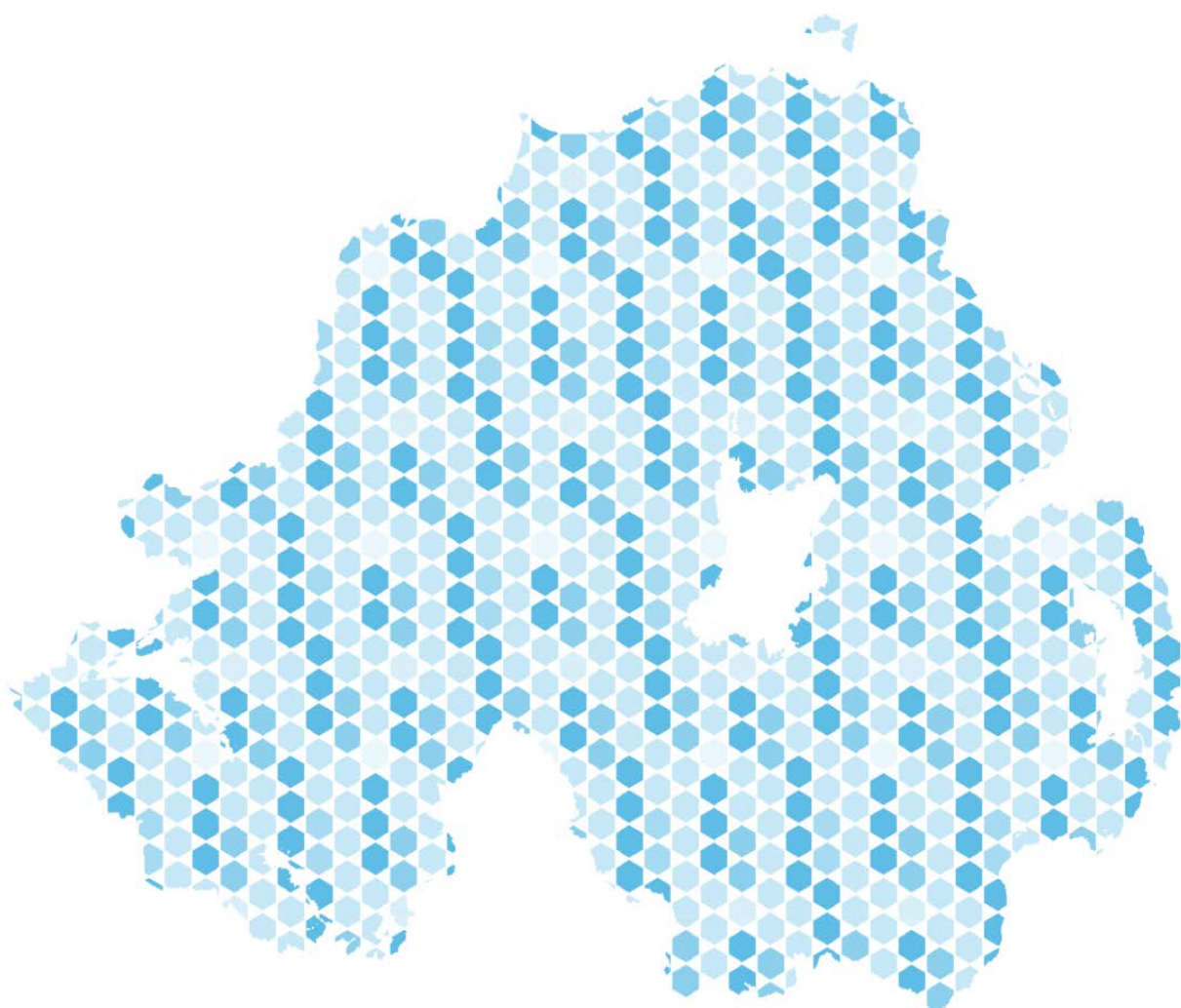


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Paul's Primary School,
Irvinestown, Co Fermanagh

Report of an Inspection in
June 2015

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 a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Twenty-four percent of the parents and most of the staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses from the parents indicate very high levels of satisfaction with and support for the life and work of the school. The parents highlighted their children's progress, the wide range of additional learning experiences provided by the school and the staff's commitment to the pastoral care and well-being of the children. The staff were wholly positive in their views of the school, highlighting the child-centred ethos, high quality working relationships and their commitment to school improvement. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the main messages and the very small number of issues arising from the questionnaires.

2. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

1. the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
2. the quality of provision for literacy and numeracy; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St Paul's Primary School and Necarne Community Nursery School are situated in Irvinestown, County Fermanagh. The children attending the school and nursery unit come from the town and surrounding rural area. The enrolment has decreased over the last three years and currently stands at 214 children in the primary school and 26 children in the nursery unit. The school has identified 24% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and 31% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

St Paul's Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	229	230	221	214
% Attendance	94.1	94.1	94.2	95.1
FSME Percentage ¹	27	30	32	31
% of children on SEN register	22	22	18	24
No. of children with statements of educational needs	6	8	7	7
No. of newcomers	10	14	13	8

Source: data as held by the school.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good
Nursery Unit	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are enthusiastic and engage positively with their learning. They interact confidently with their peers and adults; they are proud of their achievements and are keen to share and discuss their ideas. The children carry out many roles and responsibilities maturely demonstrating independence and respect for their school.
- The school's internal data indicates that almost all of the children achieve standards in line with or above expectation in mathematics; and most achieve standards in line with or above expectation in English. The majority of children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make good progress in literacy and numeracy and are well supported in the acquisition and development of language skills.
- The children communicate their feelings, share opinions and ideas in paired and group activities and develop well a range of vocabulary. The recent whole-school focus on reading is having a positive impact on the quality of, and the children's attitudes towards, reading. The most able children in year 7 read fluently and independently for enjoyment and information. They talk about their favourite authors and articulate their reading preferences with confidence. When given the opportunity, the children produce good examples of writing in real life and creative contexts. The children need more opportunities to write for a wider range of purposes and audiences and in a variety of forms.

