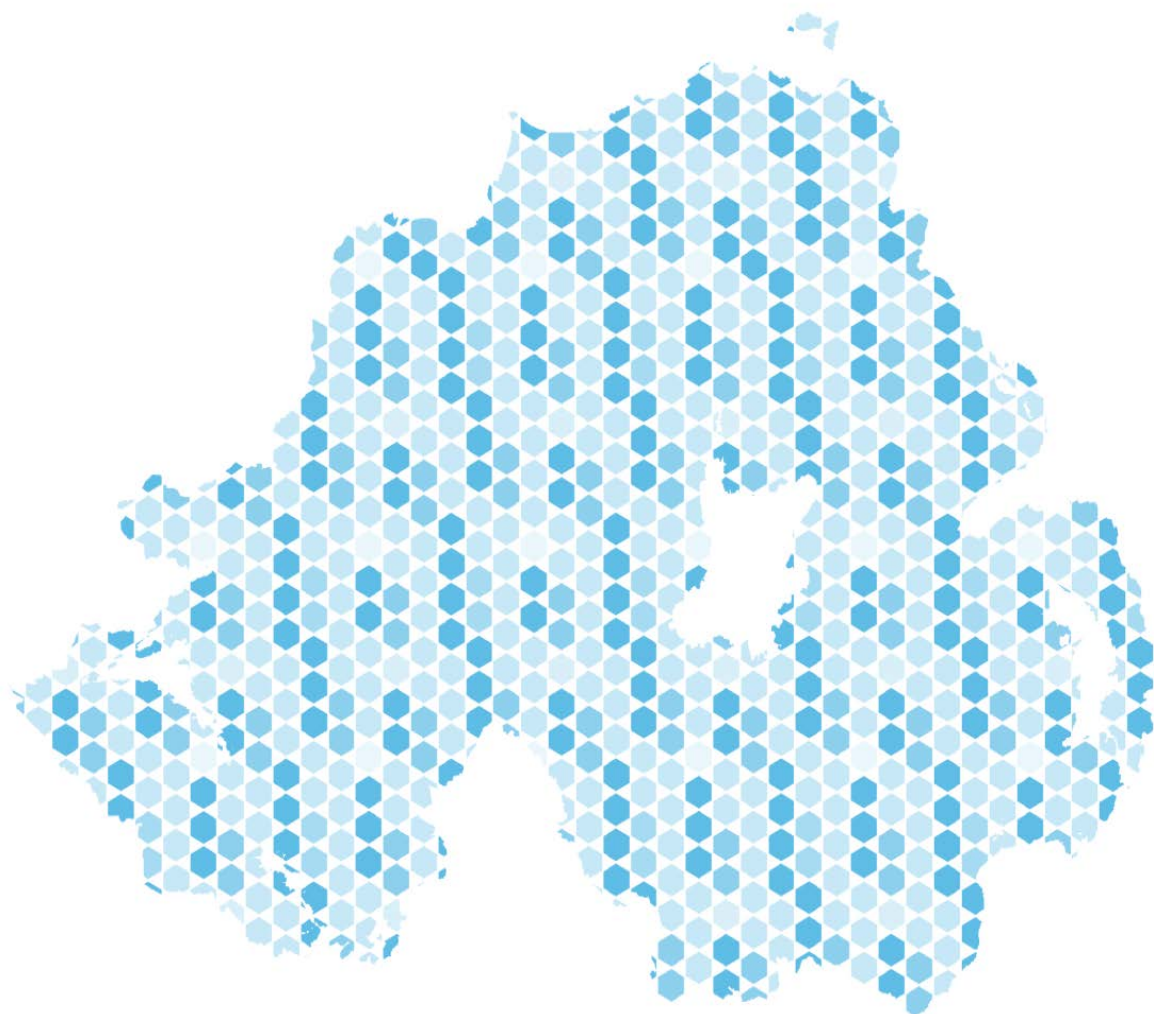


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,
Ballygawley, Co Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
March 2015

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.

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the community ethos of the school and their appreciation of the work of the teachers in meeting the needs of all of the children. The very small number of issues raised was discussed with the principal and the chair of governors. All of the teachers and all of the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive. In discussions with representatives of the governors, they emphasised the inclusive ethos of the school and the quality of the information provided by the principal regarding the school's improvement cycle.

