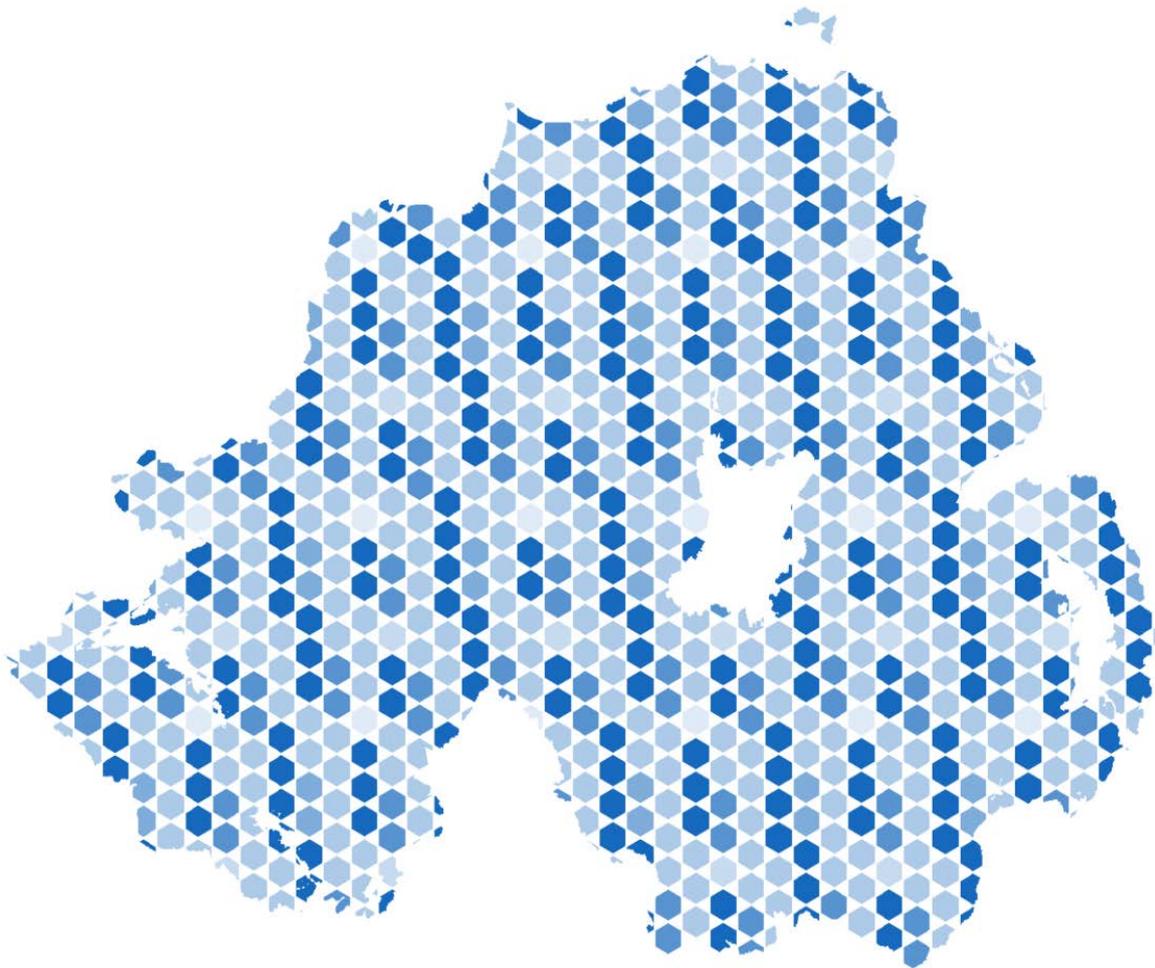


SPECIAL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Fleming Fulton School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
May 2014

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

Inspectors observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation and the pupils' 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	125	*	*	*
Teachers	27	20	74%	12
Support Staff	42	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

The 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 parental questionnaire responses are very positive. The teacher and support staff questionnaire responses indicate support for the work of the school. A number of concerns were discussed with the principal and governors.

