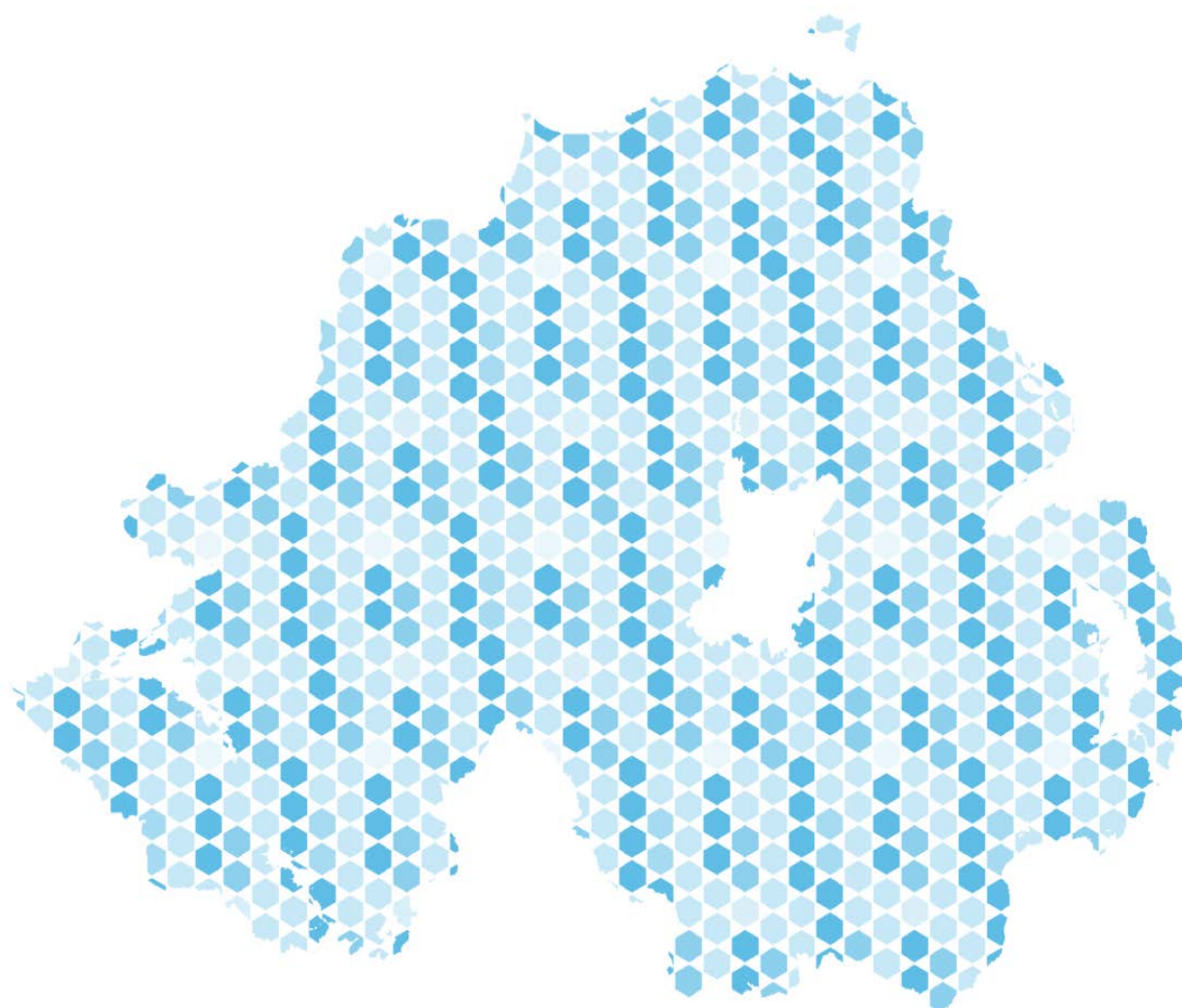


# PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Killowen Primary School and  
Nursery Unit, Lisburn,  
Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in  
January 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  
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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.

Ten percent of the parents responded to the parental questionnaires with almost all of their responses indicating high levels of satisfaction with most aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the professional and caring staff and the progress their children were making in their learning and all-round development. Most of the staff (teaching and non-teaching) completed questionnaires and their responses were also very affirmative; they emphasised the positive working relationships within the school and the staff's commitment to meeting well the children's learning and pastoral needs. In discussions with the governors, they expressed their appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the principal and staff in improving the school's provision. ETI reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main findings and any issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

## **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 provision for literacy and numeracy in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

Killowen Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated on the Laurelhill Road in a suburban setting in north Lisburn. The enrolment of the school has risen slightly over the past four years to 434 children; most of them come from the local surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, approximately 26% of the children were entitled to free school meals (FSM) and 32% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school has recently undergone a significant programme of internal and external refurbishment.

