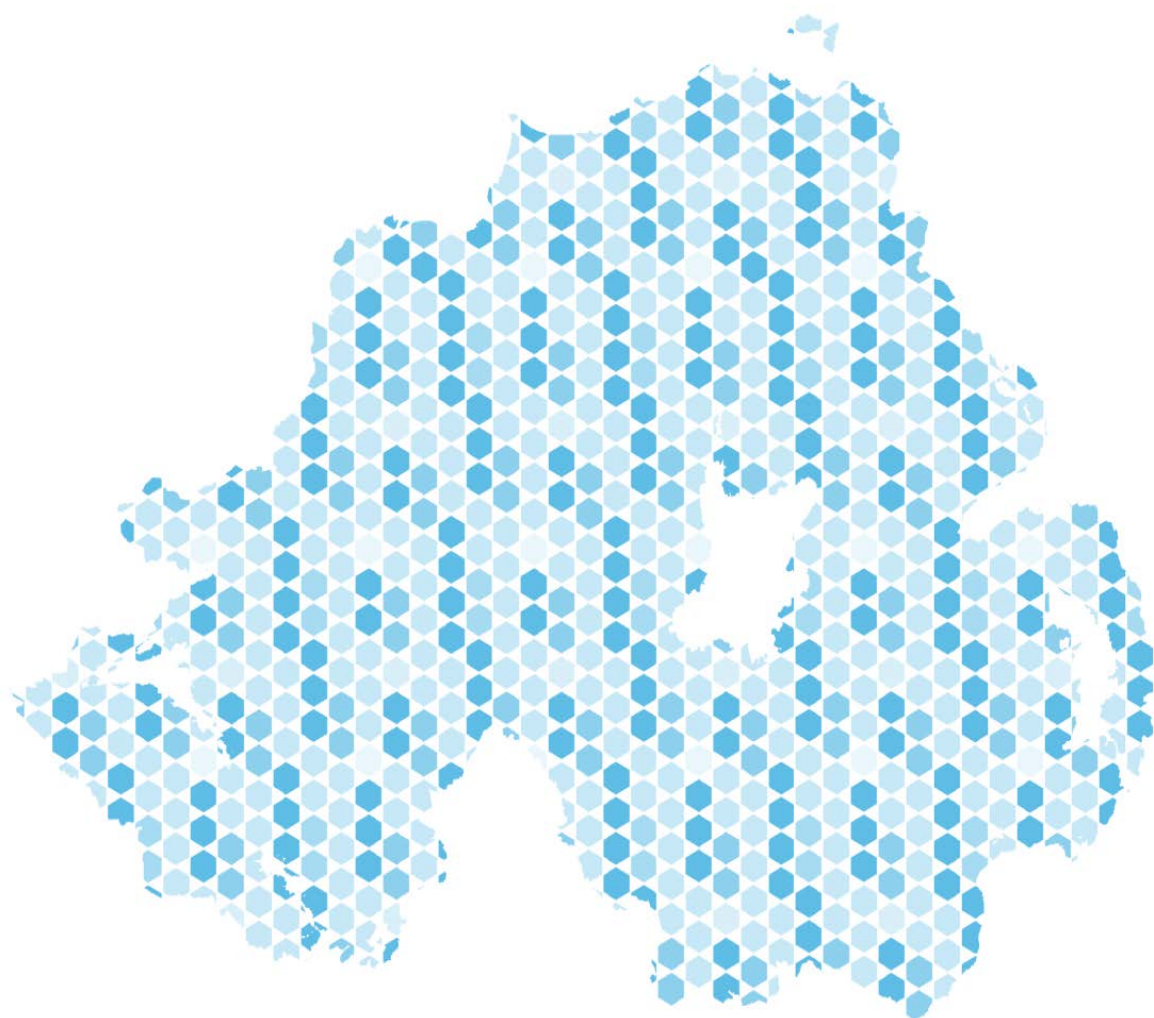


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Matthew's Primary School,
Limavady, Co Londonderry

Report of an inspection
in October 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
EXCELLENCE



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. All of the comments raised in the questionnaires were shared with the principal and the governors.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	60	9	15%	6
Teaching staff	*	*	*	*
Teaching support staff	*	*	*	*
Support staff	*	*	*	*

* Fewer than 5.

The 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 parent questionnaires may be low.

