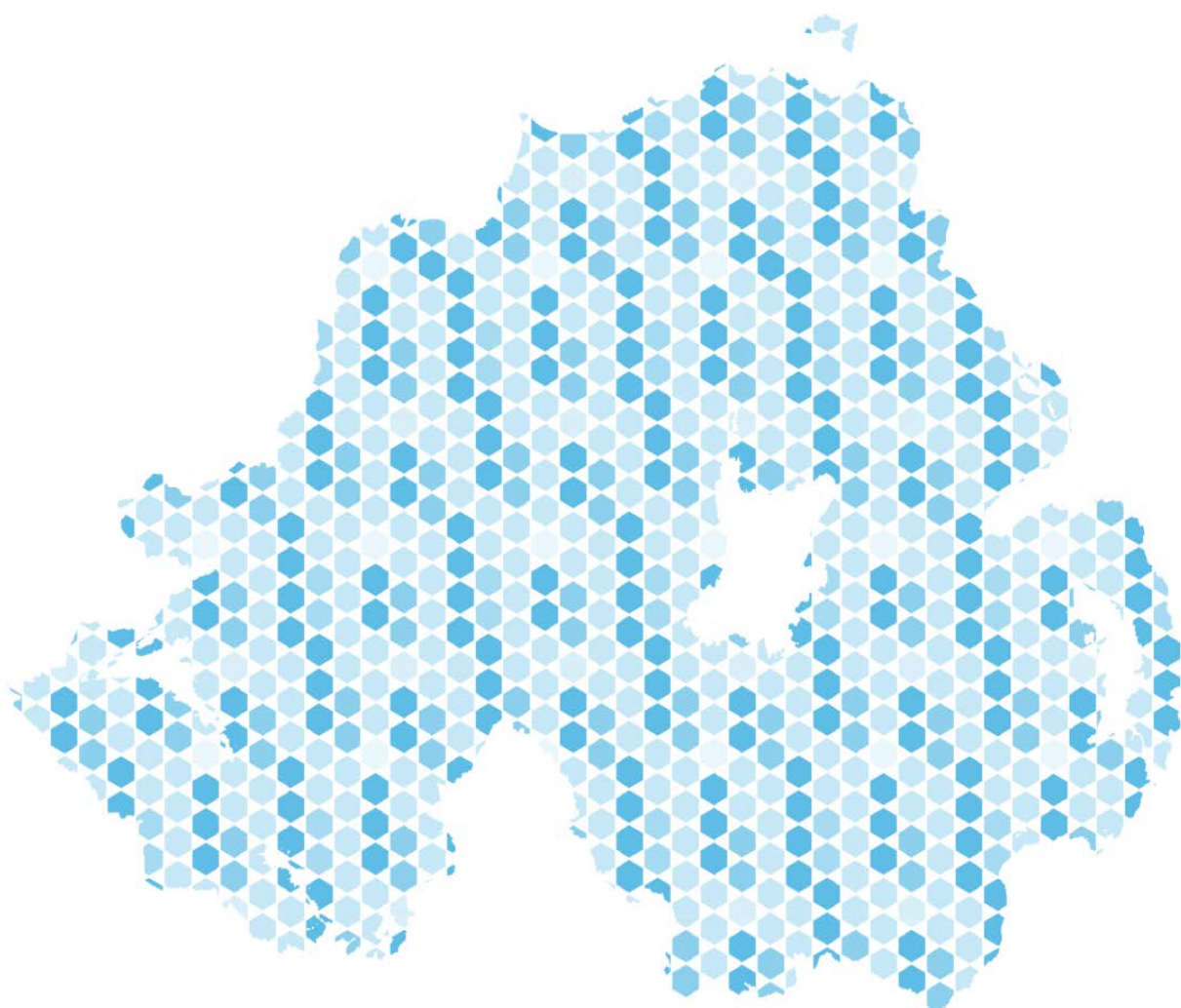


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Spa Primary School,
Ballynahinch, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in
May 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
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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

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	4
8. Conclusion	4
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.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-five percent of the parents responded to the questionnaires and a small number included additional written comments. The parental responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with all areas of the life and work of the school. In particular, they highlighted the approachable, caring and dedicated staff, the rich learning experiences provided for the children and the high regard for the school within the local community. All of the staff completed the questionnaire and their responses were very positive; they emphasised the very good working relationships among all of the staff and the importance placed on every child fulfilling his or her full potential. The 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 for literacy in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Spa Primary School is situated in the village of Spa on the outskirts of Ballynahinch, County Down. The enrolment of the school has increased steadily over the past four years and currently stands at 180 children. Most of the children come from the surrounding rural area, the village of Spa and from Ballynahinch. Approximately 10% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 8% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. There have been a significant number of changes in the teaching staff during the current academic year. At the time of the inspection, two teachers had been recently appointed and a further two teachers were employed in a temporary capacity.

