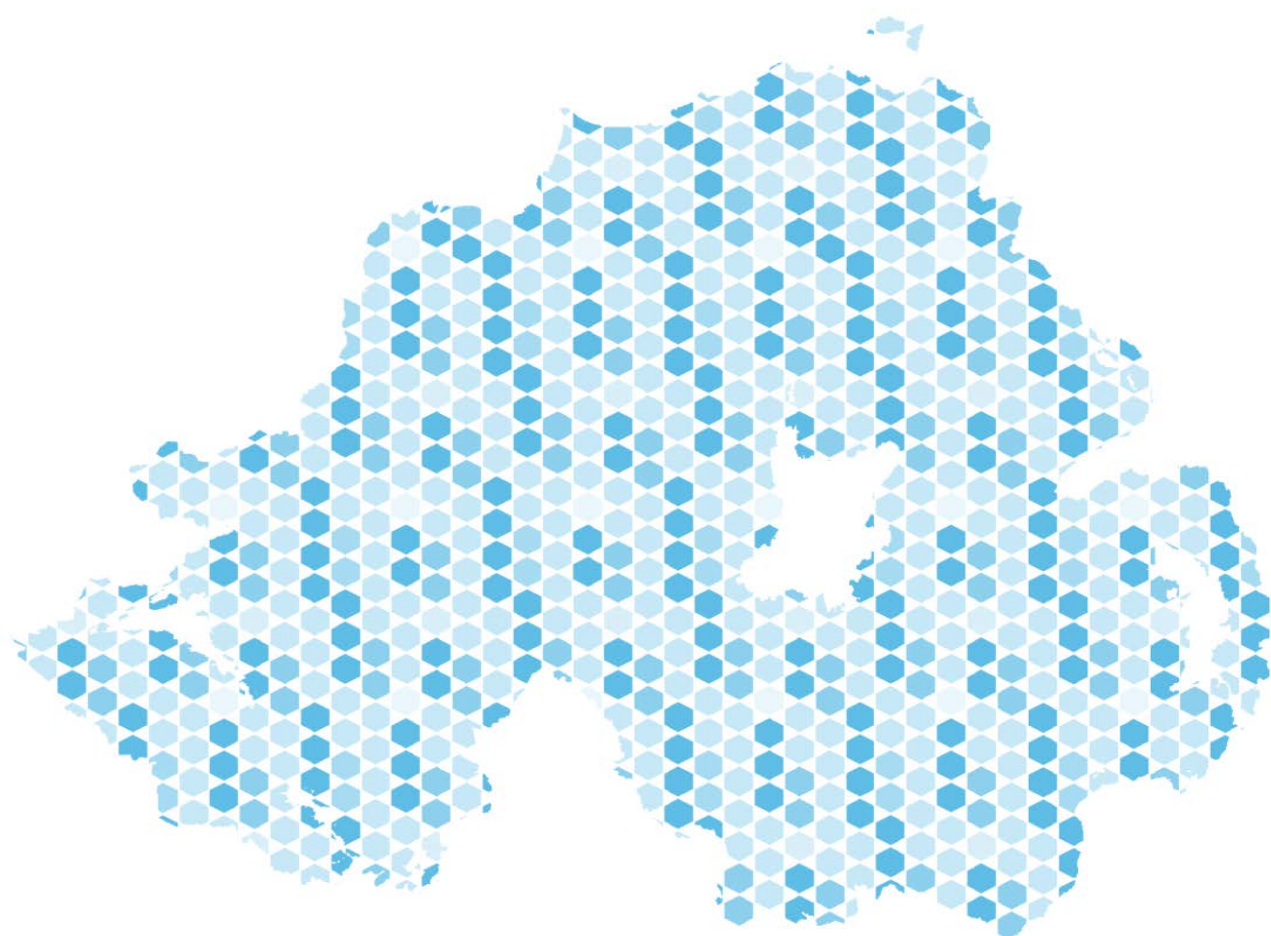


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballymacward Primary School,
Lisburn, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
January 2016

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 used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

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.

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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 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 learning and teaching, 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.

Fifty-eight percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted how well thought of the school is within the community, the nurturing environment of the school where the staff support the care, dignity and well-being of the children and how happy the children are at the school. The staff responses were wholly positive. The governors expressed their appreciation of the hard work of the staff. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors, the main findings emerging from the parents and staff questionnaires and the discussions with the children.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards with a particular focus on literacy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on literacy; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Ballymacward Primary School is a maintained primary school situated on Rock Road, Ballymacward Upper, on the outskirts of Lisburn. Most of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area with the remainder coming from Lisburn and Belfast.

