

PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Moneymore Primary School
and Nursery Unit, Magherafelt,
Co Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
March 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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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.

Twenty-eight parents in total responded to the questionnaires with 22 providing additional written comments. Almost all of the responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of both the school and the nursery unit. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the pastoral care for the children, the welcoming and friendly ethos, the hard work and professionalism of the principal and staff and the high regard for the school in the local community. All of the teaching staff responded and were very positive about almost all aspects of the life and work of the school. Almost all of the support staff who responded were very positive in their evaluations.

ETI reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main points emerging from the questionnaires, including the very few concerns raised.

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 in the school including the nursery unit and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Moneymore Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated in the village of Moneymore in County Londonderry. The children attending both the school and the nursery unit come from a wide catchment area. The enrolment has increased steadily in the primary school in recent years and now stands at 186 with an additional 26 in the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection, approximately 24% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 12.9% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

Moneymore Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	160	165	185	186
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.7	95.5	95.9	97
FSME Percentage ¹	17.5	26.0	23.7	24.1
% (No) of children on SEN register	11.8	15.2	13.2	12.9
No. of children with statements of educational needs	7	6	6	8
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- In the primary school, the children are inquisitive and engage enthusiastically in all aspects of their learning; almost all have high levels of independence and self-management and take pride in their work and achievements. They are friendly and courteous to each other, the staff and visitors to the school, and their behaviour is exemplary.
- The school's performance data shows that in English and mathematics, almost all children, achieve in line with their ability or above expectation. The children who require additional support with their learning participate fully in all aspects of school life and most make progress in literacy and numeracy in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The quality of the children's talking and listening, reading and writing is of a consistently high standard across the school. The children talk enthusiastically, confidently and articulately about their learning and work well in pairs and groups, listening and responding to the views of others. The children develop their reading skills and experiences systematically as they progress through the school; they enjoy reading fiction and non-fiction and they show enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, a wide range of authors. Their writing is neatly presented, shows creativity and flair, and reflects their interest in the topics they learn in all areas of the curriculum.

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

- Across the school, the children demonstrate a good understanding of all areas of the mathematics curriculum. The whole-school focus on mental mathematics encourages the children to be flexible in their thinking and, as a result, most are able to explain their thinking and can talk confidently about their responses and work. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, almost all of the more able children can offer alternative strategies to solve mathematics problems. The children use mathematical language appropriately in the varied classroom activities, can problem solve, investigate and apply their knowledge of mathematical processes in a range of contexts.
- The children in the nursery unit are well settled, very well behaved and have a positive attitude to their learning. The majority of the children have good levels of independence and engage in purposeful, concentrated and productive play. Most of the children are gaining a good understanding of early mathematical concepts and are developing their skills of reasoning and logic through a wide variety of constructional and scientific play experiences. The children are very interested in the natural world and handle tools very competently during indoor and outdoor activities. Most of the children are articulate, engage readily with the staff and their peers and listen attentively during group sessions. Many of the children in the nursery unit can produce detailed representational drawings, paintings and models and show an interest in early writing.
- The children are highly skilled in using a wide range of information and Communication technology (ICT) devices and software to extend and express their learning across the curriculum. Across the school the children can confidently use ICT to record and present their work to a very high standard and use the internet safely and effectively to research information for topics.

6. Provision

- The teachers' planning is comprehensive and guides very effectively the work in classes and also the nursery unit. The detailed planning for literacy and numeracy ensures progression in the children's learning and takes appropriate account of the children's abilities, interests and stage of development. The teachers' ongoing evaluations often take account of individual and group responses and relate to the extent to which the lesson aims are achieved to inform future learning and teaching.
- The quality of the teaching in both the primary school and nursery unit is consistently of a very high standard. In almost all of the lessons and sessions observed, the teachers use a wide range of strategies to promote high levels of interest and engagement. The tasks and levels of support provided are matched very well to meet the varying needs and abilities of the children. The lessons are well paced and the children have opportunities to work in pairs and groups. The teachers use questions and plenary sessions very well to extend the children's thinking and consolidate the learning. In the nursery unit, the skilful interaction of the staff extends the children's language and thinking skills; the staff often join the children in their play and talk to them about their ideas, personal experiences and achievements. Routines such as snack, tidy up and dinner time are key learning elements of the daily timetable and promote well the children's independence.