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of special 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-special.htm>.

2. Context

Fleming Fulton School is a special school situated in south Belfast. All of the pupils have physical disabilities and the more recently enrolled pupils have increasingly complex educational needs. The pupils come from four Education and Library Boards, some travelling long distances each day. There is a declining pupil enrolment in the school with currently 125 pupils aged from 3 to 19 years. There are currently insufficient numbers of pupils for the nursery classes to continue to operate in the next academic year. The principal was appointed in September 2013; there is one permanent vice-principal of five years' standing, one temporary vice-principal, and 25.6 full time equivalent teachers, 10 of whom have management points. There are 31.1 full time equivalent classroom assistants, 5.2 of these posts are temporary appointments, with a principal classroom assistant currently in a co-ordinating role. There are teams of allied health professionals, including physiotherapists, speech and language, and occupational therapists, along with a full-time school nurse, based in the school.

Fleming Fulton School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	141	124	128	125
% Attendance	85.2%	86.3%	85.6%	87.6%
Teachers	26.5	27.4	28.2	27
Classroom assistants				42
FSME Percentage ¹				47.2
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	*

Source: data as held by the school.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the pupils' achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall finding

Overall Performance Level	Inadequate
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Inadequate

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The pupils are motivated and resilient learners; they are proud of their achievements and when given the opportunity, for example through effective questioning, they are responsive and willing to discuss their learning. They are friendly and welcoming and show sensitivity towards, and a mature understanding of, the needs of others.
- The pupils work co-operatively with others in pairs and groups, both within the school and with pupils from other schools; they are confident in presenting their opinions, for example in the school council.
- The pupils enjoy writing about their own experiences and interests but have limited opportunities to write for other purposes and audiences, particularly in the primary department. In mathematics the pupils are successful in developing their skills through active learning experiences.
- The pupils achieve notable success in competitions with other schools, for example Young Cook of the Year, art competitions, Young Enterprise and sporting events.

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

- Almost all of the pupils leaving the school go on to further education or training placements, however the school is unable to demonstrate that, by the end of their time at the school, the standards attained are appropriate and adequate for the individual pupils. There is a need for the school to co-operate in tracking and evaluating the learning of individual pupils throughout their time in the school, and to demonstrate that the pupils meet their full potential.

6. Provision

- The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory; in the post-primary department almost all of the lessons observed were good or better, over half were very good or outstanding. In the primary and nursery departments, almost half of the teaching was satisfactory with a significant minority evaluated as good. There is an urgent need for the school to agree and to disseminate the very good or outstanding practice to all of the classes. The outstanding practice was characterised by well-planned and resourced lessons with clear learning outcomes, appropriately differentiated work, and a range of learning strategies, including questioning to probe and challenge the pupils' thinking, encourage independence, and enable the pupils to apply their learning in meaningful contexts. In the less effective practice there was a slow pace to the lessons, unclear intended learning outcomes, the activities were not matched sufficiently well to the pupils' needs or abilities and there was limited progression or consolidation of learning. Throughout the school there are examples of information and communication technology being used well by pupils and by teachers to extend the pupils' learning experiences; this practice needs to disseminate further.
- The classroom assistants provide sensitive care for the pupils, however in the best practice, they also work in collaboration with the teacher to promote and support learning within classes; this practice enhances the pupils' learning and needs to become consistent throughout the school.
- The whole-school planning lacks coherence and, as a result, there is a lack of continuity and progression in the pupils' learning. A systematic, rigorous and robust whole-school system for implementing assessments, analysing resulting data, action planning, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the provision needs to be agreed urgently. There is a need for all of the staff to work together to ensure that there is a clear line of progression of the pupils' learning and the development of their skills with a focus on learning rather than activities, a greater focus on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, more use of effective differentiation and frequent and regular evaluation of the planning and learning to inform future practice.
- The curriculum for the pupils in the primary and nursery departments needs to be reviewed by the staff in order to ensure that the needs, interests and abilities of all the pupils are matched to the whole school facilities and staff expertise; the provision for physical education, art and music is particularly enjoyable and beneficial for the younger pupils. In the post-primary department there is a broad and balanced curriculum at key stage (KS) 3 and there has been some progress in offering courses collaboratively with a training organisation at post-16, where additional courses reflect the pupils' needs, interests and abilities. In contrast, the range of subjects at KS4 needs to reflect more effectively the pupils' career aspirations and abilities to enable them to explore broader, more diverse progression pathways.

