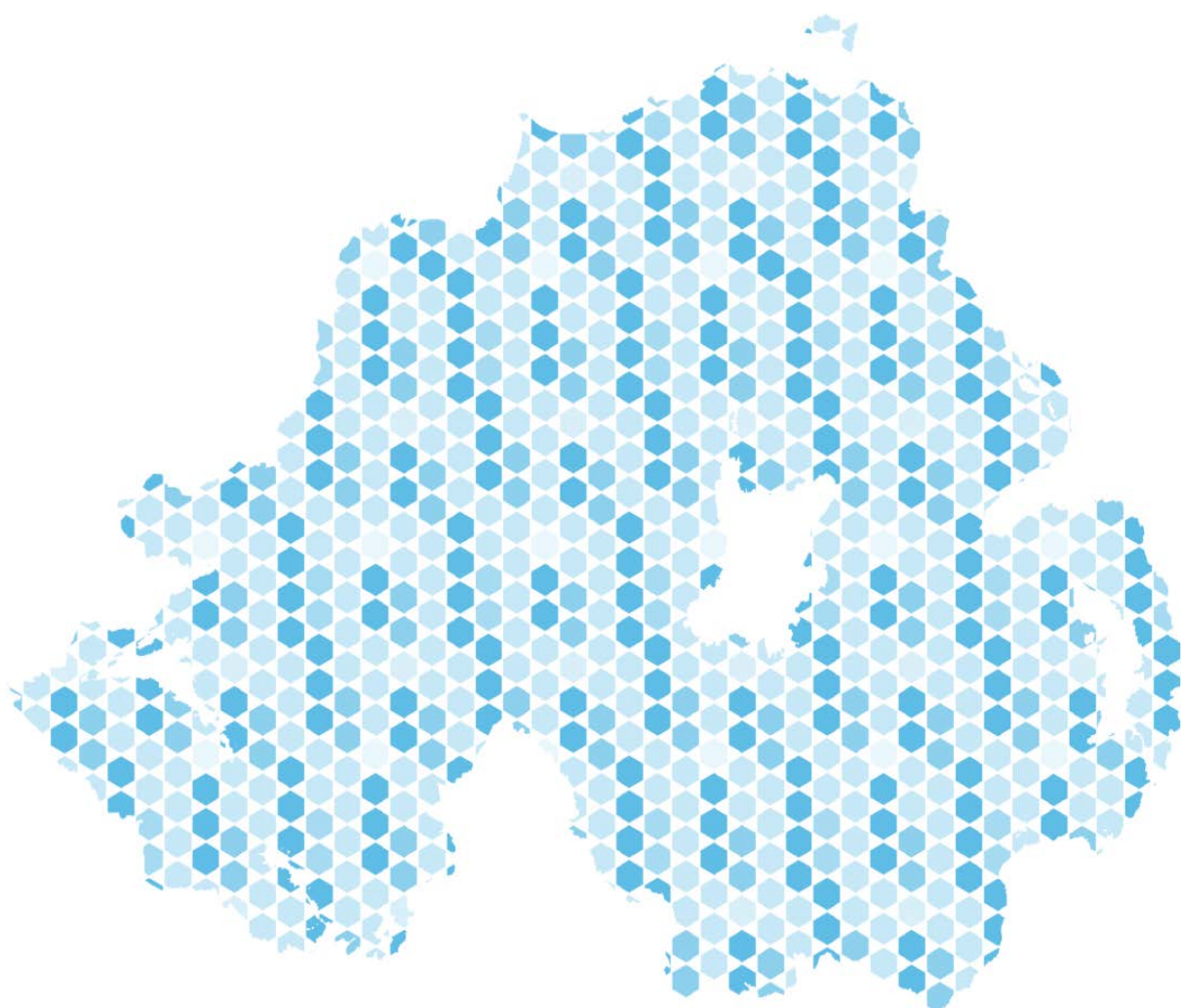


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Seymour Hill Primary School,
Dunmurry, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
February 2015

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
EXCELLENCE



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

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision	3
7. Leadership and management	5
8. Conclusion	6
Appendix	

