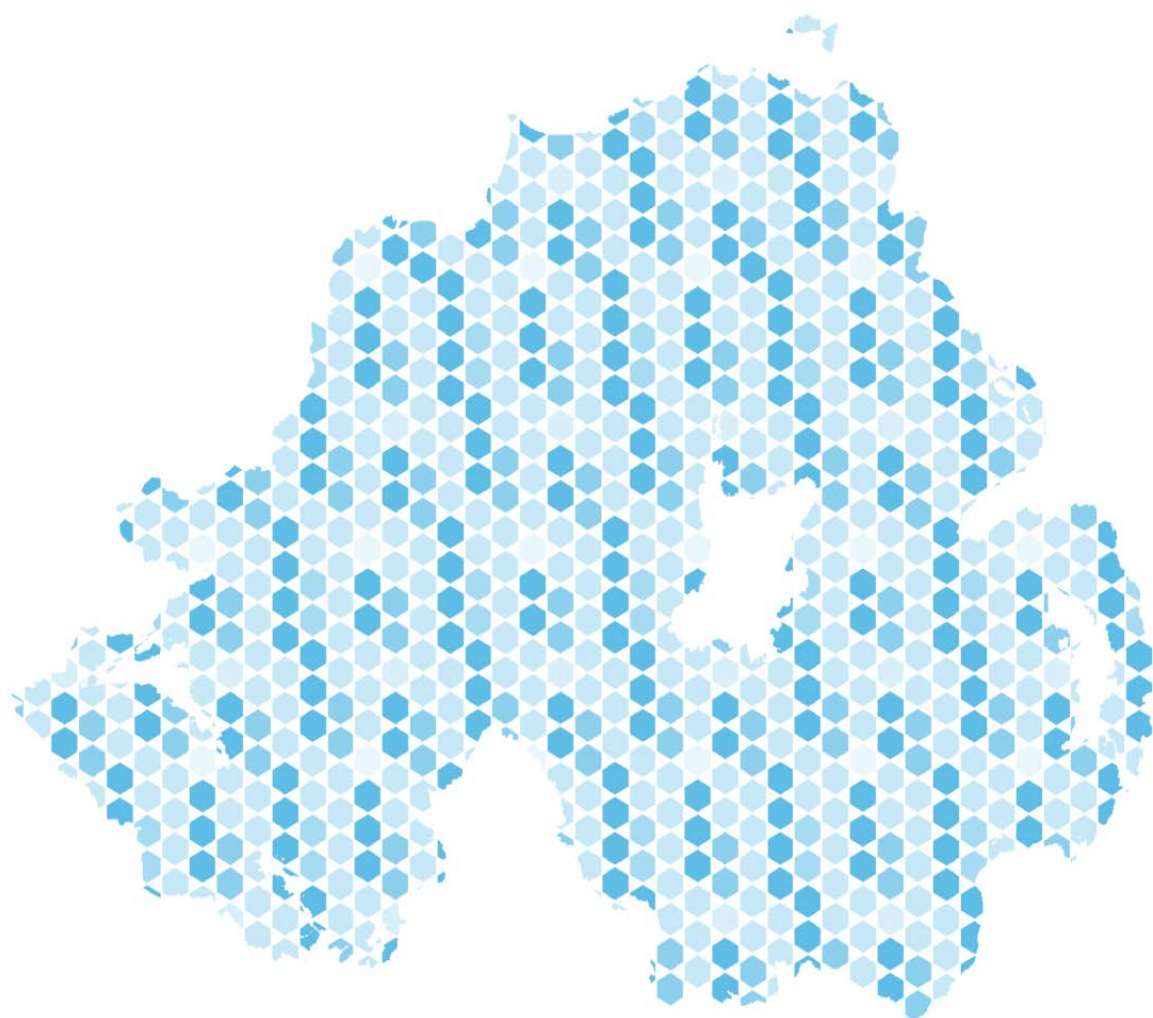


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Poyntzpass Primary School,
Co Down

Report of an Inspection in
April 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 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	67	19	28%	*
Teaching staff	8	7	88%	*
Support staff	9	8	89%	*

* 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.

Almost all the responses from the parental questionnaire highlighted the caring and supportive environment, the children's enjoyment of learning, and the approachable staff. The responses from the teachers were wholly positive and highlighted the inclusive and pastoral ethos, the good communication throughout the school and the opportunities for the children to contribute to aspects of decision-making. Almost all of the responses from the support staff were very positive and highlighted the well-managed and well-resourced working environment. The small number of matters raised in the questionnaires was discussed with the principal and the representatives of the board of governors. In addition, ETI facilitated a meeting with parents and staff at their request.