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

- The children develop progressively a secure understanding of key mathematical concepts and language across the three key stages. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the most able children demonstrate high levels of understanding across all areas of the mathematics curriculum and flexibility in their thinking and use of strategies. It is appropriate that the school has identified the need to develop further the opportunities for the children to engage in more investigative, problem-solving and problem-posing activities across the curriculum to raise further the standards in numeracy.
- Throughout the school, the presentation and quality of the children's work is variable.
- The children in the nursery unit are well settled and almost all of them play purposefully for sustained periods of time. They make independent choices as they choose their play equipment and are familiar with the routines in the nursery. Most of the children are beginning to play collaboratively and have good social skills. They enjoy browsing in books and listening to stories. The children show a good interest in early mark making and produce good representational drawings and paintings. During mathematical activities, the children sort, match and create patterns with pegs and peg- boards.
- The children use a range of digital media and programmable devices to support, enhance and display their learning.

6. Provision

- Ongoing work in relation to planning is leading to a clearer focus in the teachers' evaluations on the extent of the learning which has taken place. In addition, the teachers are developing and planning for an increasing range of connected learning opportunities. In the best practice, the teachers connect meaningfully the children's learning and enable them to apply their learning in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- The planning, teaching and assessment in just over two-thirds of the lessons observed were effective in progressing the children's learning. Key characteristics of these lessons include: effective questioning to develop the children's thinking and responses and to encourage them to reflect on and improve their work; well-planned paired and group work; and learning activities set in meaningful contexts based on the children's own experiences and matched appropriately to their abilities. In the less effective practice, the expectations for what the children can achieve are too low and there is insufficient challenge in the learning.
- The recently reviewed planning and assessment arrangements in the foundation stage are effective. The school has identified the need to develop further the provision for play-based learning in order to provide more appropriate progression and challenge in the children's learning, and to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are developed more effectively through all areas of the play programme.

- In literacy, in the most effective practice, the teachers develop the children's talking and listening skills through the well-planned use of effective questioning. The teachers make good use of novels to stimulate the children's discussion and writing relating to personal and imaginary experiences. The recently refurbished library provides an attractive and stimulating environment which fosters the children's enjoyment of reading.
- In numeracy, the teachers place an appropriate emphasis on developing the children's understanding and use of mathematical language and make effective use of mental mathematical strategies to reinforce key concepts. In the best practice, the teachers set the learning in meaningful, real-life situations. Through ongoing monitoring of the provision, the staff have identified appropriately the need to make more effective use of a range of practical resources to engage the children in using mathematics in a wider range of contexts.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified at an early stage through teacher observation and assessment. The teachers write suitable, measurable targets in consultation with the classroom assistants, parents and children. These targets are reviewed and amended regularly to ensure progression in the children's learning. The children's access to the designated circle-time room and the use of music therapy help them to express and manage their emotional difficulties and to develop their resilience.
- The broad and balanced range of interesting activities in the nursery unit provides very good opportunities for learning in the majority of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The quality of the staff interactions with the children is consistently good and, in the best practice, they develop well the children's thinking and problem-solving and extend their vocabulary. The new planning format is effective and the observations of the children's learning are used well to inform the programme, and to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of all of the children.
- The staff's commitment to the holistic development of the children and to their well-being is evident in the high quality pastoral care. The welcoming and inclusive ethos in the school and nursery unit is underpinned by mutual respect and a sense of family and community. A varied programme of extra-curricular activities enhances the children's learning and contributes positively to raising their confidence and self-esteem.
- The year 6 children spoke enthusiastically about the many aspects of school life they enjoy, including their shared education experiences with children from two neighbouring controlled primary schools. They report that they feel safe and secure in school and know who to go to if they have concerns about their safety or well-being.
- The school and nursery unit give 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 give high priority to the health and well-being of the children and staff and are focused on raising attainment of all of the children. There is a creative approach to the continuous professional development of staff whereby they share and learn with their peers from other primary and post primary schools. These well-established and purposeful links enrich the curriculum and provide the children with interesting shared learning experiences.
- The school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement are informed by the analysis of performance data and consultation with children, parents and governors. The comprehensive school development plan (SDP) sets out clearly appropriate areas for improvement.
- The establishment of curricular teams and the agreed systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision ensure a collective approach to school improvement. As the school continues to develop the roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators, it will be important to bring more rigour to these processes in order to improve further the quality of the learning experiences and the standards achieved by the children.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school and support the principal and staff in taking forward the priorities identified in the SDP.
- 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.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school and nursery unit is good. The school and nursery unit have important strengths in most of the educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The area for improvement is the need for:

- more rigour in the monitoring and evaluation processes in order to improve further the quality of the learning experiences and the standards achieved by the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the area for improvement.

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