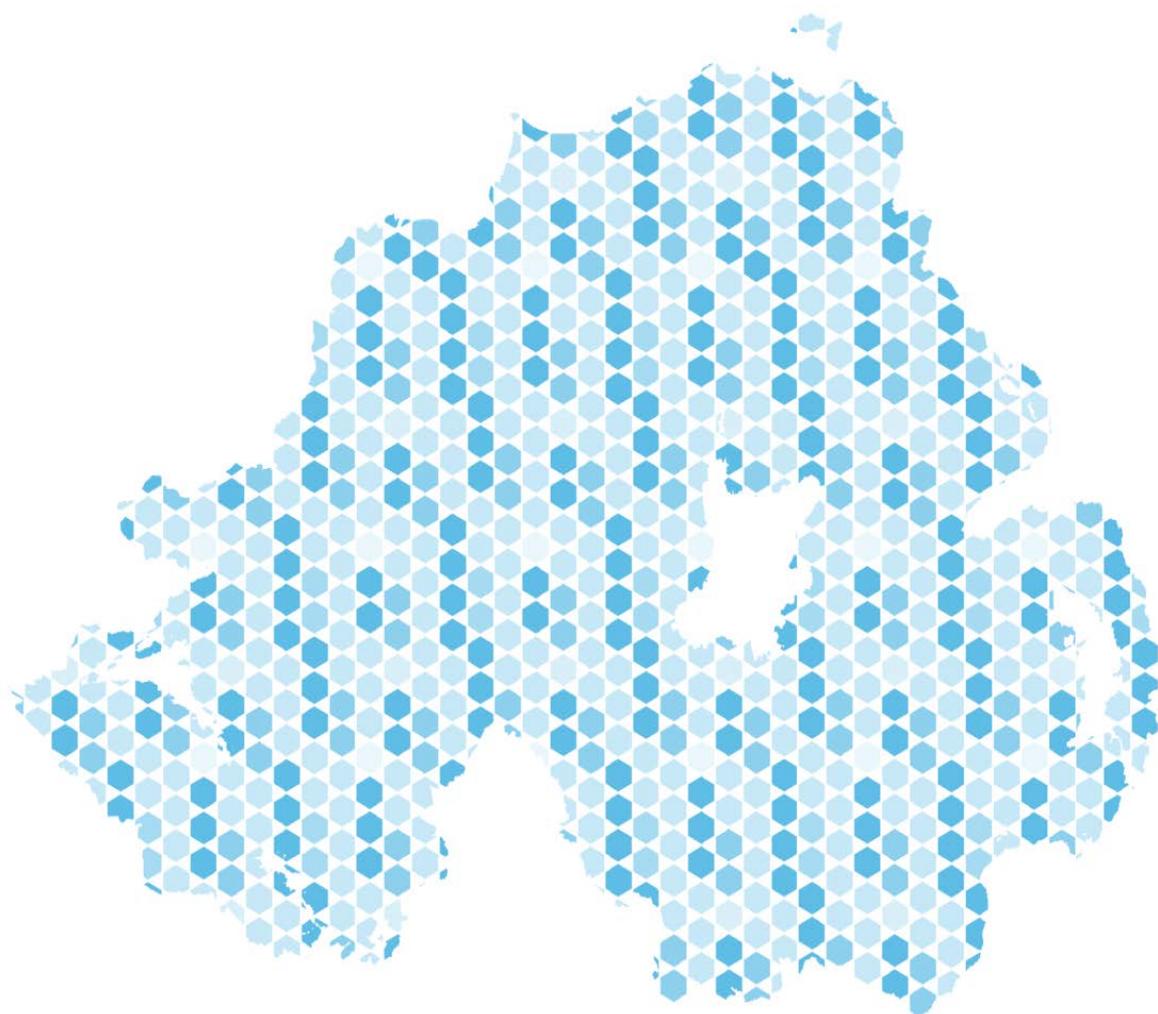


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Malachy's Primary School,
Kilclief, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in
March 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	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	70	33	47%	18
Teaching staff	*	*	*	*
Support staff	*	*	*	*