Spa Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	146	156	168	180
% Attendance (NI Average)	97.3	97.0	96.9	-
FSME Percentage ¹	5.5	6.4	7.1	9.6
% (No) of children on SEN register	12.3	17.3	14.9	8.4
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

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Very good
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Very good
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are highly motivated learners and engage enthusiastically in the interesting and creative learning opportunities provided by their teachers. They enjoy their learning and can work very well in pairs and small groups; valuing the opinions and idea of others. From early in the foundation stage, the children develop very good self-management skills and, throughout the school, they are well-mannered and courteous.
- The school's internal performance data indicates that most 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.
- The children achieve very good standards in literacy. Throughout the school, the children's talking and listening skills are of a high standard and they are very confident in engaging with adults and with each other. By year 7, the most able children read with fluency and expression. They have good levels of understanding of character development and can summarise succinctly their current reading material. The children report that they enjoy reading and can discuss their reading preferences. The children write to a good standard across a range of writing types.
- The children make very effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) for research, word processing, presenting information, and creating animations. They use well a range of ICT software programmes, programmable devices and tablet technology which support and enhance their learning in literacy and numeracy.

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

6. Provision

- In most of the lessons observed, the planning, teaching and assessment were highly effective in promoting and progressing the children's learning. In the most effective practice, the teachers' skilful questioning develops well the children's thinking enabling them to give extended answers and develop further their understanding. Interesting and relevant learning experiences are provided by the teachers, through well-chosen topics, which present very good opportunities for the children to engage in purposeful group work. Across the school, the teachers reflect continually on the children's learning and evaluate robustly their progress to plan a programme that builds effectively on the children's prior learning.
- The programme for language and literacy ensures balance and progression across the key stages in talking and listening, reading and writing. The staff make very effective use of a wide range of approaches to the teaching of spelling and phonics. These approaches are tailored to the needs of classes and individuals ensuring that the children use spelling, punctuation and grammar with increasing accuracy as they progress through the school. A strength of the school's literacy provision is the use of well-chosen class novels which is developing effectively the children's literacy skills across the curriculum. The school has identified appropriately the need to provide more structured opportunities for the children to develop their creative writing skills and to extend their understanding and use of writing techniques.
- The provision for the children who require additional support with their learning is a significant strength of the school. Early identification, coupled with high quality targeted support, ensures that the children make very good progress in over-
- coming barriers to their learning. The staff have participated recently in an intensive training programme exploring factors affecting children's literacy development; this continuing professional development has enabled them to become more adept at developing and implementing strategies and approaches to meet the children's learning needs. The individual education plans reflect appropriate targets for the children and outline a range of teaching strategies to meet each child's learning needs. Those children who are identified as potentially underachieving are supported effectively through a range of reading and numeracy interventions; their progress is rigorously monitored and almost all of the children have made good progress.
- The pastoral care provision is outstanding. There is a very inclusive, child-centred ethos with high levels of mutual respect and positive working relationships. The children have very good opportunities to develop their leadership skills and contribute to improvements in their school with the opportunity to hold positions of responsibility, in particular, the school council, the Eco-committee and as year 7 playground 'buddies.' The promotion of positive behaviour is very effective; the children's personal and academic achievements are recognised and rewarded regularly by all staff. In the summer term, pre-school children are very well-supported in their induction to year 1 through an innovative pre-school afternoon club. The children, who come from a wide range of pre-school settings, visit the school for play sessions where they can get to know each other and their teacher in an informal way. The children in year 6 spoke very positively about the wide range of after-school activities and school trips which enrich greatly their learning experiences and build their self-esteem.

- The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The school leadership provides a strategic approach to school improvement which is child-centred and focused clearly on improving learning and teaching to raise further the standards achieved by all of the children. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility and provide very good leadership. They use robust methods for monitoring and evaluating, including the effective use of data, in order to ensure continued improvements in the provision and in the standards achieved by the children.
- The school development planning process is highly effective and the governors, parents, children and staff contribute well to the identification of priorities. The action plans for the key areas of learning identify appropriate priorities and the progress is monitored regularly by the co-ordinators, the senior leadership and the governors. The school development plan is of a high quality and is clearly understood by all members of the school community. A children's version of the school development plan was produced with considerable input from the school council and it was presented by them to the rest of the school. A parental version ensures that all parents are aware of the current priorities for improvement.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well informed about all aspects of school life and provide appropriate support and challenge to the leadership to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- 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 feel safe and knew what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Health and Safety

1. The perimeter fencing of the school is not sufficient to provide secure controlled access to the playground.
2. The current accommodation does not provide suitable access for those with mobility difficulties.

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