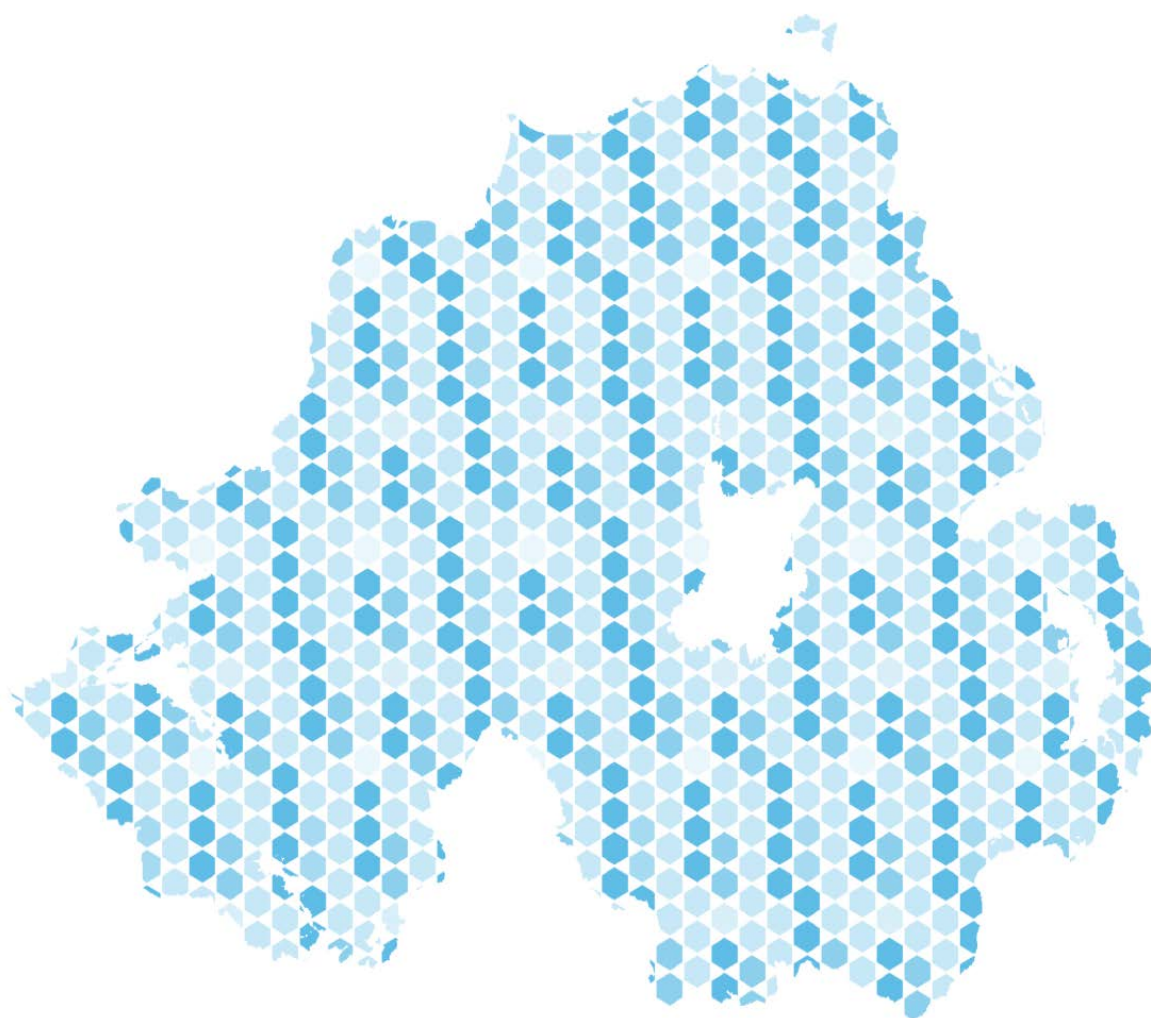


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Tildarg Primary School,
Ballyclare, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
November 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 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	56	17	30%	7
Teaching staff	7	6	86%	*
Support staff	7	6	86%	*

* fewer than 5

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 responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. All of the teachers and the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were also very positive.

2. Context

Tildarg Primary School is situated in the townland of Tildarg, close to Ballyclare in County Antrim. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the immediate area. The enrolment has remained steady over the last four years and currently stands at 77 children; approximately 11% of the children in the school were entitled to free school meals and around 11% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. At the time of the inspection, the principal was on leave of absence, an acting principal was in place and all of the co-ordinators had very recently taken up their roles.

Tildarg Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	74	76	77	77
% Attendance	96.3%	97%	95.5%	-
FSME Percentage ¹	3%	11%	11%	11%
% of children on SEN register	17%	17%	19.4%	11.6%
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 underachievement 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 are well-motivated learners: they demonstrate high levels of confidence, work well with one another and their behaviour is generally very good.

¹ 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 years² shows that in English and in mathematics, the school's performance was above the Northern Ireland (NI) average and that of schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category in two years and below in one.³ The school's internal performance data shows that by the end of KS2, almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make good 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 their standards in ICT including the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) ICT Accreditation, are consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average.

6. Provision

- The teachers' planning guides well the teaching and informs progression in learning. A particular strength is the thematic approach taken, which links learning with the children's own experiences and interests and makes good use of the local environment.
- The quality of the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was always good and in a small number of lessons, it was very good. In the more effective practice, there were opportunities for the children to make decisions, take responsibility for their own learning and investigative activities enabled deeper learning to take place.
- The school makes very good use of all of the available information to inform and track the children's progress and to identify and respond to their learning needs. The teachers mark the children's work carefully and give clear guidance on how to improve aspects of their work.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is very good. The teachers and the support staff know the children very well and provide a safe and caring learning environment; a strong sense of family, community and tradition create a distinct ethos within the school. The school has appropriately identified the need to give the children a greater say in school life and a school council is currently being developed.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, including through a good range of sporting activities and programmes to encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. In addition, the children benefit from a wide range of other opportunities including educational visits and enrichment activities, which develop well their skills and understanding.

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 school identifies at an early stage, the children who need additional support with aspects of their learning. The children benefit from withdrawal classes, links with external agencies and the effective work of their classroom assistants and teachers; this work is guided well by appropriate individual education plans.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management have placed an appropriate focus on maintaining the high standards the children attain, creating very effective links with the parents and local community and developing the distinct ethos of the school.
- At the time of the inspection, all of the staff were working well together in their new roles, in the interests of the children. The staff have identified appropriately the need to develop further the roles of the co-ordinators, to include more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision.
- While the school development plan identifies the school's priorities, the associated action plans need to focus more sharply on the children's learning and the specific actions that need to happen in order to bring about further improvements.
- The parents are involved fully in their children's learning and an active and valued parent teacher association makes an excellent contribution to the work and 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 understand the opportunities and challenges it faces: they carry out effectively their support and challenge functions. The governors are highly supportive of the life and work of the school and expressed their support for, and appreciation of, the leadership provided by the principal.
- 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.
- 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 the school is 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 the roles of the co-ordinators, in order to bring about further improvement in the quality of the provision and the standards the children attain.

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

ACCOMMODATION

- The mobile classrooms are in a poor condition and too small to facilitate sufficiently the active learning approaches of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

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