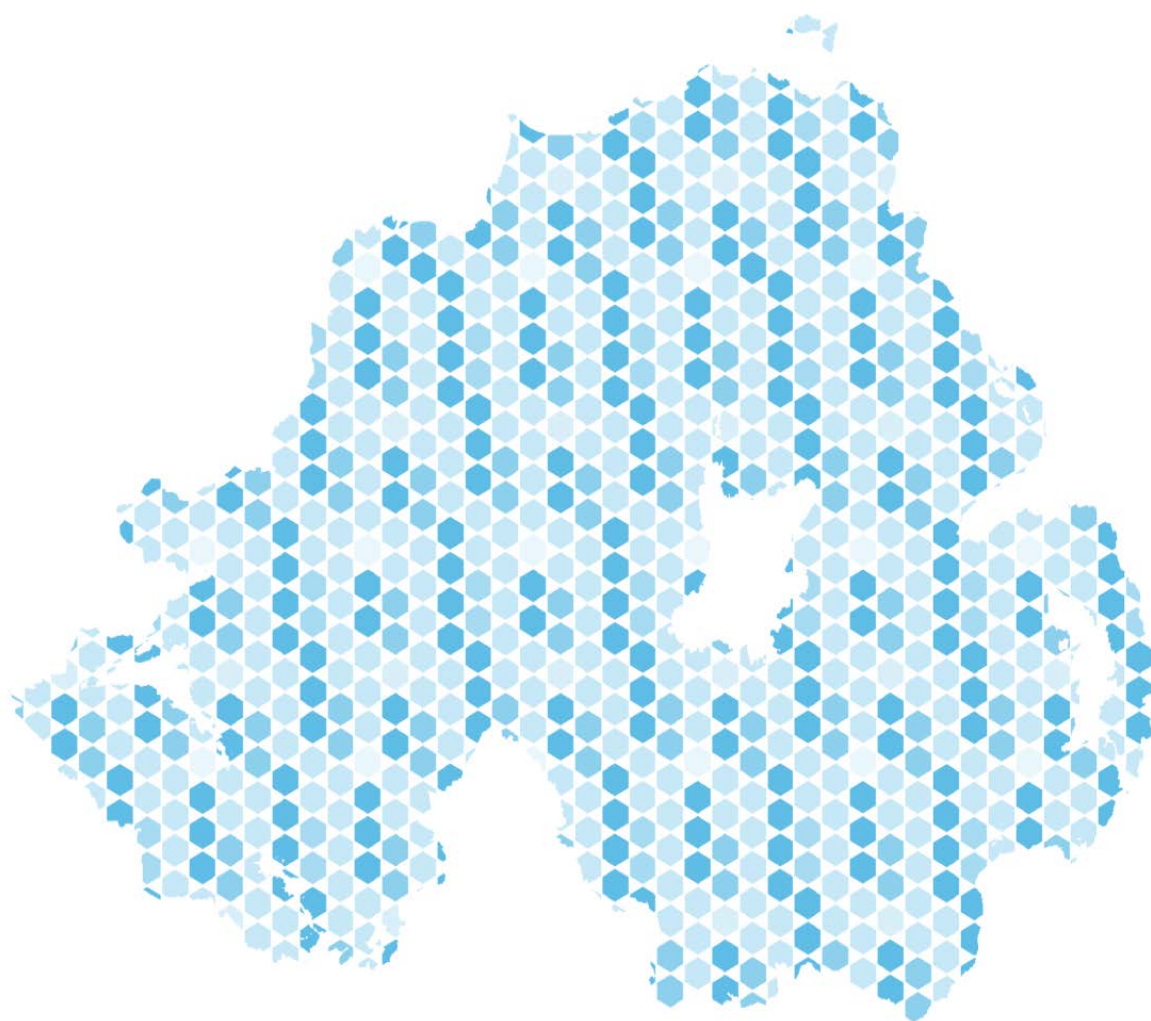


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Brigid's Primary School,
Ballymoney

Report of an inspection
in September 2013

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 on-line questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	158	19	12%	9
Teaching Staff	11	11	100%	11
Non-Teaching Staff	16	5	31%	*

* fewer than 5

The ETI is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents/carers about the life and work of the school. As a result, the response rate to the parent/carer questionnaires may be low.

