

PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Old Warren Primary School,
Lisburn, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
September 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
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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.

Fewer than five of the parents responded to the questionnaires and there were no written comments. Fewer than five of the staff (teaching and non-teaching) responded to the questionnaires with a small number of written comments. The responses to both the parental and staff questionnaires were positive about almost all aspects of the life and work of the school. No significant issues were raised and ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the messages 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 the nursery unit; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Old Warren Primary School is situated in the Old Warren residential estate in Lisburn. The enrolment of the school has recently increased and currently stands at 97 children in the primary school and 26 in the nursery unit. This represents a 23% increase on the previous two years. Almost all of the children come from the local area and approximately 58% are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 23% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school has recently undergone a period of significant change in relation to staff and leadership. At the time of the inspection, the principal and vice-principal were both in an acting capacity and there had been a number of changes to key co-ordinator roles.

Old Warren Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	93	79	79	97
% Attendance (NI Average)	93.4%	93.6%	95.1%	-
FSME Percentage ¹	68%	68%	52%	58%
% (No) of children on SEN register	26%	30%	28%	23%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	-	-	-	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Good
Nursery Unit	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well behaved, motivated and show a keen interest in their learning. They are respectful of their teachers and respond positively to the learning opportunities provided for them. The children are beginning to develop their personal and social skills and take on roles of responsibility.
- The school's performance data shows that most children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability; a minority make progress above expectation. The standards in both English and mathematics have improved markedly in the past year and the number of children identified as potentially underachieving has reduced significantly.
- The children achieve satisfactory standards in literacy. A majority of the children enter the nursery unit with significant delays in their language and communication skills. The good focus on developing language and communication within the nursery unit is not built on effectively across the primary school. By year 6 and 7, the most able children are able to read with a good level of fluency and expression and achieve satisfactory standards in writing. The standards achieved by the children in mathematics are satisfactory; most of them engage well in their mental mathematics activities and are beginning to use mathematical language with increasing confidence and accuracy. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the children are knowledgeable in the majority of the areas of the mathematics curriculum. They are insecure, however, in explaining their strategies and have limited flexibility in their mathematical thinking.

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

- At the early stage in the settling in period, the children in the nursery unit are becoming familiar with the various routines of the nursery. Most of the children spend lengthy periods in sustained and purposeful play, in particular, in the role-play, construction and early scientific activities. They are developing appropriate dispositions regarding the sharing of resources with their peers.
- The children's achievements and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory. They use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to enhance and display their learning across the curriculum.

6. Provision

- A new planning format has been introduced for the teachers' short and medium term planning which provides satisfactory guidance for the teachers. There is a need for all of the teachers to: develop further their use of planning to ensure greater differentiation within the learning; evaluate more effectively the children's learning; and use the evaluations to inform future planning. In the last year, the school has developed an assessment and marking policy. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and in the best practice provide guidance to the children on how to improve their work. In developing this practice further, the teachers should ensure that the children are given opportunities to respond to this guidance and make improvements to their work.
- In the effective practice, the lessons are well-structured with an appropriate pace for learning. The teachers and classroom assistants provide good levels of support to meet the needs of all children. They use an effective range of strategies to promote positive behaviour in the class and provide the children with opportunities to work in pairs. In these lessons, the teachers take time to model and scaffold the language for the children and give them appropriate opportunities and time to think and to respond. Where teaching was less effective, the teachers' expectations for the children are too low and there is insufficient challenge in the activities, particularly for the more able children. There is a need for all teachers to develop a shared understanding of effective questioning and how to promote and develop more effectively the children's oral language skills and thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- The newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has undertaken a significant review of the provision for special educational needs in the school and has put in place appropriate systems for the early identification of need, targeted interventions and the tracking of progress. The support for children with additional learning needs is primarily provided through differentiated class activities. The SENCO has identified appropriately the need for the teachers to develop further the use of effective differentiation within the classes, to meet better the needs of all of the children, including the more able.
- The school has invested in a new reading scheme and developed an attractive school library in order to foster a greater interest in and love for reading. The 'Reading Partnership' programme has been introduced and the school has an additional part-time teacher through the 'Signature' project. Both of these initiatives have improved the standards of the children who have been involved. The school has identified the need to develop the children's understanding and use of phonics through a whole-school phonics programme, in order to ensure

continuity and progression across the key stages. The teachers in the foundation stage need to ensure that this includes an appropriate programme of activities to develop the children's early phonological awareness and key skills. Throughout the school, the teachers need to provide the children with more focused opportunities to develop further their talking and listening skills across all areas of learning and to promote their confidence to share ideas through discussion, group work and effective plenary sessions.