- The quality of the provision for pastoral care in the school is very good. The school has a very caring and nurturing ethos in which every pupil is valued. Positive behaviour is actively encouraged and the pupils respond well to the school routines and staff expectations. The staff are highly committed to the welfare of the pupils; the excellent contribution of the multi-disciplinary teams enhances greatly the development of each pupil. During a meeting with the inspectors the pupils spoke with pride about their school and the senior pupils, in particular, appreciate the very good relationships with staff and the age appropriate activities and opportunities planned for them which enhance their personal development.
- The programme for careers education information advice and guidance (CEIAG) is well developed and the pupils progress to a variety of providers for further education and training, and by health and social services. A group of the older pupils spoke in an informed way about future pathways and the qualifications they need in order to progress to employment or further study, however the pupils in the transition classes need further and wider opportunities to inform choices and develop skills. The pupils benefit from work experience and from specialist careers support from the Department of Education and Learning careers officer and there is a highly effective school multi-disciplinary transitions team to support families. The curriculum for pupils at KS4 needs to be reviewed urgently to allow pupils to maximize opportunities for appropriate qualifications in order to enhance further their career pathways. Links with other schools in the local area learning community should be explored further to this end.
- The Lynked Club provides very good opportunities for pupils and former pupils, along with siblings and volunteers to meet regularly two evenings each week and a Saturday morning twice a month during term time for a range of leisure activities, for example art, games and video making, and to visit community venues, for example restaurants. The pupils benefit from using their decision making skills in a range of settings and from socialising with an extended group of people. The provision could be enhanced further by links with the Youth Service and youth clubs in order for the pupils to access youth leadership courses for example.
- The school promotes well healthy eating through the recent introduction of healthy breaks and the daily provision of fruit; the lack of facilities for regular outdoor exercise is inhibited greatly by the inadequate outside playground space.

7. Leadership and management

- In the short time that the Principal has been in post she has worked hard to complete thorough audits of the current provision throughout the school and of parental views; the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team are currently being reviewed. There are examples of effective management within the school, however significant development work is required to ensure that there is a coherent focus on improving the quality of provision to meet the needs of the pupils and to raise the standards they attain. There is a lack of clear and consistent communication of the leadership team's aims and plans with the rest of the staff. The lack of clarity in defining roles and responsibilities, particularly of co-ordinators, has impacted negatively on the development of a clear and shared vision by the school and of coherent whole-school planning, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

- There is no current school development plan and previous examples of the plan do not meet the Department of Education School Development Plans Regulations (NI) 2010 nor address the strategic needs of the school. There is an urgent need for the senior leadership team to provide effective strategic leadership through a rigorous school development planning process and for the staff to agree and implement the priorities and strategies required to achieve the objectives within the required time frame.
- The school has effective links with a range of external agencies, including a weekly savings bank in school; links with other schools are being developed appropriately to enhance the learning opportunities of the pupils. The school produces a regular school newspaper to keep the parents informed of recent events and celebrations.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors should urgently appraise their arrangements to more effectively review and challenge, where necessary, evidence presented to them by post holders on the impact of the action they are taking within their areas of responsibility.
- 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 pupils reported that they feel happy and secure in school and they know whom to talk to if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

8. Conclusion

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the strategic planning at all levels in the school;
- review and improve the whole school planning, monitoring and evaluation of the learning experiences and outcomes for the pupils; and
- provide consistently high quality teaching in all classes throughout the school.

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.

Accommodation

- The school buildings and limited outside play areas are inadequate for the needs of the pupils.

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