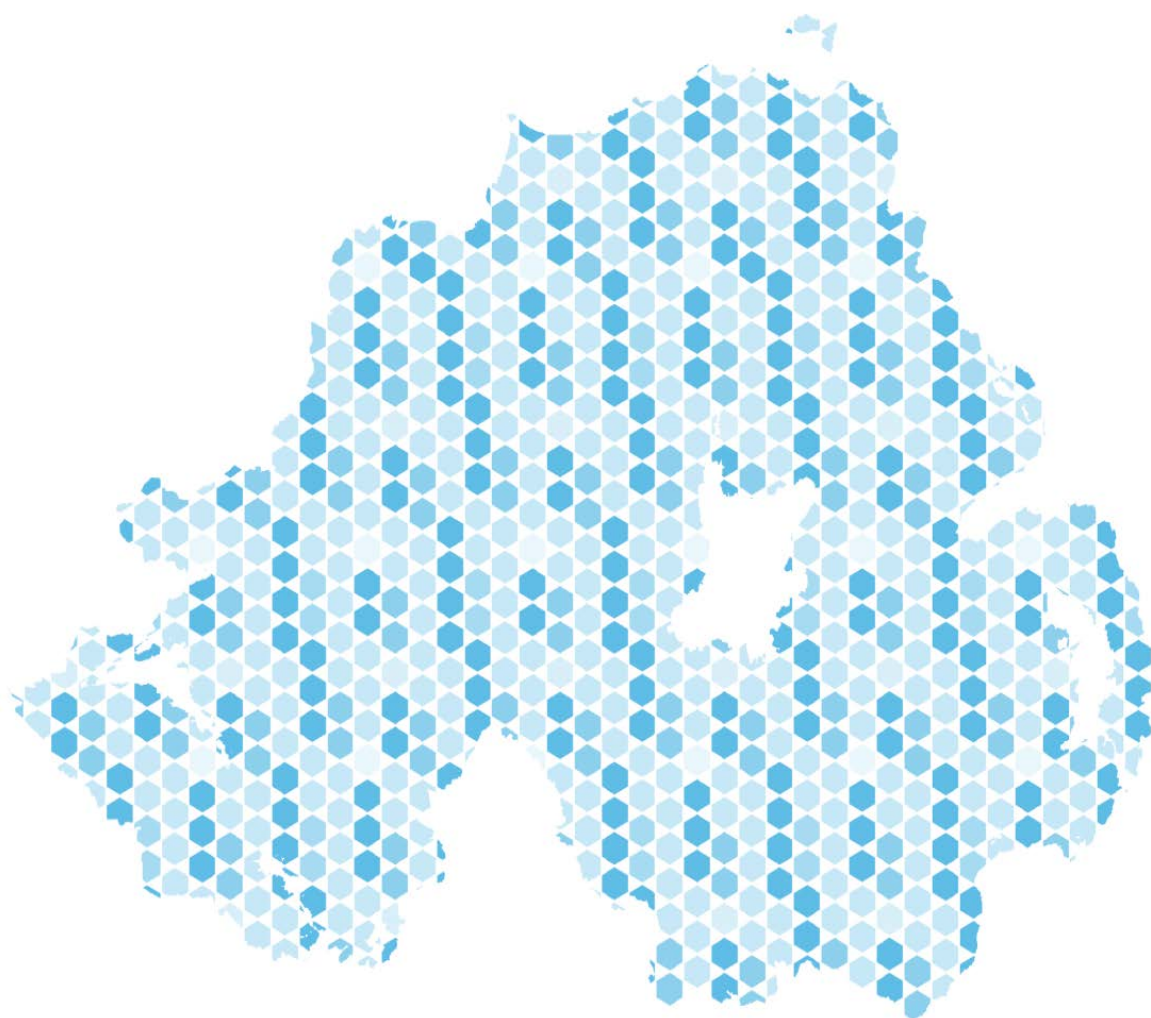


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Loughash Primary School,
Donemana, Co Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
June 2014

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*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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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	22	9	41%	5
Teaching staff	*	*	60%	*
Support staff	*	*	60%	*

* 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.

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicate high levels of support for and appreciation of the work of the school. They commented on, in particular: the mutually respectful ethos; the progress the children make; and the supportive staff who prepare the children well for the next stage in their education. The small number of concerns raised by the parents was shared with the principal and representatives of the governors. The majority of the teaching and support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were highly positive.

2. Context

Loughash Primary School is situated in the parish of Donaghedy, between Claudy and Donemana, and serves the local rural community. Over the last four years, the enrolment has risen slightly from 28 in 2010-11 to 33 in the current school year. At the time of the inspection, 15% of the children were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 12% of the children as having difficulties with their learning.

