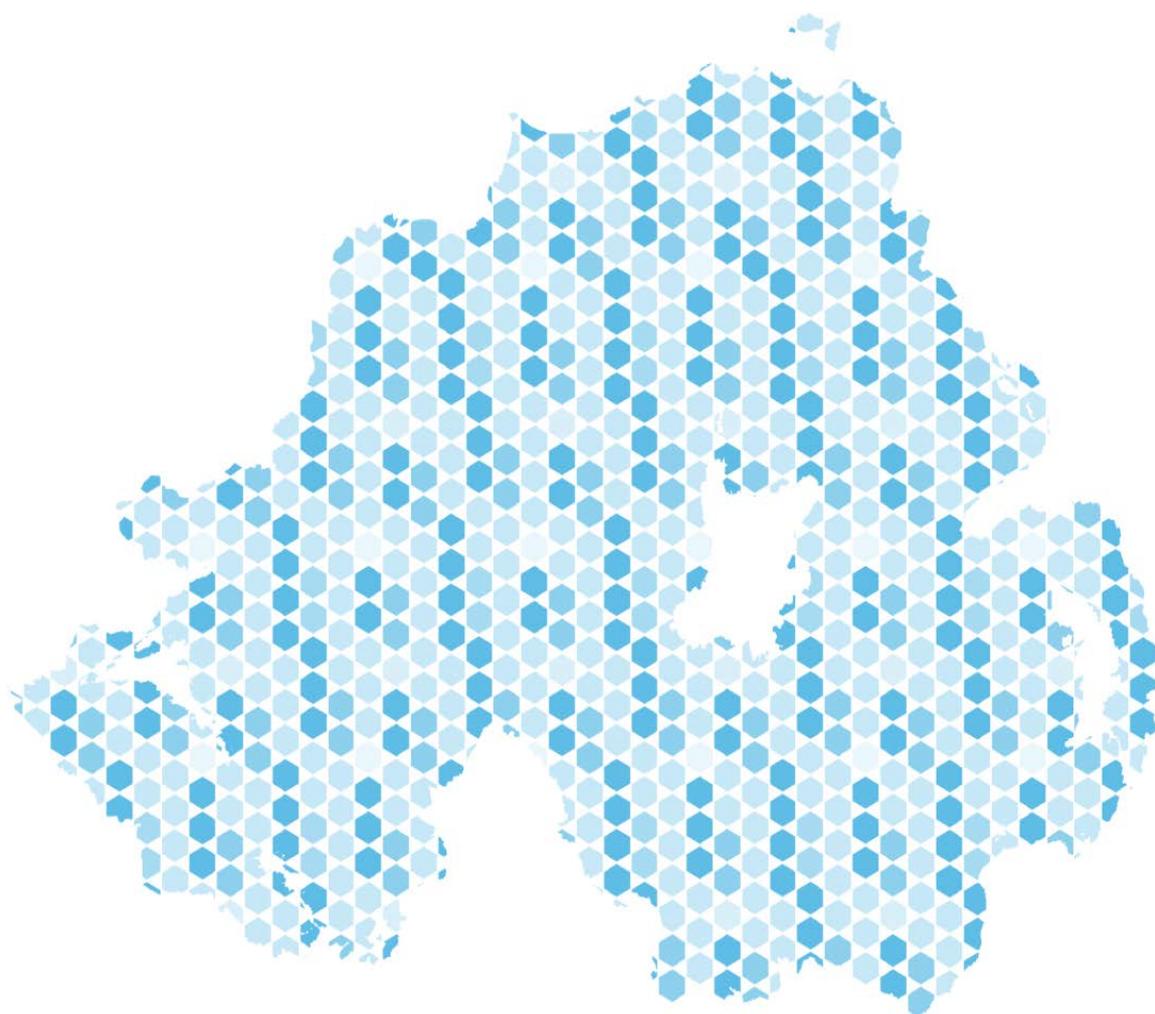


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Sacred Heart Primary School,
Dundrum, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in
March 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.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	50	16	32%	9
Teaching staff	5	*	60%	*
Support staff	*	*	60%	*

* 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.

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicate high levels of support for and appreciation of the work of the school. In the written comments, the parents highlighted the welcoming ethos, the supportive, approachable staff and the wide range of extra-curricular activities enjoyed by the children. The small number of concerns raised by the parents was shared with the principal and representatives of the board of governors. Most of the teaching and support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were highly positive.

