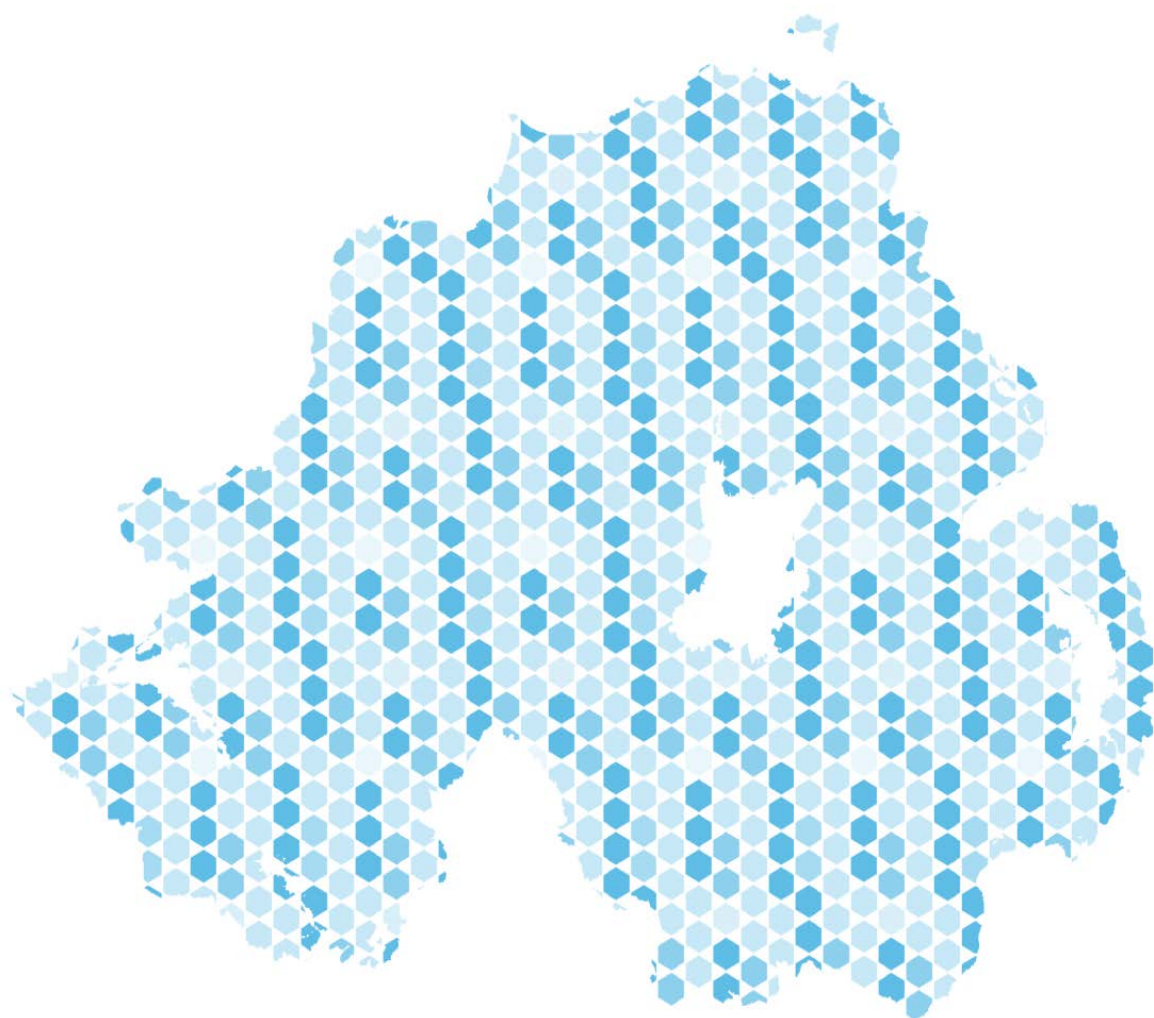


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School,
Downpatrick, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in
November 2013

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
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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	42	11	25 ¹	6
Teaching staff	4	*	*	*
Support staff	4	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

The responses from the parents and staff indicated that they are very content with the friendly school ethos, the provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning and the enthusiasm for learning of the children. The governors expressed their confidence in the school and appreciation for the work of the staff. The year 6 children spoke about the many opportunities provided for them and their enjoyment of school.