2. Context

St Matthew's Primary School is situated near Drumsurn, between the towns of Limavady and Dungiven. Enrolment had reduced slightly over the previous four years and has risen in the current year to 87; this figure includes 18 children in year one. At the time of the inspection, approximately 43% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals and 17% were identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

St Matthew's Primary School	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	91	86	82	82	87
% Attendance	95.3	94.7	94.6	93.6	-
FSME Percentage ¹	23.1	24.4	32.9	31.7	42.5
% (No) of children on SEN register	17.6	16.3	15.9	12.2	17.2
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0	0

* Fewer than 5

Source: data as held by the school.

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

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

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children have a positive disposition to their learning and their behaviour is very good. They engage easily and warmly with adults and with one another in all aspects of school life. From an early stage, the children respond well to the staff's high expectations and as a result, their progress and self-management in key aspects of their learning are developing well. Throughout the school, most of the children can make decisions about their learning, explain their thinking and carry out a variety of roles and responsibilities with increasing maturity and confidence.
- An analysis of the end of key stage two (KS2) performance data over three years², shows that the school's performance in English and mathematics has fluctuated from below to above the Northern Ireland average and a similar trend is evident when compared against schools in the same free meals category³. The school's internal performance data indicates that most of the children achieve the expected standards in English and mathematics across key stage two and almost all, including those who require additional help with aspects of their learning, are making good progress in line with their ability or above expectation.

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.

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 children express themselves confidently and read with good fluency and understanding; they can write extended factual and creative responses to a range of stimuli. The children are knowledgeable in most of the areas of the mathematics curriculum. They use mental strategies well and show good flexibility in their mathematical thinking. The well-planned play-based learning sessions and routines enable the children to use and develop flexibly their language and skills in both literacy and mathematics.
- Most of the children receiving additional support in literacy and numeracy are making good progress in line with their ability.
- Across the school, the teachers and children use a good variety of information and communication technology (ICT) software and devices well to support and extend the learning in all areas of the curriculum.

6. Provision

- The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding with most of the teaching being very good or better. In these lessons, the teachers have high expectations for what the children can do, they build effectively on the children's prior learning and make skilful use of the plenary to review and consolidate the children's understanding of concepts. The teachers' short term planning is effective and informs well the day to day learning and teaching. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop a more strategic approach to the overall progression in the planning across all areas of the curriculum.
- Literacy is promoted well across the curriculum and the children are encouraged to develop and use their skills in talking, listening, reading and writing in meaningful and interesting learning contexts. All of the teachers and classroom assistants work skilfully to enable the children to engage in sustained class and small group discussion, and to structure and provide reasons for their thinking and opinions. The teachers provide a suitably broad range of mathematical experiences throughout the school. Mental mathematics has been developed well across the school and, from an early stage, the children apply and develop their understanding of number and speak confidently about their preferred strategies using appropriate mathematical language. The teachers integrate ICT well into classroom activities to support, enrich and extend the children's learning.
- The children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage through good teacher observation and the effective use of internal performance data. They are supported well through very effective withdrawal sessions and in-class support from their teachers and classroom assistants. The school needs to ensure greater consistency in the education plans through the inclusion of sharper targets and associated teaching strategies in order to focus more clearly on the quality and extent of the children's learning.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good. This is evident through the friendly supportive ethos, the very positive working relationships throughout the school and the children's respect for each other. The older children demonstrate great maturity and responsibility through the well-developed buddy system and through their positive attitudes and actions to ensuring the school is eco friendly.
- The school gives good attention to promoting a healthy lifestyle through the healthy break and lunch initiatives and through the varied range of physical activities on offer.

7. Leadership and management

- The teaching principal, co-ordinators and the rest of the staff collaborate well within a hard-working team. They work thoughtfully and purposefully together to provide a good breadth of learning experiences which contribute significantly to the children's all-round development and well-being. The staff team fosters and sustains a very good range of meaningful links with the local and wider community; these arrangements enhance and enrich the children's learning.
- The current school development plan has involved suitable consultation with the staff, children, parents and governors and indicates appropriate areas for development. In taking this good work forward, the school needs to make more strategic use of all of the available information so that the associated action plans correspond more closely to the school's key priorities.
- The governors carry out their roles conscientiously and supportively; they understand well the challenges and opportunities facing 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.
- 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. During the inspection, the inspectors met with a group of year six children. They reported that they are very happy and feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have any worries or concerns.
- 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 good and the pastoral care is very good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address; this is the need to:

develop a more strategic approach to aspects of the planning, monitoring and evaluation to improve further the provision and sustain the very good standards attained by the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress in the areas for improvement.

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