Ballymacward Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	60	58	55	64
% School attendance	95.3	96.5	96.6	N/A
% NI Primary school average	96.1	97.3	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	21.7	25.9	29.1	25
No. of children on SEN register	16	13	11	15
% of children on SEN register	26.7	22.4	20	23.4
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Requires significant improvement
Provision for learning	Requires significant improvement
Leadership and management	Requires urgent improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are happy and well behaved. They are respectful of their teachers, classroom assistants, peers and visitors and show pride in their school. All of the children engage positively in their learning and complete the tasks set for them by their teachers. Most of the children speak with confidence and contribute willingly to class discussions. When differentiated learning activities and opportunities to work in pairs or groups were incorporated, in the minority of lessons observed, the children become more actively engaged in the lessons.
- The school's performance data shows that most children are making progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making insufficient progress; a significant minority achieve in line with their ability.
- Overall, the standards achieved by the children in literacy require significant improvement. The first hand evidence from the work in the children's books and their responses during the lessons indicate that progression in the children's learning requires improvement. They write for a range of purposes and audiences however, additional opportunities are required to broaden these experiences. The presentation of the children's work is variable and there is a need to develop further their independent and creative writing skills. By year seven, the children read with different levels of fluency and there is a marked variation in their understanding of text. The children are developing well their oracy skills as they progress through the school.

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

- During the effective play-based learning in the foundation stage, the children are developing well their independence and creativity as they play collaboratively with one another and discuss with confidence their learning during the effective plenary at the end of the session.

6. Provision for learning

- There are appropriate long-term overviews that guide the teachers' short and medium-term planning. The majority of the literacy and special educational needs planning lacks sufficient detail to meet the needs of all the children. The majority of the teachers evaluate the children's learning, however, the quality of the evaluations and their impact on future planning and learning are variable and in most cases require significant improvement. The school has identified appropriately planning as an area for improvement.
- The majority of the lessons observed were good. In these lessons, the teachers used skilful questioning to extend the children's learning and thinking; well-planned group activities provided opportunities for the children to work together and learn from one another; and information and communication technology (ICT) resources were used effectively to support the learning and teaching. In the less effective practice, in a significant minority of the lessons observed, there was: a focus on the completion of an activity rather than on the actual learning taking place; insufficient challenge in the learning, especially for the more able children; and over-direction by the teacher. Throughout the school, there is an over-reliance on worksheets in all learning areas. It will be important for the teachers to prioritise the development of the children's thinking skills in all classes and across all areas of the curriculum. While most of the teachers mark regularly the children's work, there is a need for all teachers to develop an understanding of marking for improvement and to implement the constructive marking policy that has been devised.
- The quality of the provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning requires significant improvement. The register for recording the additional educational needs of the children is not sufficiently maintained. There is a need to ensure that the children's priority needs are identified and are reviewed regularly. The interventions in place to support the children with additional educational needs are at an early stage of development and require appropriate planning. The individual education plans require updating to: ensure the targets are reflective of the children's needs; include reference to the children's strengths; and, provide opportunities for the children to make their own contributions. A more rigorous approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the individual education plans is necessary by the staff in order to inform the next stage of learning and to ensure that children make sufficient progress. It will be important for the staff to include the effective deployment of classroom assistants within the short and medium-term planning so that the children benefit from more structured support.

- The quality of the provision for literacy requires significant improvement. The children are provided with insufficient opportunities to write creatively and independently across the curriculum and to apply the skills developed in grammatical exercises to their extended writing. There is a need to develop a more systematic approach to the teaching of reading across the school and to build upon the examples of effective provision in the foundation stage and key stage 1 in order to improve the standards attained by the children by the end of key stage 2. It will be important to develop further a literacy-rich learning environment across the school which captures the interest and engagement of all the children.
- The quality of pastoral care in the school is good. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and evidence of supportive working relationships at all levels. The children are developing their leadership and communication skills through participation in the school- and eco- councils.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- There is an urgent need for the leadership and management at all levels to re-evaluate the current priorities identified in the school development plan² and to establish a systematic and rigorous process for monitoring and evaluating the provision at all levels in order to raise the standards attained by the children. There is a lack of rigour to the identification of priority areas and the associated action plans do not ensure the effective management of change in the school to effect sufficient improvement in the quality of learning and teaching.
- The governors have been recently reconstituted. They are committed to the school and the local community. The governors have scrutinised appropriately the school's finances to ensure these remain within budget. They are at an early stage of developing curricular links with the school. Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors need to be better informed about the work of the school from the co-ordinators in order to fulfil their challenge function around the children's achievements and standards. There is also a need for the governors to review the distribution of staff roles and responsibilities to ensure the pastoral well-being and professional effectiveness of all staff.
- 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 reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following areas need to be addressed:
 - review further the recently ratified suite of policies to include a positive behaviour management policy; and

² The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- develop comprehensive arrangements for consulting with parents, staff and children when reviewing policies.
- In discussions with the inspectors, the year 6 children reported that they feel very happy and safe in school and know what to do if they have 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. Overall effectiveness

Ballymacward Primary 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 areas for improvement are the need to:

- improve the quality of learning and teaching, with a particular focus on effective planning;
- raise the standards achieved by the children in all aspects of literacy; and
- establish a systematic and rigorous process for monitoring and evaluating the provision at all levels in order to inform the school development planning process.

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 18-24 months.

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