2. Context

St Joseph's Primary School is situated in Ballycruttle, a rural area on the outskirts of Downpatrick, and has a wide catchment area. The enrolment has risen by approximately 12% over the past four years and there are currently 59 children, including five of reception age, in three composite classes.

¹ 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.

St Joseph's Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	52	64	61	59
% Attendance (NI Average)	96%	94%	96%	-
FSME Percentage ²	30.8%	33%	40.6%	47.4%
% (No) of children on SEN register	21.2%	25%	27.9%	32%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	5	*	5	*
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	Very good
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Very good
Leadership and Management	Very good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children engage well with their learning; they take pride in their achievements and enjoy talking about their work. The children become more independent as they move through the school, working well in pairs and groups, and are able to take responsibility for their own learning.

² The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data³ in three of the past four years shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland average in one out of three years. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the performance in English and mathematics is on or above the average in two out of three years.⁴ 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.
- By the end of KS2, the children have a good mathematical understanding, are flexible in their thinking and apply their knowledge and skills across a range of problem solving activities with accuracy. They use mathematical vocabulary appropriately when working within the core areas of number, space and shape, and measures. The children read well with fluency and expression and are able to give their opinions about characters and plots from their reading books and novels. The quality of the children's writing is very good and they use their imagination, expressing themselves in a range of styles. The children listen well and are confident in expressing their opinions and asking questions to extend their learning.
- The children attain good standards in information and communication technology (ICT); many examples of their competent work are displayed throughout the school and they contribute well to school information leaflets.

6. Provision

- The quality of the planning and assessment for learning is very good. There are clear and succinct plans and policies which guide effectively the work of the teachers throughout the school. The teachers' short-term planning identifies clearly the intended learning and differentiated activities for the age range and ability within each class.
- The quality of all of the teaching was very good or outstanding. The children are provided with a broad curriculum in which there is a good balance of written, oral and practical activities planned to take account of the children's abilities and interests. The skilled classroom assistants support well the work of the teachers and the individual needs of the children.
- The children who require support with their learning are identified at an early stage and appropriate strategies, including additional teaching support for two days each week, are used effectively. The children and their parents are fully involved in the setting and evaluation of their personal targets. The individual education plans are used competently and the progress of the children is monitored and evaluated regularly to inform skilfully future teaching.

³ 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.

⁴ 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 children of reception age follow the routines of the day and engage well in learning and play activities for sustained periods. They are developing their independence and co-operate appropriately with other children and adults. They demonstrate very good social skills and participate with enthusiasm in whole class activities.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos and very effective working relationships at all levels throughout the school community. The children benefit from participation in the school council where they make decisions regarding playground resources and school rules. The school is well supported by an active parents' support group and has long established links within a cluster of local primary schools.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal provides very good leadership and supports the staff pastorally and professionally with a clear focus on the holistic development of the children. She works closely with the parents and governors to maintain the school's high standing in the community. She is well supported by the co-ordinators who are knowledgeable and skilled in their specialist areas and assume multiples roles and responsibilities within the school. They provide good curricular leadership with effective monitoring and evaluation of practice and proficient advice to their colleagues.
- A culture of self-evaluation has been developed which informs well future school improvement. There is a well-established school development planning process with parents, staff and governors involved closely in the setting of priorities for the further development of the school.
- 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; they use a range of skills to exercise their challenge function in relation to finance and school improvement.
- 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 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, school 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 learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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