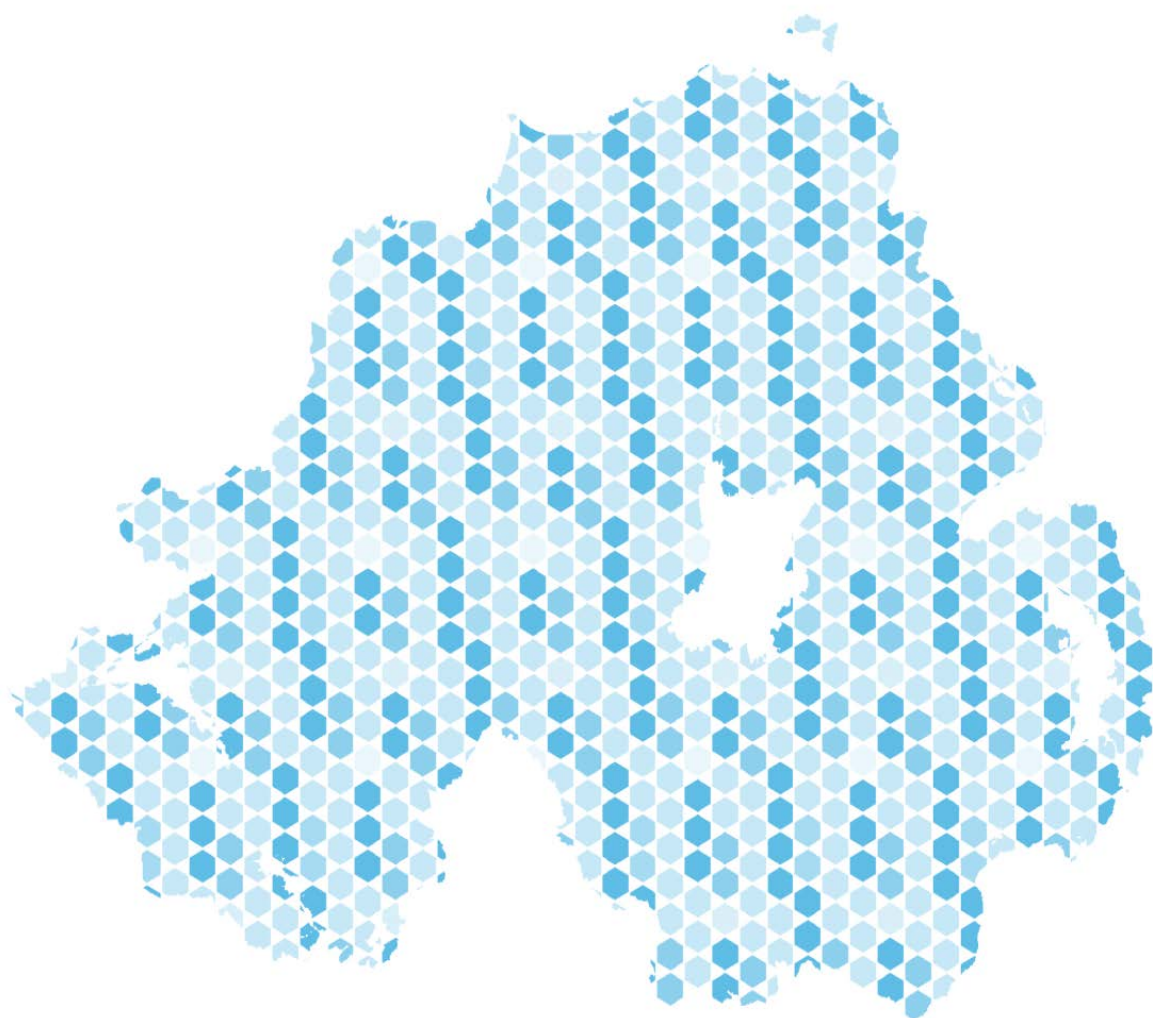


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Woodlawn Primary School,  
Carrickfergus, Co Antrim

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 Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.eti.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	291	9	3.09%	6
Teaching staff	13	13	100%	*
Support staff	8	*	*	*

\* fewer than 5

The ETI is trialling a range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the response rate may be low.

The positive responses from the small number of parental questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with the overall provision in the school. The responses from the teaching and support staff were affirmative about all aspects of school life and discussions with the governors indicated their confidence in the work of the principal and the staff. A group of year 6 children reported that they enjoy the extra-curricular activities and feel happy and safe in school.

The small number of concerns raised in the questionnaires and written responses has been discussed with the governors and the principal.

## 2. Context

Woodlawn Primary School is situated in the south-western part of the town of Carrickfergus. The school enrolment has increased from 275 children in 2010 to 291 children at the time of the inspection. The majority of the children come from the immediate locality. Approximately 46% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The school community has been through a difficult and challenging period of transition in their leadership and management in recent years. The new principal took up post at the end of August 2013. In the absence of a principal during the previous year, the vice-principal was the acting-principal.

Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	275	257	286	291
% Attendance (NI Average)	93.7%	94%	94%	-
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	30.2%	38.91%	48.6%	46.09%
% of children on SEN register	14.18%	15.56%	17.83%	16.15%
% of children with statements of educational needs	1.09%	0.78%	1.4%	0.69%
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	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

### Key findings of the inspection

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are generally well motivated in their learning. Most children can work both independently and collaboratively in pairs and smaller groups. In the best practice, the children review and evaluate their work effectively to make improvements and transfer their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. They respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for managing their own work, make choices and decisions.
- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data in three of the past four years shows that in English, the school's performance is consistently below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the performance in English is also well below the average. An analysis of the end of key stage (KS2) performance data in two of

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

the past four years shows that in mathematics, the school's performance is consistently below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the performance in mathematics is also well below the average.<sup>2</sup> The school's internal performance data shows early indications of improving standards for English and mathematics.

