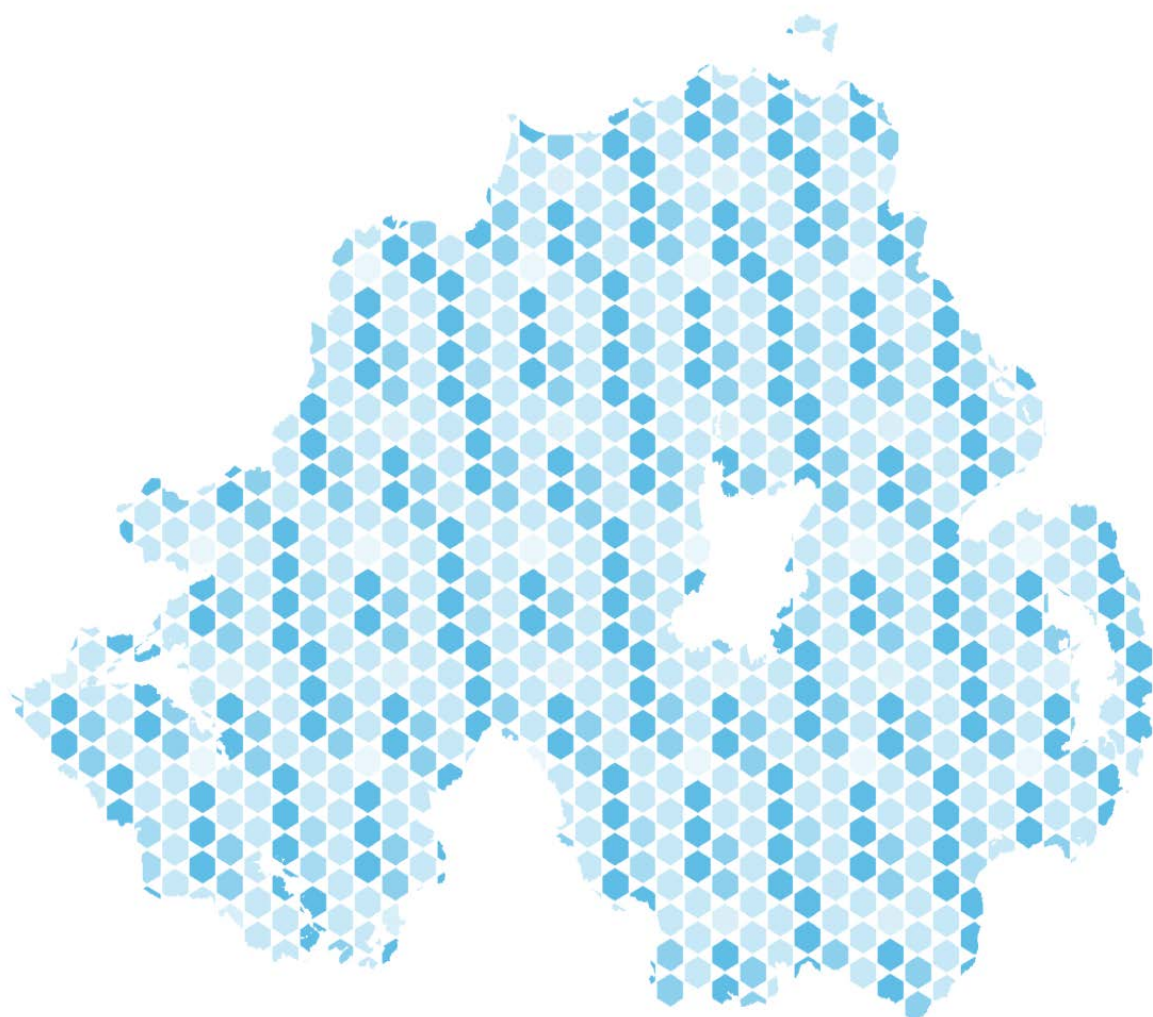


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Malachy's Primary School,  
Kilcoo, Co Down

Report of an inspection  
in October 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 Inspectorate's 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
Parental	85 families	19	22%	14
Teachers	7	6	85%	*
Support staff	5	*	40%	*

\* 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.

The parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision in the school. In particular, the parents acknowledged the caring and approachable staff, the broad and balanced curriculum, the school's role within the local community and the range of extra-curricular experiences for the children. The few concerns raised were shared with the principal and the governors.

The teaching and support staff emphasised the happy working environment, the good opportunities to learn together and the team approach, with all staff working for the benefit of the children and their families.

The governor who met with the team expressed the confidence of the governors in the principal and her staff in providing the best quality of education for all of the children.

## 2. Context

St Malachy's Primary School is situated in the village of Kilcoo in County Down. It is a rural school that draws its children from the village and the surrounding area. The enrolment has steadily increased in recent years. There are currently a few children of reception age attending the year 1 class; the principal has reported that due to an increasing enrolment the reception provision will not be renewed next year. The inspection would endorse this decision.

St Malachy's Primary School	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	112	114	125	124	131
Reception	5	6	5	8	*
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.3%	94.3%	95.8%	94.9%	
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	25.74%	25.8%	26.9%	30%	33%
% of children on SEN register	28%	21.6%	26.9%	23%	24%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*	*
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 under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

### 4. Overall finding

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Very good</b>

### Key findings of the inspection

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are enthusiastic and motivated learners; they engage effectively with one another in pairs and in small groups. They demonstrate very good personal and social skills and increasingly work independently.

<sup>1</sup> 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 data in three of the last four years<sup>2</sup> shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the performance in English and mathematics is above the average\*. The school's internal performance data shows that almost all children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics and achieve in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Throughout the school, the children's talking and listening skills are well developed enabling them to engage in whole class discussion and give reasons for their opinions. By the end of key stage 2 the children read with confidence, fluency and expression and they have a sound understanding of mathematical concepts.
- The children's achievements and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are very good.

## 6. Provision

- There is a coherent, whole school approach to the arrangements for planning, teaching and assessment throughout the school. The whole-school planning is effective and provides continuity in the learning experiences within the classes. The teachers' written evaluations are used well to inform future learning and teaching. In the best practice, the marking of the work focuses on how the children can improve aspects of their work. There is a developing focus throughout the school on peer and self-assessment.
- The quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding; most of the lessons observed were good or better. Almost half of the lessons observed were very good or outstanding. Where the practice was best, the teachers' excellent use of open-ended questions challenged the children's thinking and developed their investigative and problem solving skills.
- The school is fully committed to the early identification of and intervention for those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The teachers use a wide range of strategies to support these children. The children's individual educational plans are comprehensive and guide well the provision in the classroom. The children benefit from well-focused withdrawal sessions and in-class support in both literacy and numeracy which has a positive effect on the children's self-esteem and learning. In addition the school provides sessions to challenge those children identified as being very able.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. This provision is characterised by the supportive, inclusive and nurturing ethos which permeates the school community. There are excellent working relationships at all levels; in particular, the priority given to the care and well-being of the children and the support for their learning. The children are happy, courteous and very well behaved. The support staff make an excellent contribution to the life and work of the school.

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the current transition period in the arrangements for statutory assessment this analysis of the end of key stage 2 performance data is based on the outcomes up to but not including the 2012/13 school year.

- The school gives very good attention to promoting a healthy lifestyle through the healthy break and lunch initiatives and the importance given to physical activities on offer throughout the day.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- There is a clear vision for the continuous development of the school and to improve further the learning experiences of the children, both academically and pastorally. A key feature of the school is the staff's commitment to developing the school as an integral and vibrant centre of the community. The on-going professional development of the staff is clearly linked to the priorities identified for the school.
- There is a well-embedded culture of self-evaluation throughout the school. The teachers make effective use of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data to inform the action plans that guide the development of the key priorities within the school. The co-ordinators have initiated effective books reviews; they need to develop further the monitoring and evaluating role of the quality of the children's learning and achievements.
- The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school; they work effectively with the Principal to ensure that the school is well managed and provide suitable challenge. 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. The children are particularly well informed and involved in many of the recent initiatives and developments in their school. They value and look forward to the many opportunities to take on roles of responsibility, such as, a 'play buddy' and house-captain. The children are aware of what to do if they are concerned about anything and speak with confidence and enthusiasm about their learning experiences in school.

## **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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