2. Context

Poyntzpass Primary School is situated in the village of Poyntzpass approximately eight miles from Newry. The enrolment has been increasing steadily over the past four years and currently stands at 114. The children come from the village and the surrounding rural area. The school maintains Eco-school flag status.

Poyntzpass Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	102	109	109	114
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.7%	98.2%	96.7%	97.4%
FSME Percentage ¹	13.26%	15.26%	14.17%	21.66%
% (No) of children on SEN register	23.4%	28.3%	20.7%	22.8%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

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	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are confident, motivated and engage well in their learning. Their behaviour is exemplary; they show respect for their peers and interact well with each other and with adults. The children work well both individually and collaboratively and often reflect upon and discuss their learning. The children have high expectations of themselves; they take pride in their school and their own achievements. They respond well to the creative and stimulating learning opportunities provided for them.
- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data in 2009/10 and 2010/11 shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category in 2009/10 and 2010/11, the

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

performance in English and mathematics is in line with or above the average.* The school's internal performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.

- Throughout the school, the children present their work to a very high standard across all areas of the curriculum. They enjoy reading and share their opinions about an extensive range of books and authors. Across the key stages, the children show an increasing competence in the writing process and plan, draft, edit and present their work in a range of formats, including digital media. Almost all of the children speak with clarity and confidence and have well developed talking and listening skills.
- The children have a very good understanding of key facts and concepts across all areas of mathematics. They show flexibility in their thinking, are able to transfer their skills and knowledge and apply a range of strategies to problem solving activities. The children show high levels of enthusiasm during practical activities and, in particular, during the imaginative mental mathematics sessions. The children are well supported by the staff in adopting a 'have a go' attitude and are confident in taking risks in their learning.
- The children use effectively an increasing range of information technology skills to research, present and enhance their learning.

6. Provision

- Almost all of the teaching observed was very good or better; a majority of the lessons were outstanding. The teachers know the children well, this is reflected in the relevance of the topics chosen, through which high quality, well resourced, and stimulating lessons are taught. The teachers are creative in providing opportunities for the children to connect their learning across the curriculum and to apply their skills and knowledge in real life contexts.
- The long and medium term planning is detailed and evaluated appropriately to provide comprehensive guidance which ensures continuity and progression in the children's learning. A wide range of appropriate assessment strategies is used to monitor and track effectively the children's progress.
- The outstanding provision for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is characterised by early identification of needs and the use of a range of interventions which are tailored to meet the individual learning requirements of the children. The education plans are well focused and reviewed regularly and the children are involved in setting and evaluating their personal learning targets. They are well supported by the high quality withdrawal sessions and in-class support provided by the teachers and the classroom assistants.

* The school participated in the 2011/12 Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) pilot assessment programme; therefore, there are no recorded outcomes for this year. 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.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. The school has achieved the Welcoming School** status and this initiative is influencing positively the academic and pastoral provision throughout the school. The pastoral care provision is characterised by the inclusive, child centred-ethos and excellent working relationships at all levels. The school pays particular attention to monitoring and supporting the children's emotional health and well-being. There is an effective focus on building the children's self-esteem and self-confidence through the development of positive attitudes to learning and recognition of individual children's interests and abilities. The children demonstrate self-awareness of their own knowledge, skills and talents through a range of thoughtful and sensitively planned self and peer-assessment opportunities.
- The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through healthy breaks and the attention given to the development of physical skills through the curriculum and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal provides outstanding leadership; she is very well supported by the skilled and knowledgeable co-ordinators and all the staff who have a shared vision for continued improvement. The staff are committed to their own continuing professional development which is focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising further the standards achieved by the children. There is very good teamwork and all members of the school community work well to implement change in a systematic and well-paced manner.
- The school development planning process is well embedded and is underpinned by a culture of rigorous self-evaluation leading to improvement and critical self-reflection. The school makes very effective use of available performance data to inform the school development plan and effect improvement at whole school, class and individual level.
- The school has very good links with the parents and actively supports local, regional and global initiatives. There are effective links with the local pre-school and post-primary providers to ensure a smooth transition for all children through each stage of their education. The school also participates in cross-community events and is involved in a cluster of local primary and post-primary schools which meets regularly to discuss relevant educational developments.
- Based on the evidence at the time of the inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well-informed about all aspects of the life and work of the school and recognise the importance of the school in the heart of the local community. The range of expertise in the governing body is used well to support the staff as they develop provision in the school and provide a challenge function to all aspects of school leadership and management.

** The Welcoming Schools project is funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and supports whole school development of a welcoming ethos and atmosphere focusing on People, Places, Policies, Programmes and Processes. The school works in conjunction with the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) on this project.

- 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 discussion with the inspectors, the year 6 and 7 children reported that they enjoy school and feel happy and secure. They know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their well-being. They appreciate the opportunities to contribute to decision making in school through involvement in the School Council and Eco-Council.

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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