2. 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 for numeracy in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St Mary's Primary School is situated in the village of Ballygawley, County Tyrone. Most of the children attending the school come from the village and the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has remained steady over the last four years and currently stands at 104 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 15% of the children were entitled to free school meals and around 13% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

St Mary's Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	116	116	114	104
% Attendance	97	94	97	
FSME Percentage ¹	13	14	14	15
% of children on SEN register	10	10	12	13
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	5	*
No. of newcomers	12	13	11	13

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children respond positively and with great enthusiasm to the learning opportunities organised by their teachers. They apply their learning in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum in a variety of relevant contexts. As they move through the school, the children reflect in a mature manner upon their learning and suggest ways in which they can improve the quality of their work. From the foundation stage (FS), the children learn to be independent and self-reliant. The children's behaviour is excellent; they are confident, support and respect one another and the adults and respond well to the positive ethos in all of the classrooms.
- The school's internal performance data indicates 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 mathematics, across all the key stages, the children show a high level of enjoyment and engagement in their mathematical activities and are developing a very positive attitude to this core curriculum area. The foundation stage (FS) children use confidently a range of practical resources well-matched with engaging play-based activities to develop their conceptual understanding of mathematics including, for example, shape, patterns and number. By year 7, the most able children demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of key concepts across the mathematics curriculum. They complete calculations with very good levels of speed and accuracy and the children show flexibility in applying a very good range of mental mathematics strategies to solve problems.

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

- The children identified with additional learning are making very good progress in meeting the targets outlined in their individual education plans.
- The children use very confidently and competently a wide range of digital media to research information for their topic work. By year 7, the children have developed a good range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills which prepare them very well to work independently and in small groups.

6. Provision

- In the highly effective teaching observed, there was appropriate challenge, support and progression in the children's learning. This work was underpinned by thoughtful differentiation of the tasks which ensured perseverance and enjoyment in the children's learning. The teachers employed very effective questioning and made skilful use of the children's responses to develop their thinking skills and encourage extended answers. Importantly, the teachers recapped key points to reinforce and deepen the children's learning.
- The teachers' individual planning includes very detailed evaluations of the children's progress which is focused well on the extent and depth of the learning. The teachers use this information rigorously to inform future planning and to ensure progress in the children's learning across the ability range.
- The needs of children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early and the children are integrated very well in to the life of the school. The monitoring, evaluating and systematic tracking of the children's progress is a key strength of the special educational needs provision.
- In numeracy, the children access a wide range of well-planned activities across the curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on problem-solving and completing investigations. The younger children's mathematical knowledge and understanding are embedded effectively through meaningful play activities and as the children progress through the school, the numeracy tasks are set in real life contexts chosen by the children themselves. Overall, the teachers make very good use of practical activities to develop the children's mathematical language and thinking and to consolidate and extend their knowledge. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used consistently and effectively to support the children's learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. There is an inclusive and child-centred ethos in the school with very good working relationships at all levels, built upon mutual respect. The children benefit from the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities which meet their needs, interests and abilities; they contribute to decision-making in the school, through, for example, participation in the Eco-council. As a result, the children are confident and display a keen sense of pride in their school and their collective and individual achievements.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management team has a clear strategic vision for school improvement and has built a highly effective collegial working ethos. There is a firmly embedded system of self-evaluation and all of the teachers working as a team monitor thoroughly the extensive system of planning and assessment for learning within the school, providing challenge and support for all staff. The improvement process is highly inclusive of the school community, and makes very good use of the extensive internal school data. This work is evident in the policies and planning and in the arrangements for setting targets, plotting progress and celebrating achievement. In addition, the teachers analyse, level and evaluate collectively the quality of the children's work and share effective practice within the school.
- The board of governors use well their collective experience and expertise to support the school in meeting the needs of every child; they carry out their associated challenge function very well by adopting a proactive role in the school development planning process, and supporting the principal and staff in ensuring that all of the children reach their full potential. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high level 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 broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Health and safety

1. The employing authority and board of governors need to keep under regular review the potential risks posed to the children by the low wall at the front of the school.

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