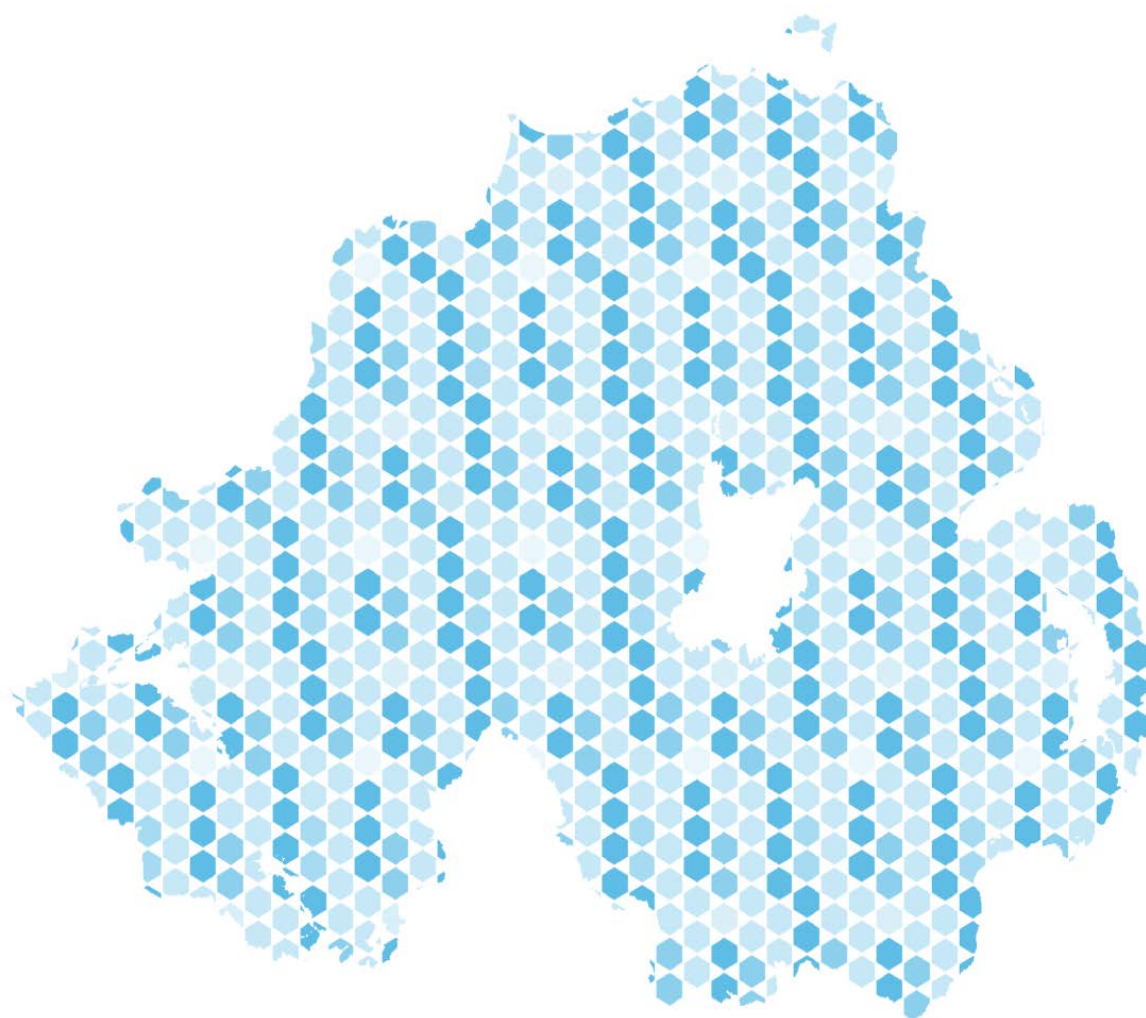


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School,
The Loup, Co Derry

Report of an Inspection in
December 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 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	96	7 ¹	0.7	5
Teaching staff	8	8	100	7
Support staff	5	*	60	*

* fewer than 5

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the hard work and high expectations of the staff and the leadership of the principal. All of the teachers and almost all of the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were also very positive; they emphasised the very good working relationships across the school and the valuable links with the parents and wider community.