- Most of the children enjoy reading and talk confidently about the stories and characters. By the end of KS2, they read with fluency and understanding and write across a good range of formats. At times, there is an over-emphasis on de-contextualised exercises which constrain the children's written responses. The younger children would benefit from more frequent opportunities for practising their writing through play-based contexts. When provided with opportunities, the children are eager to express their thoughts and ideas.
- The children are confident in their knowledge of key mathematical concepts covering a breadth of number, shape and space, measures and data handling. Many are less secure in their ability to carry out investigative activities and explain the processes they deploy using appropriate mathematical language.
- Most of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make steady progress in attaining the targets set out in their individual education plans.
- The children make confident use of information communication technology (ICT) to prepare presentations, research information for topic work and to reinforce their learning using a range of appropriate soft ware.

## **6. Provision**

- The quality of the teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Almost half of the teaching was good, a minority was very good and a third of the teaching was satisfactory. In the best practice, the teachers make skilful use of questioning to probe the children's level of understanding, encourage them to explain their thinking and obtain extended responses from them. The learning intentions and success criteria are clear, relevant and used effectively to evaluate the extent of the learning by the teacher and the children. In addition, the children are motivated to learn through enjoyable and meaningful active engagement.
- In the less effective practice, the teacher's level of expectation of what the children can achieve is too low and the pace and content of the lessons are poorly matched to the needs of all children.
- The staff have updated and developed their planning in recent years to ensure the children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. In the best practice, the teachers use their evaluations of the children's learning to inform future planning. In addition, the assessment methods are effective in helping children improve their work. The staff collaborates well within year groups; the whole staff team need to develop a more consistent approach to the implementation and interpretation of the planning and assessment based on a shared understanding of best practice.

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<sup>2</sup> ***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.***

- Significant work has been carried out to identify children who require additional help with their learning and a range of approaches are currently used to support these children. While there are strengths in the early identification of need, the current arrangements for meeting these needs are too fragmented and lack coherence; the leadership and management need to review and improve this provision.
- The teachers use a combination of approaches, such as, the phonics programme and the guided and shared reading to support the children's reading. The most effective practice needs to be identified, shared and developed to ensure more consistency in the effective implementation of these approaches. In the best practice, good use was made of information communication technology (ICT) to engage the children in the presentation of their work to one another, followed by skilful peer-evaluation. Overall, there is a lack of sufficient opportunities for the children to extend their creative and independent writing skills.
- Within numeracy, the children use a suitable range of practical materials to support their learning and they are generally accurate in their written work. In the best practice, the teachers provide meaningful opportunities to use mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. The teachers need to improve their approaches to developing the children's mathematical language, processes and flexibility in their mental mathematics.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good. The strengths of the provision include the effective working relationships in the classrooms, the very good behaviour of the children, and, in particular, the excellent support and care for one another throughout the whole school community. The children have very good opportunities to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They develop their sense of responsibility through their involvement in the eco-council and being 'playground pal' to the younger children. The school has appropriately identified the need to review the pastoral care and related policies in order to extend the opportunities through which the children can contribute to, and provide feedback on, the life of the school.
- The children are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle through the promotion of healthy eating and participation in a wide range of physical activity and sports.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The current school development plan, which involved all staff in its compilation, meets the Department of Education's (DE) School Development Plans Regulations (NI) 2010. It sets out clearly the key strengths in the school and identifies areas for development. This provides a useful basis, along with the recent school audit and the inspection findings, to set key priorities and develop well-focused action plans for future development and improvement.
- The senior management team has appropriately identified the need to review the roles and responsibilities of the staff, develop curricular teams and strengthen the role of the co-ordinators. More strategic, systematic and rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluation by the staff needs to be developed to raise further the standards attained by the children.

- The school has well established and effective links with the parents who receive suitable information on their children's progress. There is a high level of parental support for the school's fund raising events and the family worker, funded through the extended schools' cluster, is available to provide additional support for children and their families. The wide range of extracurricular activities, impacts positively on the children's personal, social and educational development. There are effective links with other local schools including a cross-community partnership through involvement in the CAN<sup>3</sup> Peace III programme.
- Based on the evidence at the time of the inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance inspected. The governors support the continuous improvement within the school and the development of the communication approaches between themselves and the wider staff team.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following minor areas need to be addressed: to ensure that the arrangements for child protection are made known to the parents at least every two years, and that sufficient governors are trained in child protection to sit on recruitment or selection panels.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is satisfactory. The strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, teaching and learning and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all of the children are to be met more effectively.

The key areas for improvement identified are as follows:

- the leadership and management at all levels need to develop a more strategic and rigorous approach to the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching to inform school improvement;
- the staff need to improve the quality of the differentiation in the teaching to meet the needs of the full ability range of the children; and
- the staff need to improve the standards attained by the children in literacy and numeracy.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

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<sup>3</sup> CAN - Carrickfergus Antrim and Newtownabbey



### Health and Safety

- The access points through doors to the rear of the school are not secure.

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