

PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Mossley Primary School,
Newtownabbey, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
December 2014

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
SERVICE
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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 a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Fifteen percent of parents responded to the questionnaires. In their responses, the parents indicated very high levels of satisfaction with, and support for, the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the school's welcoming ethos, the teaching and support staff's focus on the holistic development of all of the children, and the leadership of the principal. Most of the teachers and a minority of support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were also very positive; they emphasised the support from the principal and vice-principal, the supportive, collegial ethos across the year groups and the links with the parents and wider community. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the key findings emerging from the questionnaires.

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; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Mossley Primary School was established in 1868 to provide education for the families of the workers at Mossley Mill, in Newtownabbey. The current school building was opened in 2007 and serves the communities of Mossley, Ballyduff, and Carnmoney. Almost all of the children come from the immediate locality. Over the last four years and against demographic trends, enrolment has risen slightly; the school is regularly over-subscribed. Over the last four years, while the proportion of children entitled to free school meals has risen, the percentage of children recorded on the special educational needs register has fallen overall, although the number of children with statements has increased.

Mossley Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	605	618	627	621
% Attendance	95.7	95.6	96.4	98
Percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	14.21%	16.5%	19.45%	19.64%
% of children on SEN register	33%	27.18%	30.14%	18.19%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	6	9	13	12
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

Source: data as held by the school.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Very good
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- Almost all of the children are highly motivated and respond very positively to the high expectations of their teachers. They engage readily in the learning activities and take pride in the presentation and accuracy of their work. They work independently, managing aspects of their own learning, and co-operate maturely with one another in paired and group work.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children are achieving in line with their ability or above expectation in English; most of the children are achieving in line with their ability or above expectation in mathematics.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make consistent progress in literacy and numeracy, in line with their individual targets. The school's internal data indicates clearly that, in almost all cases, they make outstanding year-on-year progress.
- In mathematics, the children apply their thinking skills maturely, make choices and decisions in their mathematical learning and explain clearly the calculation strategies they are using. By year 7, most of the children demonstrate a very good working knowledge of key concepts across all areas of mathematics. They can handle simple and more complex computation competently, and are confident and flexible in their mathematical thinking.

- From the earliest stage, the children articulate their thinking in a variety of appropriate talking and listening activities, including class discussions, presentations, performances and during themed role-play. As the children progress through the school, they develop very well their competence in, and enjoyment of, reading. The children in year 7 read across a wide range of literature with fluency, expression and evident enjoyment. The children apply their writing skills with increasing accuracy to a broad range of genres, exhibiting high levels of accuracy, presentation and handwriting. By year 7, they demonstrate maturity and flair as they plan and compose more challenging forms of text, including poetry.
- By the end of KS 2, the children have developed an appropriate range of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) which prepare them well for the next stage of their learning. Across the year groups and the curriculum, the children use ICT confidently and appropriately to enhance their learning; for example, to prepare presentations and to research information for topic work.

6. Provision

- The detailed, thorough planning guides well the learning and teaching, ensures progression across the year groups and is informed by systematic assessment of the children's progress. The strengths in the planning include the explicit connections between all areas of the curriculum and the integration of ICT to support and extend the children's learning. In the best practice, the extent of the children's learning is evaluated rigorously and used effectively to inform future planning.
- The high quality of almost all of the teaching, which promotes effectively the children's learning, is a key strength in the school and is characterised by the teachers' high expectations of what the children can achieve. The lessons are well structured with appropriate levels of pace and challenge to engage all of the children. The teachers' skilful questioning enables the children to develop thinking skills, reflect on their own responses and articulate clearly their ideas and opinions. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and positively and, in the best practice, identify clearly how the children can improve the quality of their work. The school has identified appropriately the need to implement more fully assessment for learning strategies and it will be important to disseminate further the best practice in order to ensure consistency across the key stages.
- The teachers provide a well-structured programme for literacy and place a strong emphasis on the systematic and progressive development of the children's language, knowledge and skills. The most effective literacy lessons integrate successfully the elements of listening and speaking, reading and writing. These lessons enable the children to communicate clearly, to expand their understanding and love of reading through well-planned and appropriately challenging reading lessons and to extend their ability to write capably in meaningful and engaging contexts. As a consequence, the children are developing as confident, competent readers and writers. ICT is used well to enrich and extend the children's learning in literacy.

- The whole-school programme for mathematics is comprehensive and provides for balanced coverage and continuity across the areas of mathematics at all key stages. A key feature of the numeracy provision is the developing portfolio of well-planned applied tasks which extend the children's thinking and create opportunities for the children to make connections between their mathematical learning and everyday life. Well-focused mental mathematic activities are used as an enjoyable and challenging introduction to lessons, to consolidate the children's previous learning and to promote their use of the associated mathematical language. The teachers make effective use of a range of practical resources, including ICT, to engage the children's mathematical curiosity, develop their financial capabilities and deepen their mathematical understanding.
- The school community is inclusive and committed fully to supporting those children who face difficulties with aspects of their learning. This commitment is exemplified by the very wide range of additional resources allocated to identifying, at the earliest stage, and meeting the children's increasingly complex range of needs. A particular strength of the special educational needs provision is the way in which all of the staff, including the highly skilled learning support assistants, use their detailed knowledge of the children to inform the well-conceived intervention strategies. Detailed analysis of qualitative and quantitative data undertaken by the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support teachers, complemented by robust monitoring arrangements, ensures that the resources are targeted effectively to meet the needs of the children.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The school has an inclusive ethos which emphasises the value of every child's holistic development, progress and achievements. The children respond well to the whole-school emphasis on promoting positive behaviour, respecting others and taking on appropriate responsibilities. The very wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances further the children's personal development and enjoyment of school life.
- The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the healthy eating policy which is implemented effectively throughout the school. There is a wide range of well-planned opportunities for physical activity as part of the curriculum, in the playground and through trips and visits which encourage the children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal, vice-principal and senior leaders set a clear strategic direction for continuous school improvement and work closely with the staff and governors to develop very well a collegial approach to school development planning. They enjoy the strong support of the staff and the local community. They set appropriately high expectations for the children, focused clearly on achieving the highest possible standards in learning, teaching and pastoral care.

- The school improvement process is under-pinned by a culture of wide consultation and meaningful reflection, and by the high level of professional skill of post-holders and class teachers. There is clear evidence of year-on-year whole-school development. In order to sustain this high level of self-improvement, the senior leaders and co-ordinators should continue to review and develop further the written action plans to ensure that they are consistently focused on a manageable number of key priorities with measurable outcomes.
- The school has forged highly effective links with the parents, involving them extensively in their children's education, for example, by arranging curricular evenings and providing practical written guidance to help them support their children's progress. Through the annual transition fair, the school is establishing close links with local post-primary schools and has enabled the children in year 7 and their parents to make informed decisions about the next stage of their education.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- 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 feel very happy and 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 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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