2. Context

St Patrick's Primary School is situated in the village of The Loup, three miles from Magherafelt in Co. Derry. Most of the children attending the school come from the immediate area. The enrolment has increased significantly over the last four years and currently stands at 157 children. At the time of the inspection, 21% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals and 17% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

¹ 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.

St Patrick's Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	141	148	158	157
% Attendance	94.8	95.9	96	
FSME Percentage ²	15.6	14.7	20.2	21.1
% of children on SEN register	16.3	15.5	17.7	17.2
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	6
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	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children in the school are well-motivated learners; they display very high levels of independence and maturity and their behaviour is exemplary. The children respond very enthusiastically to the learning opportunities provided by their teachers. The children are able to plan and critically evaluate their work, make decisions, solve problems, think creatively and manage 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 data over three years³ shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance was consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and that of schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category. 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 significant progress in English and mathematics and achieve in line with their ability, or above expectation.
- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and appropriately and their standards in information and communication technology (ICT), including the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT Accreditation, are consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average.

6. Provision for learning

- The teachers' planning is comprehensive, innovative and rigorous; it connects well all aspects of the children's learning, ensures progression and is well informed by a thorough evaluation of the children's previous learning and the teachers' knowledge of their individual needs.
- The quality of the teaching and learning observed ranged from good to outstanding; almost all of the lessons were very good or outstanding. The individual lessons met effectively the range of individual needs within the classroom and had good pace, challenge and progression. The teachers made skilful use of open-ended questioning techniques to develop the children's thinking and oral responses, and ICT was an integral part of the learning process.
- The teachers employ a wide range of assessment approaches to evaluate the children's learning and they use the data discerningly, together with classroom observations to inform the teaching and challenge the children further in their learning. Marking of the children's work is regular and consistent and the teachers provide effective feedback to the children both orally and in their books. This feedback, together with the children's self and peer assessment, enable them to reflect on, and manage, their own learning.
- The school has developed a rigorous coherent and connected approach to the development of literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful contexts which facilitates progression. The children benefit from the excellent range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities which meet their needs and interests.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is outstanding. The school motto "*Every child, every chance*", permeates every aspect of the life and work of the school. Throughout the school, the quality of the working relationships at all levels is excellent. The holistic development of each child is central to the work of the school and a very strong sense of community is evident throughout; the school environment is nurturing, inclusive, safe and secure. The children have very good opportunities to contribute to decision-making in the school, including for example, through the school council, and the eco council. The school has important cross-community links with local schools which forms part of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme.

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.

- The school identifies at a very early stage, the children who need additional support with aspects of their learning. The support for literacy and numeracy is provided through well-focused in-class and withdrawal sessions and is guided by effective individual education plans. The teachers and classroom assistants provide sensitive and highly effective interventions for the children which have a positive and significant impact on the children's learning and on their self-esteem.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the school is visionary, highly strategic and clearly focused on innovative learning and the well-being and holistic development of the whole-school community. The principal and vice-principal are leaders of learning, excellent role models and inspire confidence and respect among the children, parents, staff, governors and wider school community.
- The co-ordinators are highly motivated and work collaboratively to continually improve learning and teaching and improve the standards and achievements for all children. They carry out their leadership roles very effectively.
- The school has a strong culture of self-evaluation which is clearly leading to improvement. There is a comprehensive school development plan which has been informed by rigorous and robust evaluation; a particular strength is the consideration given to the views of all stakeholders. The associated action plans have a clear focus on improving further the provision for the children and raising the standards they attain.
- The school has a strong partnership with the parents and the local community. The parents are fully involved in their children's learning and an active and valued parent support group makes a significant contribution to the life 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; the governors are very well informed about the school and carry out effectively their support and challenge functions.
- 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 children reported that they felt very secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.

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.

Accommodation

- A room being used currently as a classroom is too small.
- The playground to the rear of the school building is not secure; the school governors, staff and the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) need urgently to carry out a risk assessment regarding access arrangements.

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