2. Context

Sacred Heart Primary School is situated in Dundrum and serves the town and local rural community. Over the last four years, the enrolment has declined from 81 in 2010-11 to 74 in the current school year. At the time of the inspection, 35% of the children were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 28% of the children as having difficulties with their learning.

Sacred Heart Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	81	81	77	74
% Attendance	94.2%	94.5%	95.7%	%
FSME Percentage ¹	25%	28%	31%	35%
% (No) of children on SEN register	36%	30%	22%	28%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	4	4	3	3
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	Good
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children's behaviour is excellent; they settle quickly, engage readily in their learning and participate fully in class discussion. When given the opportunity, they work well independently, manage aspects of their own learning and co-operate with others.

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

- An analysis of the key stage 2 performance data in three of the past four² years shows that, in English and mathematics, the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in two of the three years.³ Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the school's performance in English and mathematics is also above the average in two of the three years. 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 good progress in English and mathematics, in line with their ability or above expectation.
- By the end of key stage 2, most of the children are articulate and express their views with confidence. They read with expression, fluency and understanding, and they write competently for a range of different audiences and purposes within the literacy programme. By year 7, the children have a very good understanding of key mathematical concepts. They are able to apply their mathematical knowledge to complete calculations, with a good level of accuracy, but lack flexibility in applying mathematical strategies in mental computation.
- The children in year 7 have participated in the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessments (CCEA) information and communication technology (ICT) Accreditation Scheme, and, over the last three years, the children's attainment was above the Northern Ireland (NI) average.

6. Provision

- The long-term planning for literacy and numeracy is comprehensive. While the short-term planning is detailed, it lacks a sharp focus on the intended learning outcomes, associated success criteria and opportunities for connected learning. Throughout the three key stages, the planning needs to integrate fully the learning across the curriculum, in particular, the development of the children's writing.
- The quality of the teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory, with the majority of the lessons being good. The best practice was characterised by a clear focus on the learning, with the work matched appropriately to the needs and abilities of the children, and effective questioning. In the one-third of lessons which required improvement, the learning was overly directed by the teacher, the level of challenge was not appropriate, and there were missed opportunities to extend the children's learning. The children's work is marked regularly and positively, but marking for improvement strategies are not being implemented consistently across the year groups.
- The quality of the provision for special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator uses assessment data well to identify those children who experience difficulties in their learning. The children benefit from effective support for literacy and numeracy in the withdrawal sessions. While the children's individual education plans are shared and reviewed regularly with the parents, the targets and strategies to support their progress are not consistently well matched to the children's needs and abilities.

² Due to the current transition period in the arrangements for statutory assessment, this analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data is based on the outcomes up to but not including the 2012/13 school year.

³ The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good and is characterised by mutual respect at all levels. The children's achievements are celebrated and their excellent behaviour is rewarded regularly. The children participate in the decision-making processes in the school through the school council and eco council; these contribute to the children's social and personal development.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles through the wide range of sporting activities, as well as the effective emphasis on healthy breaks.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leaders have fostered an effective team spirit among the staff and a supportive ethos throughout the school. They prioritise appropriate opportunities for the professional development of the staff, in line with the priorities for school improvement. The teachers have overseen sustained high standards in English and mathematics, underpinned by an effective emphasis on the children's holistic development.
- The school development plan is not fully compliant with the School Development Planning Regulations (2010) as it lacks the required evaluations. In the most effective action plans, the priorities are identified through analysis of the school's internal performance data. To improve further these processes, it will be important for senior leaders and co-ordinators to develop robust and systematic mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision, and of the learning and teaching, in their respective areas of responsibility.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in most aspects of governance. The governors have worked well with the principal to overcome a substantial financial deficit. They are well informed about curricular developments within the school and the school's place at the centre of the local community. Their contribution to the life of the school may be extended further through reviewing and challenging, where necessary, a greater range of evidence presented to them on the effectiveness of the action being led by the various post-holders.
- 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 governors and senior leaders need to review and amend, as necessary, aspects of the procedures for recording concerns; and to ensure that the governors are appropriately trained in selection and recruitment.
- In discussions with the inspectors, the year 6 and 7 children spoke very positively about the school, notably the rewards for positive behaviour, the sporting activities and opportunities to use ICT. They reported they feel happy and secure in school, and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. There is a need:

- for senior leaders and co-ordinators to develop robust and systematic processes for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision and of the learning and teaching in their respective areas of responsibility.

The ETI will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress in the area for improvement.

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