Killowen Primary School and Nursery Unit	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	410	416	410	434
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.62%	94.97%	95.15%	-
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	19.8%	24.7%	23.7%	25.9%
% (No) of children on SEN register	20.6%	26.9%	34.3%	32.3%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	6	*	*	7
No. of newcomers	6	4	7	6

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Nursery Unit</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are friendly and motivated learners; they engage readily with their peers, the staff and visitors. In the primary school, almost all settle quickly to the activities provided by their teachers, showing support for one another in their work and enjoying one another's success. The children display good teamwork skills in paired and group tasks; they would benefit from more structured opportunities to keep extending their thinking skills and personal capabilities across the curriculum. For the time of year, the children in the nursery unit are generally well-settled in their self-chosen activities and most co-operate well with one another.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children make good progress in English and almost all of the children make good progress in mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. A majority of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are also progressing well in line with their abilities.
- Throughout the school, including in the nursery unit, most of the children express their ideas and opinions with confidence. The most able children in year 7 speak enthusiastically about their reading; they read fluently and with good levels of understanding. The quality of the children's writing is inconsistent across the year groups. In order to improve further their written communication, the children's vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar need to be more accurate and increasingly sophisticated.

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

- The children have a good understanding of key concepts across the mathematics curriculum. Their mental mathematics strategies are developing progressively, and support well their learning and thinking in mathematics. In the best practice observed, the children apply their knowledge well and display competence in problem-solving and practical investigations. Across the three key stages, the children need more frequent enquiry-based and investigative work in mathematics.
- In the nursery unit, the majority of the children engage in purposeful play. The staff need to enable the children to become absorbed in their play for longer periods and provide additional resources to encourage the children to extend their concentration and independence.
- The children use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) devices and software competently to support their literacy and numeracy and other aspects of their learning.

## **6. Provision**

- In the most effective practice, in most of the lessons observed, the learning activities contained appropriate pace, challenge and progression and took close account of the children's needs and responses. In these lessons, the teachers used effective open-ended questioning to extend the children's thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Appropriately, the teachers are developing the planning to ensure better progression in the children's learning, informed by their increasingly focused evaluations and improving use of the assessment information. In the nursery unit, the assessment methods need to be developed further in order to outline the children's development and progression in all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The children have regular and purposeful opportunities to talk and listen to one another, developing well their oral communication skills. The re-stocked library is being used effectively to encourage a love of reading among the children. The school has recently and appropriately undertaken a review of the programme for language and literacy. The inspection findings suggest that this review should have a particular focus on ensuring progression, continuity and creativity in writing across the year groups in order to raise further the standard of the children's written communication.
- Across the key stages, the children experience a well-balanced mathematics programme. There is an appropriate focus on asking the children to explain their mathematical reasoning. In the best practice, the children are provided with realistically challenging tasks which clarify and extend their mathematical thinking in a variety of meaningful real-life contexts. This very effective practice needs to be disseminated across the key stages in order that the planned activities correspond more closely to the varying abilities of the children, particularly those who require more challenge in their learning.

- The nursery unit provides satisfactory opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. It will be important for the staff to plan together to identify the learning inherent in all of the activities and routines, and to review aspects of how the sessions are organised to ensure that all of the time is used more effectively for learning.
- The provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is given a high priority throughout the school. A strong pastoral focus, interwoven with the special educational needs provision, is directed at meeting the children's all-round needs and reducing their barriers to learning. The children are supported very well through in-class and withdrawal sessions and their progress is monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure progression. Throughout the school, the learning support assistants make an important contribution to the children's learning and well-being.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care in the primary school is very good and in the nursery unit it is good. This provision is characterised by, for example, the welcoming, child-centred ethos and the meaningful development of the children's voice through the School Council. In addition, the wide range of extra-curricular learning opportunities enhance the quality of the children's learning experiences and contribute significantly to their personal development. In the nursery unit, the staff need to review the behaviour management policy and agree a range of strategies to manage the children's behaviour more effectively.
- The school and the nursery unit promote well healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, the children are encouraged to enjoy nutritious snacks and to participate in a varied range of sports and physical initiatives including cycling and walking to school.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The senior leadership team, comprising the principal and vice-principal, provide highly effective strategic leadership and set a clear and realistic path for the work of the school centred on meeting fully the pastoral and learning needs of the children. They have focused on the continuous improvement of all aspects of the school's provision and have prioritised, appropriately, the need to develop further the co-ordinators' capacity to lead and account for their respective areas of responsibility. There is clear evidence that this work is already bringing about improvement in the school's provision, standards, and learning and teaching; the inspection findings endorse its continuation.
- Appropriately, the school has developed more robust processes for self-evaluation. As a result, the key priorities of the school development plan concentrate on improving further the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards that they attain. In taking this effective work forward, the co-ordinators need to consider more first-hand evidence to justify and evaluate the impact of the actions for improvement.
- The school has recently carried out significant, well-conceived improvement work in the building and school grounds. This work has made a very positive impact on the quality and effectiveness of the learning environment for the children and staff as well as increasing the children's safety in the outdoor spaces.

- There are appropriate arrangements in place for communicating with parents to involve them in their children's education. The school has established good links with a range of other schools, the local community and with various external support agencies to enhance further the children's learning opportunities.
- The governors carry out their roles supportively and conscientiously, and understand many of the challenges and opportunities facing the school. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. There are aspects of governance to review; specifically, for the governors to broaden their awareness of developments in the primary phase.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the primary school and the nursery unit have 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 year six children. In discussions, the children spoke highly of the support they receive from their teachers and the wide range of musical, recreational and sporting activities the teachers provide. They report that they feel safe and cared for in school and are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the primary 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.

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in the nursery unit is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop and implement more effective positive behaviour management strategies;
- develop further the assessment methods to outline the children's development and progression in all areas of the pre-school curriculum; and
- review aspects of the organisation of the day to ensure that all time is used effectively for learning.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the nursery unit's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.



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