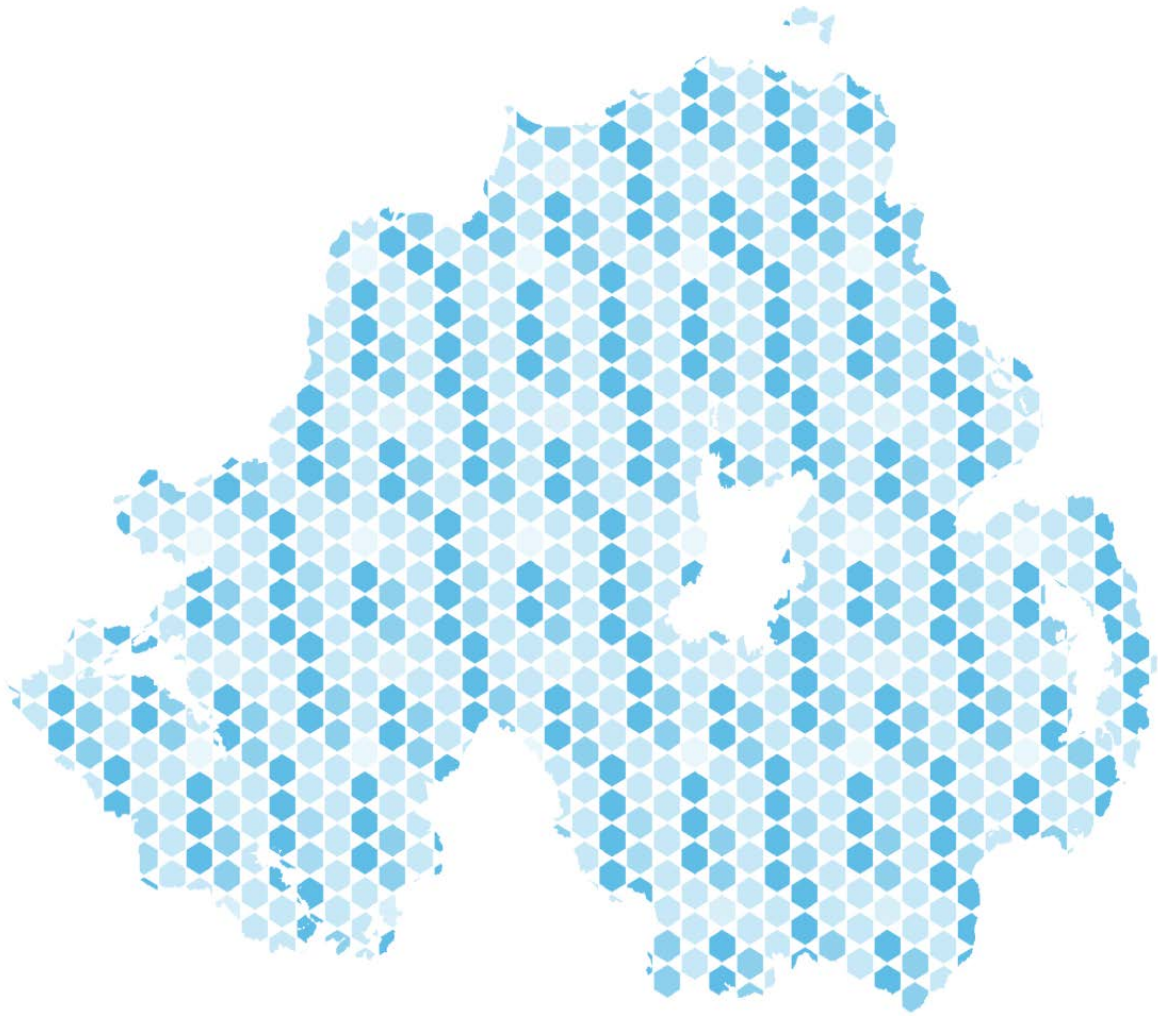


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School and  
Nursery Unit, Mayobridge,  
County Down

Maintained, co-educational

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

*eti*

The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

St Patrick's Primary School and Nursery Unit is a maintained primary school situated in Mayobridge, Newry. There is a single class nursery unit. All of the children attending the school come from the village and surrounding area. The enrolment has risen slightly over the last four years and the school is oversubscribed. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has decreased in the past four years while the proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has remained steady. The school is an active member of a number of cluster groups.