- There have been a number of key developments and initiatives in the numeracy provision during the past year, including the introduction of long-term planners to provide a whole-school overview for mathematics and ensure continuity and progression across the key stages. In the best practice, this guides well the learning and teaching in the classrooms; it will be important that the more effective practice is developed and disseminated to improve the provision in all classes. An intervention programme, which focuses primarily on key areas of number, has been introduced for children in years 4 and 5 and has improved the standards achieved by the children. There has also been a recent focus on mental mathematics in order to develop the children's thinking skills and use of mathematical language. The numeracy co-ordinator has identified appropriately the need to provide further staff development in this aspect of the numeracy provision and to raise the profile of and attitude to numeracy throughout the school community.
- There are good learning opportunities within the nursery unit in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum; of significant note are the development of the children's personal, social, and emotional well-being, early scientific concepts and language skills. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is very good. They use effectively the play opportunities to model the use of appropriate language and to extend the children's thinking skills.
- Play-based learning within the primary school is underdeveloped and does not build effectively enough on the good provision within the nursery unit. The teachers and classroom assistants in the foundation stage and key stage (KS) 1 need to provide appropriate progression and challenge for the children and ensure that their numeracy and literacy skills are developed through all areas of the play programme.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is a strength in the school and nursery unit. There is a caring, friendly, welcoming ethos in the school and very good working relationships at all levels. The staff in the nursery unit guide and develop well the children who require support with their emotional and learning needs. The children in the school develop an awareness of self and others through participation in the playground buddy system, the active school council, the work on becoming an eco school, and through a range of charity fundraising activities. The recent introduction of the 'House System', which is named creatively after a diverse and inclusive range of local sporting figures, encourages the children to aspire to achieve. The school works closely with Barnardos who facilitate a school counselling service and a programme for developing self-esteem and motivation. The children in year 6 spoke positively about the counselling service and are clearly proud of their school and appreciative of the recent improvements. They value the work of their teachers and the good range of after-school activities available to them.

- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- The nursery unit gives very good attention to healthy eating and physical activity. The children's conversational skills develop well during the snack routine. All of the learning experiences encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The current leadership of the school has a very clear and realistic direction and vision for the school based on an understanding of the work that needs to be undertaken in order to bring about improvement. The acting principal has provided very good leadership in affecting significant change over the last year. The school development planning processes are informed by a very good use of data and self-evaluation. The staff work well as a cohesive team that is dedicated to addressing underachievement, raising standards and updating the resources and the fabric of the school building. The leadership needs to consolidate further the very good systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision and the standards that the children achieve, in order to effect continued improvement. There is an urgent need for the governors of the school and the South Eastern Education and Library Board to ensure that the acting posts of leadership within the school are addressed as soon as possible, to afford the school the stability it requires in developing further.
- A wide range of links with sporting bodies, charities, external support agencies, a local artist and local businesses has been established, which enhances the children's learning experiences. The school held a multi-faith week for children to learn about other religions and has good links with a number of local church ministers who lead assemblies in the school. An effective pastoral and curricular link has been established with a local special school. The staff in the nursery unit have effective links with the parents, for example, through a home visit before the child starts the nursery unit and a parenting programme facilitated by the staff and supported by Barnardos. During the school year, appropriate procedures are in place in the school and nursery unit to keep parents informed about their child's progress. The school is working to develop further the links with parents and has an active and enthusiastic Parent Teachers' Association which provide support and raise valuable funds for the school.
- The board of governors has recently been re-constituted with a number of new governors and a new chairperson of governors in post. At a meeting with the governors, they expressed their support for the new leadership team in the school and the significant improvements it has brought about during the past year. 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. The governors now need to ensure that they are fully informed about the quality of provision within the school and the impact of all future development work on the standards achieved by all children.
- 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 but the following area needs to be addressed:

- the recently reviewed and updated policies should now be ratified by the board of governors.

In discussions with the inspectors, the children reported that they feel very secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

8. Conclusion

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

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

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the quality of the learning and teaching;
- raise further the standards in literacy and numeracy; and
- improve the provision for play-based learning.

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