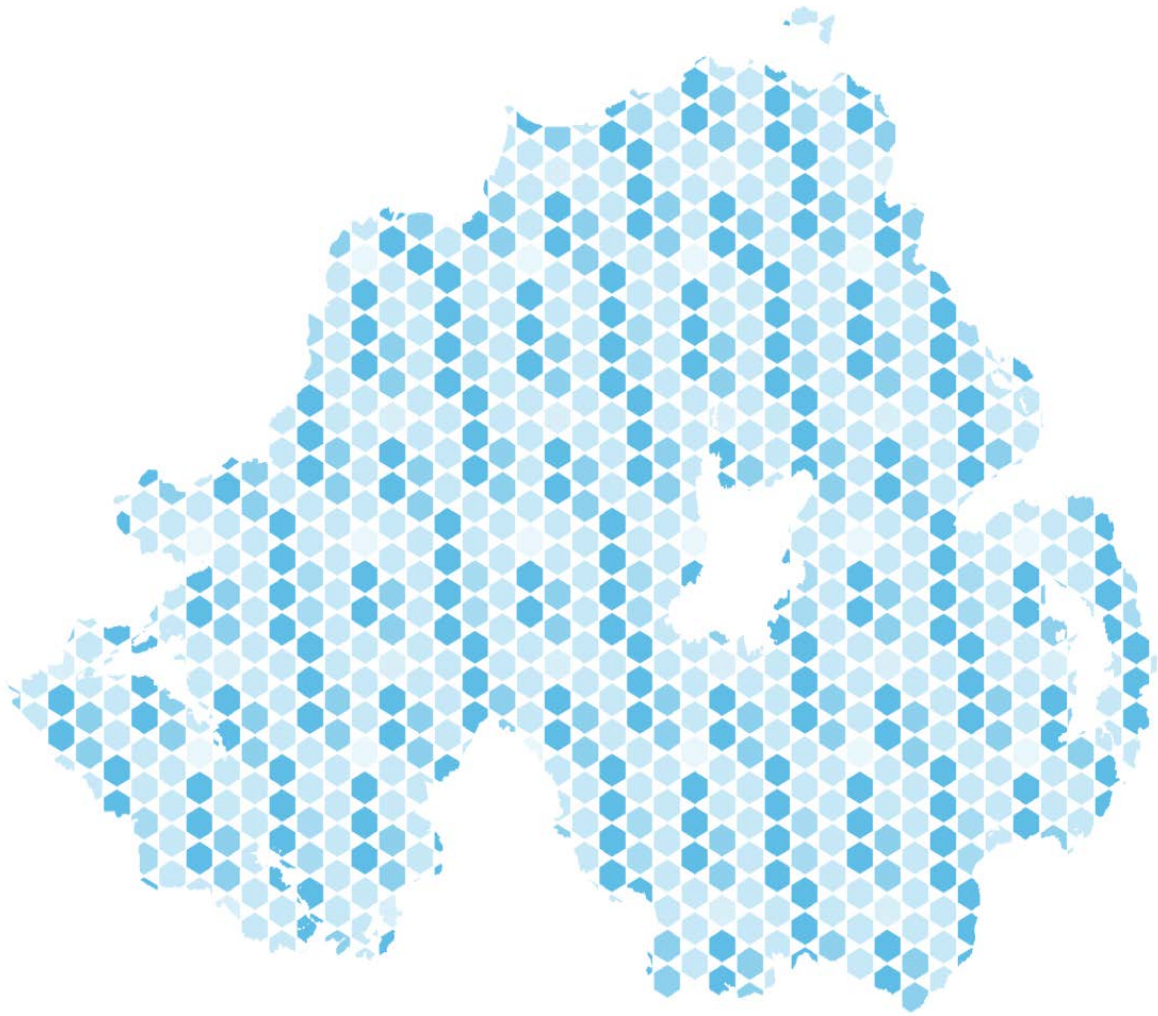


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Portglenone,
County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action
Short of Strike) in April 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated on the Ballymena Road, Portglenone, County Antrim. The children attending the school come from the immediate vicinity of Portglenone and the wider surrounding rural areas. The current school building was opened in 2010 under the Private Public Partnership (PPP) scheme and includes a full-time nursery unit. The school is involved in a shared education programme with a local primary school.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that almost all of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection

St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	235	227	227	222
% School attendance	96.3	96.4	96.3	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	17.43	21.39	21.39	20.9
No. of children on SEN register	35	34	38	37
% of children on SEN register	14.89	14.97	16.74	16.60
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	8	7
No. of newcomer children	5	*	5	6

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

Ten percent of parents and 48% of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses from the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents appreciated the kindness and care shown by the staff for their children's welfare, and the opportunities for parents to support the children in their work. The staff questionnaires highlighted the effective lines of communication in the school and nursery unit, and the opportunities for professional development.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum and how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;

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

- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum and the nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they have been reported below.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available
Nursery Unit	No performance level available

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- During the inspection, inspectors had an opportunity to meet with a group of the most able readers from year 7. The children read fluently, expressively and confidently. They demonstrate knowledge of a wide range of authors and offered insightful, reasoned opinion on character and plot. The year 7 children produce high quality writing across the curriculum for a range of purposes and audiences.
- By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the most able children know and can apply an extensive range of mental strategies to solve mathematical problems. They show flexibility in their mathematical thinking and use a broad range of mathematical vocabulary to explain their reasoning and the processes. The children can relate their mathematics to the real life contexts and apply their mathematical knowledge to challenging, real life investigative activities, for example, designing a container box or organising a fund raising event.
- The children in year 7 use information and communication technology (ICT) with confidence. They use a range of devices and programmes to enhance their learning, develop their creativity and engage with a range of audiences.
- In discussion with the year 6 and 7 children, they spoke confidently about the roles and responsibilities they take on in the school through, for example, the Eco- and school-councils, digital leadership roles and participation in a range of innovative business ventures. The children are friendly and welcoming; they engage easily and courteously with visitors and are respectful towards their peers and the staff.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- standards attained by the children;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions

6. Quality of provision

- The whole school overview planning for literacy, numeracy and ICT and that of the nursery unit shows breadth, continuity and progression in the learning and teaching.
- The children with additional learning needs are identified at an early stage. Small samples of individual learning plans were reviewed; they included appropriate targets and were monitored regularly in partnership with parents. Appropriate innovative, intervention strategies have been put in place to support children identified with individual needs.
- During the inspection, inspectors had an opportunity to meet with a group of year 6 and year 7 children. The children spoke very positively about their enjoyment of their learning experiences within school, their aspiration for their future careers, the wide range of extra-curricular activities available and the caring staff who support them well in their learning.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the curriculum; the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- care and welfare.

7. Leadership and management

- The school improvement process is well-embedded and informed by a culture of reflection and self-evaluation. It is underpinned by rigorous analysis of qualitative and quantitative performance data which is used effectively to monitor and evaluate the actions taken, track individual children's progress and inform appropriately the children's learning. Aspects of the assessment and recording system in the nursery unit require further review and refinement to ensure a more appropriate method of collating relevant evidence of the children's progress across all the areas of the pre-school curriculum is used to inform future planning.
- The school engages in meaningful, on-going consultation with the governors, staff, parents and children. The continued professional development of staff is a high priority and a programme of staff development is in place to support the action plans.
- During the inspection, the ETI met with representatives of the board of governors. They are well informed about the work and life of the school and contribute significantly to the overall strategic planning and policy development. The governors manage the finances of the school effectively and carry out appropriately their challenge and support roles.

- The school has established valuable links with parents to involve them in the education of their children. Effective links have been developed with local pre-schools, primary and post-primary schools, local businesses, environmental agencies and the borough council to enhance the educational programmes.
- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The year 6 children reported that they feel safe in school. They know what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety or well-being.
- The school buildings and grounds are maintained to an exceptionally high standard.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of strategic leadership and governance;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement including self-evaluation and the development planning process.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by almost all of the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and safety

- There is a need to carry out a risk assessment on the small pond in the school grounds.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website: [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

In order to conduct a primary inspection, inspectors observe learning and teaching, scrutinise documentation and the children's written work and hold formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

These arrangements include:

- meetings with the principal and teachers with specific responsibilities on the pre-inspection visit;
- 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.

Where, owing to the action short of strike, this evidence base was not available, it has been referenced in the body of the inspection report.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management²:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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