There are two composite classes in the school; one caters for 15 children and comprises three year-groups across foundation stage (FS) and key stage (KS) 1. The second class caters for 18 children and consists of four year- groups encompassing key stage (KS) 1 and KS2. The teachers work flexibly to ensure equity in the class sizes. The school has secured additional teaching resources to provide part-time support for literacy and numeracy in order to help raise standards further.

Loughash Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	28	28	29	33
% Attendance	98%	97%	98%	98%
FSME Percentage ¹	4%	7%	17%	15%
% (No) of children on SEN register	14%	14%	14%	12%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*

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	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children's behaviour is outstanding; they engage well in their learning and respond readily in class discussion. When given the opportunity, they work well independently and co-operate maturely with others in paired and group tasks. They would benefit from more opportunities to develop and demonstrate a broader range of thinking skills and personal capabilities.

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

- An analysis of the KS2 performance data in three of the past four² years shows that, in English and mathematics, the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in two of the three years.³ Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the school's performance in English and mathematics is also above the average in two of the three years. The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make good progress in English and mathematics, in line with their ability or above expectation.
- By the end of KS2, most of the children speak and listen confidently and respectfully to one another and to adults. Most children read fluently and with expression and write competently for a range of purposes and audiences. By the same stage, the children have a good understanding of key mathematical concepts and use a range of mental strategies confidently.
- The staff place a high priority on providing the children with access to a broad range of information and communication technology (ICT) in support of their learning in literacy and numeracy. The children are competent in using a range of information and communication technology (ICT) applications and, over the last two years, almost all of the children achieved the expected levels in the ICT Accreditation Scheme from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

6. Provision

- The composite nature of the classes places considerable demands on the teachers in terms of classroom organisation and planning to meet the children's differing needs. The long-term planning for numeracy provides a framework for progression throughout the school. The planning for literacy in the FS and KS1 is detailed and provides clear guidance for the development of talking and listening, reading and writing. The school has identified the need to update the planning for literacy in KS2 and the inspection endorses this priority for action.
- The quality of the teaching observed was consistently good. The best practice is characterised by positive working relationships, effective classroom management and planning which builds on the children's previous learning. The classroom assistants interact well with the children and make a valuable contribution to their learning. In order to improve the provision further, the teachers need to ensure that the planned learning activities meet more fully the broad range of needs, abilities and interests of all of the children. While the children's work is marked regularly and positively, the teachers' written comments do not identify clearly and consistently how the children can improve further the quality of their work.
- The school uses assessment data well to identify, at an early stage, those children who experience difficulties in their learning. The children benefit from effective support for literacy and numeracy in class and through external agencies. The children's individual education plans are shared and reviewed regularly with the parents; the targets and strategies to support their progress are generally well matched to the children's needs and abilities.

² 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.

³ The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

- The very good arrangements for pastoral care in the school are characterised by: the welcoming, family ethos and sense of community; the mutually respectful working relationships at all levels; the appropriate emphasis on promoting positive behaviour; the nurturing of the children's sense of fairness and respect for others; and, the opportunities for the children to participate in activities beyond the classroom which develop well their social and personal skills.
- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles through the opportunities for physical play and sporting activities available, as well as the effective emphasis on healthy breaks and lunches.

7. Leadership and management

- The teaching principal and staff work well as a team and have placed an appropriate emphasis on building the children's confidence and improving the standards they attain. They have fostered productive links with the parents and the local community which extend and enhance the pastoral, sporting and educational opportunities for the children.
- While the school development plan (SDP) identifies appropriate priorities for school improvement, it lacks the required evaluations. In the action plans, the priorities are identified through analysis of the school's internal performance data, complemented by the teachers' professional judgment. To improve further these plans, it will be important for the staff team to identify more clearly the specific actions which will bring about further improvements in the quality of the learning and teaching, and the standards attained by the children. The SDP should now be adjusted in light of the inspection findings.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in most aspects of governance. The governors have been proactive in working with other local schools to develop proposals for a sustainable school in the local area. They are well informed about curricular developments within the school and the school's place at the heart of the local community. Their contribution to the life of the school may be extended further through the more thorough review of a greater range of quantitative evidence and benchmarking information in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the action being led by the post-holders.
- 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 children in year 6 and year 7 reported that they feel 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 an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. This is the need:

- for the teachers to ensure that the planned learning activities meet more fully the broad range of needs, interests and abilities of all of the children in order to raise further the overall standards they attain.

The ETI will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress in the area for improvement.

The board of governors has been proactive in working with other local schools to identify possible proposals for a sustainable school in the area. It is important therefore that the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools works closely with the schools to end uncertainties surrounding their future in the best interests of the children.

Health and safety

- There is no locking system for the side door to the main school building, or for the mobile classroom.

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