* 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 indicate high levels of support for and appreciation of the work of the school. In the written comments, the parents highlighted the support and dedication of the principal and staff, who create a child-centred and caring environment where their children are happy. A few matters raised in the questionnaire returns were discussed with the principal and the governors. All of the teaching staff and almost all of the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive. In discussions with the governors, they emphasised the happy, family atmosphere in the school and the strong links with the local community.

2. Context

St Malachy's Primary School is situated in the town land of Kilclief, close to the village of Strangford. Almost all of the children come from Kilclief and the surrounding rural area. Over the last four years, the enrolment has increased steadily to the current enrolment of 70. At the time of the inspection, 23% of the children were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 23% of the children as having difficulties with their learning.

St Malachy's Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	63	66	66	70
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.8	95.3	94.3	96.7
FSME Percentage ¹			26	23
% (No) of children on SEN register	38	39	23	23
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

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 display positive attitudes to their learning and are well behaved and polite. They are enthusiastic as they engage in their learning activities and as they participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The children work well independently, in pairs and in groups.
- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data in three² of the past four years shows that in English the school's performance is consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and in mathematics, it is above the average in two of the three years. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the performance in English is consistently above the average

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.

and in mathematics, it is above the average in one of the three years³. The school's internal performance data shows 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's talking and listening skills are very well developed; they listen to, interact confidently with others, and express their ideas articulately. The children enjoy reading; they read with fluency and understanding and their creative and written work is of a high standard. In mathematics, the children work with enthusiasm and respond well to the high level of challenge presented by their teachers. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the children demonstrate a very good working knowledge of key concepts across the areas of mathematics and show increasing flexibility in their mathematical thinking.
- The children achieve very good standards in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) in line with their age and ability. They use a range of digital devices with creativity and confidence.

6. Provision

- The teachers' planning is comprehensive and detailed; it highlights clearly how the learning activities will meet the needs of the range of abilities within each class. The staff make very effective use of opportunities to connect the children's learning across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching was always good or better; almost a third of the lessons were outstanding. In the most effective practice, children were engaged actively in the learning, with creativity, enjoyment, growing independence and confidence. The teachers used skilful questioning to develop the children's thinking and to encourage more extended responses. The children were encouraged to reflect on their learning and to assess their own work independently.
- The quality of the provision for the children with additional and special needs is outstanding. The children are identified early through appropriate observations at the foundation stage. They benefit from a well-planned, collaborative programme that is provided through in-class support and the high quality withdrawal sessions for literacy and numeracy. The classroom assistants make a good contribution to the children's learning. The school links effectively with a range of outside services.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is outstanding. This is evident in the inclusive, child-centred ethos and the very high quality of the working relationships between all members of the school. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available enhances the quality of the children's overall learning experiences and contributes significantly to their personal development.

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.

7. Leadership and management

- The teaching principal and staff collaborate effectively and are an effective team. The strong sense of community throughout the school is evident in the collegial approach to school management and improvement. The school development plan is informed by effective consultation with the staff and with others. The internal performance data is used very well to identify low and underachievement and to prioritise areas for improvement; the associated action plans include clear systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching.
- The staff are well supported by the parents and local community through, for example, their reading partnership work and the fund raising efforts which have significantly enhanced the information and communication technology (ICT) resources in the school.
- The governors carry out their roles conscientiously; they understand well the challenges and opportunities facing small schools and are supportive yet challenging to the principal. Based on the evidence presented at the time of the 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 6 children reported that they feel secure in school and know what to do if they have 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

Accommodation

- With the increasing trend in the school enrolment, the size of the foundation stage classrooms is affecting the school's ability to deliver fully the curriculum.

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