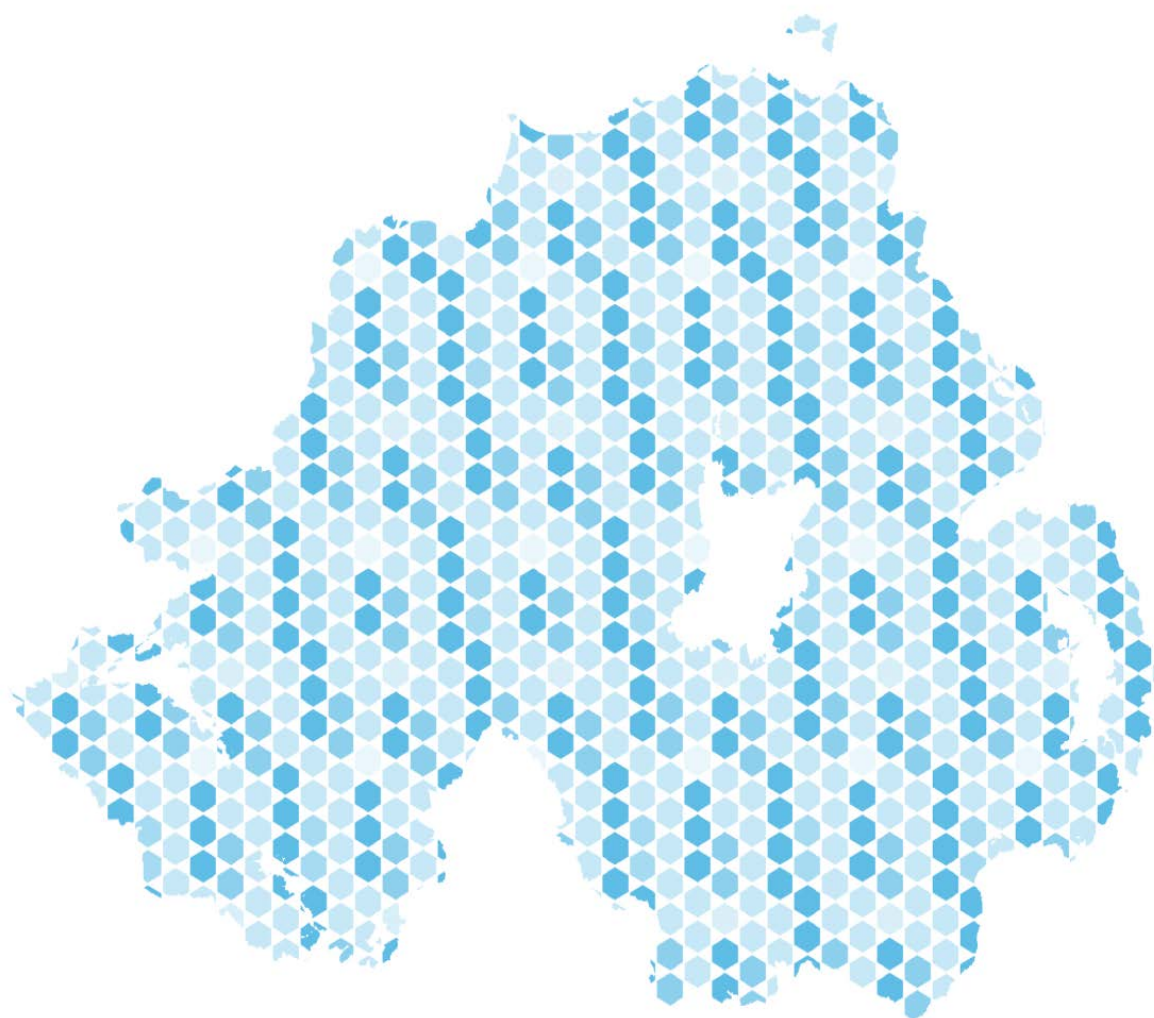


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Brigid's Primary School,
Cloughmills, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
May 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.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 questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number issued (total number in the school per category)	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	47	12	26%	6
Teaching staff	*	*	100%	*
Support staff	7	*	43%	*

* 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 indicated high levels of support for the life and work of the school. The parents commented on how well the children are looked after both academically and emotionally; they wrote about the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered and how the community supports events run by the school. An analysis of the findings and the written comments, along with a small number of issues arising, were discussed with the principal and representatives of the board of governors.