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

A small group of parents met with two inspectors and they were wholly positive about all aspects of the school's provision. In particular, they commented on: the well-attended breakfast club and wide range of after-school activities provided for the children; the commitment of the school to providing a breadth of experience for the children through the funding of music lessons and a range of educational visits; the high levels of pastoral care; and, the excellent support that their children receive from the caring staff. All of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive. The ETI has reported to the principal and three representatives of the board of governors and discussed with them the main issues 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 including the learning support centre; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Seymour Hill Primary School is situated close to the village of Dunmurry. Over the past four years, the enrolment has increased steadily and currently stands at 202 children. Most of the children attending the school come from the immediate area and a small number travel to the school from the wider surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, approximately 44% of the children were entitled to free school meals and around 36% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Twenty children with statements of educational need receive their education in a specialised Learning Support Centre (LSC) within the school which is comprised of two classes. At the time of the inspection, the principal had been in post for two years.

Seymour Hill Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	168	204	194	202
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.6%	94.1%	93.2%	94.5%
FSME Percentage ¹	51%	44%	46%	44%
% (No) of children on SEN register	45%	32%	48%	36%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	20	21	19	19
No. of newcomers	*	*	8	8

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good
Learning Support Centre	Very good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well behaved and courteous; they are keen and eager to engage with their peers and are respectful towards their teachers and support staff. Most of the children settle quickly to their tasks and respond positively to the support and guidance provided by their teachers. When given the opportunity, the children participate enthusiastically in well-planned collaborative paired and group activities, demonstrating good levels of independence and self-management.
- The school's performance data shows that most 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.
- Throughout the school, the children are able to sequence events in stories and express opinions about what they have read with increasing confidence. By year 7, the most able children are able to employ a range of language devices, for example, metaphors, similes and personification, to display empathy when writing about a character from a poem. A group of year 7 children, who read during the inspection, were fluent, confident and able to discuss the features of a playscript. The children report that they enjoy reading and are beginning to develop an awareness of authors.

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

- By year 7, the more able children are confident and flexible in their thinking across the areas of mathematics. They are secure in their knowledge of number facts, place value and shape and space. The children have a very good working knowledge of the key concepts of ratio and measures, data handling and are developing well their skills in financial capability through the management of the school stationery shop.
- The children in the learning support centres (LSC) make very good progress in literacy and numeracy. The teachers plan, monitor and evaluate the children's progress effectively and all of the children are achieving standards in line with their ability. They interact well with each other and are developing appropriately their language skills, confidence in numeracy and independence in learning.
- The children make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. They use ICT software programmes and programmable devices confidently and the school's e-portfolios contain a wide range of evidence which demonstrates clearly the acquisition and progression of the children's skills.

6. Provision

- The quality of the teachers' planning is good. The staff are reviewing currently the long-term planning for literacy and numeracy to ensure there is balance and progression across each of the areas. To improve further the provision for the children, the short-term planning needs to outline clearly differentiated learning activities and active learning strategies to develop the children's thinking skills and creativity to meet better the wide range of abilities within each classroom.
- All of the teachers are committed to improving the quality of the learning experiences for the children. In the most effective practice, the teachers use skilful questioning, provide well-planned activities where children have the opportunity to make decisions, problem-solve and to connect their learning across the curriculum. Where the teaching is less effective, in a minority of lessons, the learning is over-directed by the teacher with limited opportunities for the children to develop their thinking skills; there is insufficient challenge for the more able children and the plenary sessions are not used effectively to consolidate the learning. The staff have identified appropriately the need to develop further the provision for outdoor play in the foundation stage. It will be important to ensure that there is a shared understanding of how to integrate more effectively the literacy and numeracy activities into each of the learning areas and to ensure that there is progression and challenge for the wide range of needs within each of the classes.
- The children's work is marked regularly with supportive comments and there are appropriate procedures for keeping the parents well-informed about their children's progress. Throughout the school, assessment for learning is at an early stage of development. A more systematic approach is required to ensure that feedback given to the children enables them to improve the quality of their work.

- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early through teacher observations and the effective analysis of the school's internal data. These children benefit from differentiated activities in class, the effective support of classroom assistants, withdrawal sessions and peripatetic support. In the best practice, the withdrawal support is linked closely to the work in class, and the targets in the individual education plans are specific, reviewed regularly, and inform classroom practice. The classroom assistants work well with the teaching staff to provide targeted support for those children with statements of special educational need.
- The children are taught to read using a range of levelled books and novels through well-structured guided reading sessions. The teachers have identified the need to improve the standard of the children's comprehension. Consequently, there is an appropriate whole-school focus on developing further the teacher's knowledge and use of a wider range of reading strategies to develop the children's inferential skills. Additional support programmes, such as, 'Reading Booster' sessions develop successfully the children's enjoyment of and fluency in reading. The children are able to write in a variety of forms. It will be important for the staff to continue to develop across the key stages, a literacy-rich learning environment where the children are given regular opportunities to underpin the writing process with well-planned talking and listening activities and engage in extended writing in meaningful contexts across the curriculum.
- The mathematics programme is comprehensive, ensuring the progressive development across the key stages in mathematical processes, number, measures, shape and space and handling data. In the best practice, the learning is set in relevant contexts, and the teaching is well paced and builds on the children's prior knowledge. Mental mathematical activities are used as challenging introductions to lessons, and the children are developing well their ability to explain their mental strategies using appropriate mathematical language. The teachers use a good range of practical resources, games and strategies to engage the children's mathematical curiosity and to reinforce their mathematical thinking. To improve further the provision in mathematics, the teachers need to place a greater emphasis on mathematical processes within their planning and devise challenging and enjoyable investigations across the curriculum, particularly in science, for the children to apply their mathematical knowledge, understanding and ICT skills.
- The quality of the provision in the learning support centre is very good. The teachers and classroom assistants provide a caring and supportive environment which is conducive to sustained learning and to meeting very effectively the children's complex social, emotional and academic needs. The children benefit from well-planned and regular opportunities to integrate and work with their peers in mainstream classes and to be included in all aspects of school life.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school, including the learning support centres, is very good. There is clear evidence of an inclusive ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. The children show a high degree of respect towards each other and the staff. They speak confidently and in an articulate manner about their positive school experiences. There are many opportunities for the children to develop decision-making and leadership skills through their involvement in the Eco- and the school council. The consistent implementation of the updated positive behaviour programme promotes well high levels of good behaviour.

- The staff give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The school has a healthy eating policy in place and the children are encouraged to access regularly drinking water throughout the day. Very good use is made of staff expertise in providing a well-planned physical education programme for the children.

7. Leadership and management

- The recently established leadership team has a clear vision for the future development of the school and is highly committed to the pastoral and academic needs of all of the children through building on the effective partnerships with parents and the community. The leadership team has made effective use of the 'Together Towards Improvement' indicators to evaluate provision throughout the school. Clear roles and responsibilities have been negotiated and agreed by all members of staff with the appointment of a number of key-co-ordinators in the last year. The recent training of the co-ordinators has resulted in an emerging culture of shared leadership where the co-ordinators are beginning to analyse more rigorously the school's internal data to identify areas for improvement.
- The school development planning process is effective and is underpinned by wide consultation with parents. The action plans are well-conceived and are focused clearly on improving the children's achievements and standards in number, reading comprehension and ICT skills. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have begun to monitor the effectiveness of the actions plans through the scrutiny of the teachers' planning. The staff have identified appropriately the need to develop further the monitoring and evaluation processes through sampling the children's work and engaging in lesson observations. The inspection endorses this important work.
- A key strength of the school is the wide range of extra-curricular activities that enhance the children's social skills and personal development. The extended school programme, including the breakfast club and a wide range of after-school clubs, is well-attended and provides wrap-around-care for the children. The active parent teacher association, mother and toddler group and a wide range of classes for parents, for example, first aid, play a pivotal role in strengthening further the links with the community.
- 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 are fully committed to improving the pastoral and educational provision for all of the children. They have identified appropriately the need to monitor further the effectiveness of the school development planning process through direct engagement with the key learning co-ordinators to evaluate the impact of their work.
- 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 year 6 children reported that they felt very secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their 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, namely:

- to develop further the role of the curriculum co-ordinators in leading, monitoring and evaluating rigorously the impact of learning and teaching strategies on the standards the children attain.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

Health and safety

1. The store, which is located in the centre of the playground, obstructs the view and prevents the staff from having sight of all of the children during playtimes.
2. In the year 1 playground, the steep grassy bank falls away sharply to a tarmac covered area with a high kerb. This presents a health and safety hazard during playtimes.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2015

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk