

# PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Mullaghduh Primary School,  
Islandmagee, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in  
May 2015

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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

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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 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.

Twenty-one percent of the parents and most of the teaching and non-teaching staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses from the parents indicate high levels of support for the life and work of the school. The small number of additional written comments highlighted specific examples of how children's needs are well met and included suggestions for school improvement. The responses from the teaching and support staff were also positive. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the main findings 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 for literacy and numeracy; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

Mullaghduh Primary School, which recently celebrated its centenary, is situated in Islandmagee, County Antrim. Most of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has grown over the last four years and currently stands at 78. There is an increasing trend in the number of children enrolling in different year groups from other schools and in the range of specialised additional needs. At the time of the inspection, the percentage of the children entitled to free school meals had increased significantly. Some 38% of the children are identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

The school will amalgamate with Kilcoan Primary School in Islandmagee to form a new controlled primary school on both sites from 1 September 2016.

Mullaghdubh Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	64	62	74	78
% Attendance	94.3	96	95	n/a
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	11	11	15	26
% of children on SEN register	39	34	34	38
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*

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

\* Fewer than 5

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children display positive attitudes and dispositions to learning; they are well motivated and engage positively in their class work. The younger children are developing independence as, for example, they register themselves at the start of each day. The older children take on roles and responsibilities with increasing maturity as they work in groups; they organise themselves, share ideas, negotiate and show respect for different viewpoints.
- Through the use of a range of qualitative and quantitative data, the school has identified the variation in aspects of the children's attainments in literacy and numeracy as they progress through the school. A number of appropriate measures, including class restructuring and changes in the deployment of staff, have been taken to address this variation. The school is at an early stage of using data to track individual progress and identify underachievement. The need to make more effective use of data has also been identified by the school and is a priority within the school development plan.
- Most of the children make good progress in reading. By the end of key stage (KS) 2 the most able children read with fluency and expression and can understand and discuss underlying themes and characters. There is a need to develop further the children's reading skills, including comprehension and inference, in a progressive way and the school is focusing appropriately to do so. The children listen well to others and most contribute their own views confidently. The quality of the writing does not, however, reflect sufficiently the good quality of most children's communication skills.

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

- Most of the children are developing a secure understanding of key mathematical concepts and language as they move through the school. However, there is a need to develop more consistently their investigative, problem-solving and problem-posing skills. By the end of KS2 the most able children demonstrate good levels of understanding across all areas of the mathematics curriculum and flexibility in their thinking and use of strategies.
- Throughout the school the presentation and quality of the children's written work in both literacy and numeracy is variable.
- The children's information and communication skills (ICT) are developed progressively. They can present their work in PowerPoint presentations, make creative use of programs to design materials and regularly research information for their topic work.

## **6. Provision**

- The planning, teaching and assessment in two-thirds of the lessons observed were effective in promoting and progressing the children's learning. Key characteristics of these lessons include: good classroom management of and planning for the different year groups and ability groups, effective questioning and the development of the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities. In addition, the teachers connect the children's learning across the curriculum.
- In the less effective practice, the expectations for what the children can achieve are too low and the focus is on the completion of activities rather than the learning. As a result, the tasks are not matched sufficiently to the children's abilities and there are missed opportunities for the children to share and explain their thinking.
- A key priority is the need to continue to develop the whole-school planning for both literacy and numeracy to ensure better progression in the children's learning across the year groups. Recent work in developing reading and in embedding mental mathematics is having a positive impact on the children's learning in literacy and numeracy. The introduction of additional reading resources and materials to support the teaching of comprehension are used well to extend the children's reading skills further. The teachers make use of a range of practical resources to engage the children in learning numeracy. However, the children need more consistent opportunities to talk about their mathematical learning and to share and explain their thinking through, for example, investigative activities.
- Those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning benefit from a good range of strategies and are very well integrated into the life of the school. There is a close liaison with parents and relevant agencies to help them make smooth transitions. There is evidence that most make good progress in, for example, their reading, self-regulation and behaviour. The school recognises the need to monitor, evaluate and measure their progress in attaining their personal targets, and to track their literacy and numeracy standards more systematically.

- There is a caring, family and inclusive ethos throughout the school. The children show respect for and sensitivity to the needs of others; the older children play an important role in helping the younger children and carry out duties, such as playground buddies, in a mature manner. In discussions with the year 6 children they articulated a strong sense of being 'one family', where everyone is included. They reported that they feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.
- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- A prolonged period of uncertainty about the school's future, the demand of multiple roles on key staff and working to meet the needs of children who have increasingly complex additional needs, have slowed the implementation of the school's priorities for improvement.
- The teaching principal works hard to carry out a number of roles and responsibilities. Recent staff changes have led appropriately to an improved redistribution of duties. A recent focus on strengthening the role of the coordinators has resulted from a more distributed leadership. The agreed systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision include book scoops, lesson observation and scrutiny of planning. There is a need to bring more rigour to these processes with a sharper focus on the quality of the learning experiences and the standards achieved by the children.
- The school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement are at an early stage of development. Leadership and management at all levels need to apply a more strategic and systematic approach to self-evaluation and action planning leading to sustained school improvement. While the school development planning process is informed by consultation with children, parents and staff, the school development plan does not meet fully the requirements of the Department of Education's School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.
- The school values the contribution which parents make to enhance the provision for the children through, for example, the parent-teacher association and the breakfast club. Meaningful links with the local and wider community enhance the curriculum and provide the children with additional learning experiences which add positively to their personal confidence and development.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The contribution of the reconstituted board of governors to the life and work of the school needs to be enhanced by developing further their role in self-evaluation leading to improvement.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following areas need to be addressed: to update the child protection policy to reflect current school arrangements for safeguarding and disseminate this to parents, and to ensure that all governors complete safeguarding training.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the amalgamation of the school's provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

## **8. Conclusion**

Given the significant areas for improvement in leadership and management, the overall quality of education provided by this school is inadequate. The inspection has also identified areas for improvement in standards and learning and teaching which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-18 month period.

The main areas for improvement are the need:

- to continue to develop the planning, teaching and assessment for learning in order to improve consistency in the learning experiences;
- to raise further the standards attained by the children in both literacy and numeracy;
- for leadership and management at all levels to apply a more rigorous and strategic approach to self-evaluation and action planning leading to sustained school improvement; and
- to address the safeguarding issues identified.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-18 month period.



**Accommodation**

1. The toilets require refurbishment.
2. The accommodation, including the outdoor play area, is restricted.

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