- The teachers' use of interesting and creative resources, including ICT, to support and enhance the children's learning in literacy, and the meaningful integration of literacy across all areas of the curriculum, are key strengths of the provision. In mathematics, the teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies which develop well the children's mathematical thinking and vocabulary. The more recent focus on processes and problem solving is developing the children's understanding and is having a positive impact on their progress in these areas. Across the school there are excellent links to other areas of the curriculum, including activity based learning, the world around us and ICT. Very good mathematical links have been established with a local primary school through the extended schools programme.
- From Nursery to P7 ICT is integrated very effectively into classroom and play activities to support and extend the children's learning.
- The teachers employ a wide range of assessment approaches to evaluate the children's learning. The school's internal assessment data, together with teacher observations of the children's progress, are used very effectively to inform the teaching and to plan future learning for all the children. Across the school the teachers and classroom assistants work closely together to help the children develop and improve their work. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and in the best practice give the children precise guidance on how to develop their work further.
- The children who have learning difficulties are identified at an early stage in both the nursery unit and the school, and appropriate support is put in place to address their individual needs. Throughout the school, the classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to the children's learning through an appropriate blend of in-class and withdrawal sessions. The recent changes to the individual education plans encourage greater involvement of the parents in contributing to the setting of well- focused targets. The children are well integrated and benefit from the effective liaisons between the learning support staff and external support agencies. Of particular note is the rigorous assessment and tracking of the children's progress which takes account of the response of individual children to specific interventions.
- The learning environments in the school are very well resourced and attractively presented; across the school, the children's work is celebrated and features prominently in classroom and corridor displays. In the nursery unit, the staff have created a stimulating and ever-changing learning environment for the children; a particular strength of the nursery unit's provision is the high quality and richness of the children's experiences and the range of challenging activities offered both indoors and outdoors across all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care in the primary school and the nursery unit is outstanding. This is evident in the inclusive, child and community-centred ethos which permeates all aspects of the school's provision. The children's social and emotional development is supported well, and their achievements recognised and celebrated by a well-conceived positive behaviour policy and a comprehensive rewards system. The consistent encouragement of each child to achieve success and the continuing professional development of all staff are central to the work of the school. In discussions with the inspectors the children highlighted, very positively, many aspects of school life, including the

activities of the school council and the ECO council. They indicated they are happy and feel safe in school and know what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being. The school provides a breakfast club and after school extra-curricular activities to facilitate the children and their families. Visitors to the school and trips to places of educational interest enhance the quality of the children's overall learning experiences and contribute significantly to their personal development.

- The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through the effective implementation of a healthy eating policy and a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership team is highly effective and has a strategic collegial approach to school improvement which is child centred and firmly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The school development plan (SDP) guides effectively the work of the school; the associated action plans outline appropriate areas for development and have been identified through a rigorous and methodical process of self evaluation. Staff meetings and staff development days are well planned and used effectively to build capacity throughout the school.
- The co-ordinators, including the teacher-in-charge of the nursery unit, are rigorous in their approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. They provide appropriate guidance to their colleagues to ensure high quality learning and teaching in the school and nursery unit. The well-conceived actions plans for literacy and numeracy are focused clearly on improving further the learning experiences provided for the children, and the standards they achieve. The teachers make effective use of data from standardised tests and their own evaluations of the children's performance in literacy and numeracy to set appropriate whole-school, class and individual targets.
- The school values the role the parents play in the education of their children and actively seek and act on their views on a range of school related issues. Effective methods are in place for communicating with the parents, for example, monthly newsletters and the school website, and regular opportunities are provided throughout the year, or may be arranged, for them to discuss their children's progress or other matters. The school has developed very valuable links with the local and wider community, including other primary and post primary schools in the area, to support, enrich and extend the learning experiences and social opportunities available to the pupils. The Parent Teacher Association plays an active role in the life and work of the school and has raised significant funds to enhance the educational provision and experiences for the children.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors contribute to the life and work of the school and are highly supportive of the staff and the principal. They are actively involved in the school development planning process and provide a challenge function in relation to achievements and standards, finance and the curriculum.

- 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 reported that they felt very secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

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

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