2. Context

St Brigid's Primary School is situated in the outskirts of the town of Ballymoney. The majority of the children come from the local area. Enrolment has increased over the past five years and is currently 208; this figure includes 21 children in the school's Learning Support Centre (LSC). At the time of the inspection, 19.7% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals and approximately 17% were identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

St Brigid's Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	184	193	198	208
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.2% (94.7%)	96.4% (95.2%)	96.4% (94.7%)	-- --
FSME Percentage ¹	21.5%	22.2%	25.3%	23%
% (No) of children on SEN register	21%	19%	17.1%	17.3%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	22	19	24	25
No. of newcomers	14	14	16	18

Source: data as held by the school. * fewer than 5

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

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 Learning Support Centre (LSC), and;
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall finding

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

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are confident and articulate and have very good social and organisational skills. They are developing well their thinking skills and personal capabilities across all aspects of their work. In most of the lessons, the children co-operate ably when working in groups and work well independently. Most of the children can use relevant subject related vocabulary with confidence; for example, when questioned, they can explain and evaluate their learning competently.
- *An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data in three of the past four years shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the performance in English and mathematics is also in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average. The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children are making good progress in English and mathematics.
- The children who require additional help with their learning and the children in the LSC achieve in line with, or above their expected levels and make steady progress against their identified needs.

* 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.

6. Provision for learning

- Over half of the teaching observed was very good or better; almost one fifth was outstanding. The most effective practice included carefully structured lessons and learning tasks which met well the children's needs and interests. In these lessons, the teachers use an appropriate blend of varied teaching strategies and engaging resources to good effect. The teachers have high expectations for the children and, as a consequence, plan lessons which take good account of the children's abilities and dispositions towards their learning. The teachers' systemic review of each lesson's objectives enables the children to identify their strengths and the areas they need help with.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used appropriately in a variety of ways to support and extend the children's understanding of important concepts.
- The staff meet individual children's needs through the effective use of a variety of support strategies including team teaching and focus group activities. The children who have been identified as requiring additional help with their learning are supported very well in the key areas of literacy and numeracy and their progress is monitored systematically. The learning support assistants (LSAs) contribute well to all aspects of the children's learning and care.
- The positive impact of the school's current action plan on learning and teaching in numeracy was evident in the lessons observed. As a result, most of the children are becoming more flexible thinkers in their work in mathematics and other problem-based activities; they can select from and apply a varied range of strategies and explain their reasoning well using the appropriate terms.
- Literacy is planned for and developed comprehensively across the curriculum. The children's oral and thinking skills are promoted well through the teachers' effective questioning. There is good use of whole school routines, as well as incidental opportunities, to promote literacy meaningfully within play and across the school day. Children whose first language is not English are supported well in the school with appropriate measures in place to aid their fullest participation in all aspects of school life.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity to encourage healthy lifestyles. The children have regular opportunities for sports and make good use of a wide range of games equipment to develop their outdoor play skills.
- A range of suitable policies guides well the daily life of the school. These include the use of positive rewards to increase the children's self-esteem and motivation. In addition, the children engage well in an appropriate personal development programme. During meetings, it was evident that the children felt valued by the staff. Throughout the school, there are excellent working relationships at all levels.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal provides very effective strategic leadership and sets ambitious goals for the ongoing development of the school and the LSC. The vice-principal and co-ordinators provide highly skilled support and are empowered to lead and manage their areas of responsibility cohesively. Together with the rest of the

staff team, they maintain a sharp focus on the continuous improvement of all aspects of the school's provision.

- The school has developed effective processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement; these processes make good use of qualitative and quantitative data to set suitable targets. The key priorities of the school development plan concentrate appropriately on improving further the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards that they attain.
- The school has effective arrangements in place for communicating with parents and engages well with the local and wider community.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are highly supportive of the life and work of the school. They implement most effectively the key governance roles to ensure that the school provides a high quality of educational provision.
- 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.

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.

Accommodation

- There is no disabled access to the first floor level rooms. There is a need to evaluate the access to all parts of the school for those children with complex mobility needs.

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