All of the teachers and the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were wholly positive; they emphasised the admirable pastoral care of all in the school community where they feel valued by parents and fellow staff members.

2. Context

St Brigid's Primary School is situated in the rural village of Cloughmills. The children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment of the school has remained steady over the past four years and currently stands at 74 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 19% of the children were entitled to receive free school meals and 14% of the children 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	79	73	70	74
% Attendance	96.4%	96.9%	96.5%	96.1%
FSME Percentage ¹	11.4%	12.3%	9.9%	18.9%
% of children on SEN register	17.7%	10.9%	12.9%	13.5%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	7	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	-	-	-	-

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	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Very Good
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children's behaviour is exemplary and they are well-motivated. They are confident and independent and actively enjoy the stimulating tasks set by their teachers; they can apply and transfer their skills and knowledge to real life situations. The children demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning, and work well both individually and collaboratively on group activities.
- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data² in three of the past four years shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the performance in English and mathematics is also

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

² 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.

above the average in three of the last four years.³ 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.

- In English, the children communicate well orally; and write and present to a consistently high standard in a variety of forms for a range of purposes and audiences. Most of the children have a good knowledge of important mathematical concepts and are able to apply their numeracy skills within meaningful contexts.
- The children's achievements and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are very good. They use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and appropriately.

6. Provision

- The quality of the teaching ranged from good to outstanding, with most of the teaching being very good or better. The teachers used skilful questioning to develop further the children's thinking; the lessons were stimulating and well resourced. They managed effectively the organisation of the composite classes and differentiated the learning appropriately, based on their well-founded knowledge of the children and their individual developmental needs. The teachers' planning of topics and themes is clearly focused on connecting the children's learning across the curriculum within real life contexts. In the best practice, the teachers reflect regularly upon the quality of the learning experiences for the children and use this information to effect further improvement in learning and teaching.
- Effective arrangements are in place to identify the children who require additional learning support and realistic targets for achievement are set for these children. The support for literacy and numeracy is provided through well-focused in-class and withdrawal provision and is guided by effective individual education plans.
- The children's literacy and numeracy skills are developed effectively through the comprehensive whole school planning across the key stages. A successful feature of literacy is the range of opportunities provided for the children to plan, draft and edit their work in interesting scenarios. A key characteristic of the numeracy provision at key stage (KS) 2 is the focus on problem solving which extends the children's thinking and develops their use of mathematical language. The staff have appropriately acknowledged the need to extend this to all year groups. In the foundation stage, the children's play-based learning experiences provide them with very good opportunities to develop their language and enrich their mathematical understanding.

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 is very good. This is evident through the welcoming, caring and supportive ethos. The school motto 'where happy children learn best' permeates the quality of working relationships and learning at all levels. The children's opinions are valued, for example, through the 'Helpful Handy' initiative for children to make suggestions and raise concerns. The children's work and achievements are celebrated through reward systems.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, the children are encouraged to eat healthy breaks and, as a result of consultation with the children, they can avail of the hot breaks provided by the school each morning. The school offers a range of sporting activities and cycling proficiency classes.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the school have changed in the last year. The principal has been in post for five months; he promotes a team spirit within the school and has established a collaborative approach to decision-making amongst the staff. He is supported effectively by the co-ordinators and staff.
- The principal has put an interim two-term action plan in place in partnership with the governors. Key co-ordinators have developed action plans that are focused on improving standards in each of their relevant areas of responsibility. It will be important to adopt a systematic approach to school development planning to include more rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation procedures at all levels.
- Effective links have been established with parents through, for example, the informative 'Friday' newsletters. The school is well supported by the local community, for example, concerts, sporting events and fund-raising initiatives. It works closely with other local primary schools to further enhance the learning experiences of the children and provide cross community learning opportunities. The Forest Schools' programme fosters the children's care for the environment and utilises the school's outdoor area. The 'All Set' programme focuses on cross community music and there is a six- week shared sports course.
- 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.
- 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 5 and 6 children reported that they felt secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.
- It will be important that the employing authority, the board of governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

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.

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