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 none of the teachers would 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 Patrick's Primary School and Nursery Unit	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrolment	367	377	397	385
% School attendance	96%	95.8	96.6	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	21	22	18	16
No. of children on SEN register	42	45	45	47
% of children on SEN register	11	12	11	12
No. of children with statements of educational need	7	6	8	9
No. of newcomer children	12	16	17	15

**Source:** data as held by the school.  
N/A not available

### 2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of parents and a majority of the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire were extremely positive and the written comments indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents praised the commitment and work of the principal and staff; the very caring and welcoming ethos within the school and the open and effective communication with parents. The responses to the staff questionnaire were also highly positive and endorsed the strategic leadership provided by the principal, the shared vision and high expectations of, and for, the children and the many opportunities provided for professional development. The ETI has communicated to the principal and the chair of the board of governors the main findings, and the very few issues arising from the questionnaires.

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

### 3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy;
- 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.

### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

## KEY FINDINGS

### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The school's internal data indicates that most of the children, including those who require additional support with their learning, achieve as expected in English and mathematics. All of the children achieve good levels of information and communication technology (ICT) competence.
- A group of children from year 7, who met with the inspectors, displayed a high level of interest in, and enjoyment of, reading. They talked confidently about the books they enjoy reading, understood a range of genres and gave well-considered opinions on their preferences. The children read with fluency and appropriate intonation and displayed very good comprehension skills.
- A group of children from year 7, who met with the inspectors displayed excellent understanding of mathematical concepts. They showed flexibility in their mathematical thinking and used a range of strategies and appropriate mathematical language. The children reported that they use their mathematical understanding and knowledge across the curriculum and can apply it meaningfully to real-life contexts.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the learning outcomes for the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions.

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The children are courteous, welcoming to visitors and their behaviour is exemplary. A group of children from year 6, who met with the inspectors, spoke very positively about their school and the extensive opportunities they have to learn through practical activities in literacy, numeracy and the World Around Us. The children reported that they enjoy a range of opportunities to learn beyond the classroom, including through music, sport and cultural activities which enrich their learning and develop further their personal and social skills.

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; and
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The principal leads by example; she has the confidence and respect of the children, parents, staff and governors and is very effective in creating a collegial approach to improving further the learning, outcomes and well-being of every child.
- The school development plan (SDP) outlines a range of appropriate priorities for school improvement and is well-informed by self-evaluation including the effective use of the school's internal data and extensive consultation with stakeholders. The associated action plans guide well the work, are supported by a good range of professional development opportunities and there are effective processes in place to monitor and evaluate regularly the impact of the actions taken.
- The school has very good links with the families, the Parish and the wider community. The parents are kept well-informed about the work and life of the school through, for example, the school website, whilst workshops provide practical and much-appreciated guidance to parents on how they can support their child's learning. A particular strength of the school is the importance given to the children's ideas and opinions; these are listened to, valued, and acted upon, including through the school council and the annual forum.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that 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 take a proactive role in school development; for example, through frequent meetings with the principal; reviewing the progress of the action plans; and, managing the budget effectively to meet the learning needs of the children.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of strategic leadership;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

## **8. Safeguarding**

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The children, with whom the inspectors spoke, reported that they feel safe, secure and happy in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully, the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

## **9. Overall effectiveness**

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the staff, 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/Accommodation**

1. There is currently very limited play space for the number of children in the school; the school has raised concerns about this matter with the relevant authorities.

### 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](#)

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.

The arrangements for inspection include:

- 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.

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.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- meetings with the principal;
- meetings with a representative of the board of governors;
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential, online questionnaire;
- meetings with groups of year 6 and 7 children;
- an opportunity to read a wide range of documentation including school development planning and action plans; and
- an opportunity to read documentation presented as supporting evidence of the safeguarding arrangements.



## 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 management<sup>2</sup>:

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 in 12 to 18 months.
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 in 18 to 24 months.

<sup>2</sup> And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

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