's interest and builds the children's confidence in their learning. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the classroom practice and the children's books ensures consistency and progression in the learning of mathematics. Recently, there has been well-conceived monitoring of gender performance with a view to adapting the provision of mathematics at KS2 to improve further boys' learning.
- The quality of the provision for the children who require additional help with their learning is very good. The children's needs are identified at an early stage and they benefit from a well planned collaborative programme through in-class support and the highly effective withdrawal sessions for literacy and numeracy. The children and their parents are involved appropriately in the writing and evaluation of their personal targets. The individual education plans and the children's targets inform most of the teaching and the progress of the children is tracked and evaluated regularly to inform skilfully future teaching.
- There are very good learning opportunities in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum; of significant note are the development of the children's personal, social and emotional well-being, mathematical understanding and environmental topics, which extend the children's knowledge of, and interest in, the world around them. The quality of the staff's interactions is consistently very good with many examples of outstanding discussions with the children that extend their thinking skills. The planning and assessment methods are appropriate and identify actions for specific children that enable them to make good progress.

- The quality of the provision for pastoral care in the school and the nursery unit is very good; the school environment is nurturing and inclusive with whole-school celebration of the children's achievements. The children benefit from the school developments to enrich the quality of the learning experiences through the extensive and imaginative outdoor resources. The contribution of the support staff enhances further the holistic development of each child. The children spoke of their pride in their school, their enjoyment of learning, the many opportunities they have to contribute to decision-making within the school and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity with regular opportunities to participate in sport including football, netball and swimming. The nursery unit also gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; for example, the children harvest the vegetables from the garden to make their healthy snacks. They have very good opportunities for physical play outdoors and nature walks. All of the learning experiences encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The school leadership is highly effective, focuses clearly on improving learning and teaching, raising standards and on the holistic pastoral care of the children. Leadership and management at all levels have worked in a collaborative and systematic manner to implement change through a well-paced approach. The principal works closely with the parents and governors to maintain the school's high standing in the community. The nursery unit is an integral part of the school; the highly effective communication system maintained by the principal and the transition procedures between the nursery teacher and the year 1 and year 2 teachers ensure progression in the children's learning from the nursery unit to the foundation stage.
- The co-ordinators are knowledgeable and skilled in their specialist areas and, in the best practice, provide very good curricular leadership with effective monitoring and evaluation of practice throughout the school. They make good use of performance data to identify areas for development and inform their action plans.
- A rigorous culture of self-evaluation has been developed which informs well future school improvement. There is a well-established school development planning process with governors and parents closely involved in the setting of priorities for the further development of the school. The associated action plans have an appropriate focus on improving further the provision for the children and raising the standards they attain.
- In the nursery unit, all members of staff form a dedicated and highly skilled team. The teacher in charge of the nursery unit has established a culture of reflection and review that is evident within the staff's practice and the appropriate action plans which chart improvement in the nursery unit's provision.
- 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; they use a range of skills to exercise their challenge function in relation to finance, standards and school improvement.

- 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 reported that they feel secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of 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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