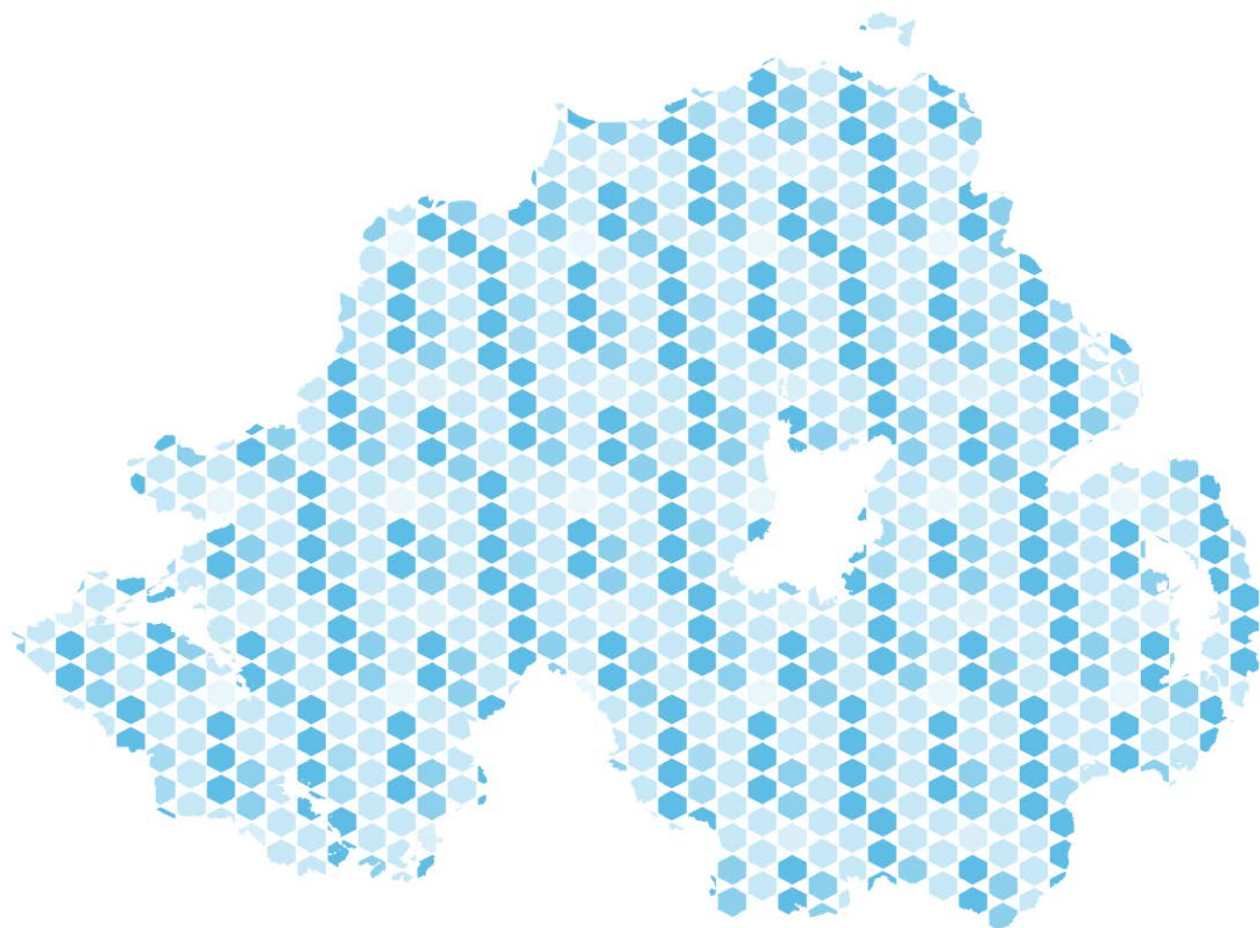


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Harpur's Hill Primary School,
Nursery Unit and Learning
Support Centres, Coleraine,
County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
November 2015

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.eti.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 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.

The parental questionnaires and written comments indicated very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the caring ethos, the very good support provided to help their children progress and achieve success, the wide range of extracurricular experiences provided and the hard work and commitment of the leadership and all of the staff. The wholly positive response from the staff highlighted a strong team approach which focuses on developing the children in a holistic way and valuing the role of the parent as a vital part of their education. The ETI has reported to the principal and chair of the board of governors the views of the parents and staff and the main issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions. No significant issues were raised.

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 in literacy and numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning in the school including the nursery unit and the learning support centres; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Harpur's Hill Primary School is a controlled primary school with an integrated nursery unit. In addition to the mainstream classes, year 1 to year 7, the school provides two designated learning support centres and a nurture room. The nursery unit is known as Culraith Corner Nursery and is accommodated in a separate building, the Harpur's Hill Children and Family Centre. The school and nursery unit are situated in a housing estate on the outskirts of Coleraine in the Cross-Glebe area.

Most of the children attending the school and the nursery unit come from the local area. The children attending the learning support centres come from a much wider catchment area. The enrolment has increased from 187 to 201 children over the last four years. The nursery class and learning support centres are working at full capacity; the school operates at 90% capacity. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has increased slightly over the last four years while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning and complex needs has increased significantly both within the primary school and the nursery unit. A significant number of staffing roles and responsibilities have changed in the last four years.

Harpur's Hill Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	187	199	194	201
Enrolment in LSC	18	21	18	17
Enrolment in Nursery Unit	27	26	26	27
% School attendance	93.96	94.7	96.1	96.3
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	59	57	58	62
% of children on SEN register	26	39	40	41
No. of children with statements of educational need	20	24	22	23
No. of newcomer children	*	7	5	7

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Outstanding
Learning Support Centres	Very good

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children in the school, the nursery unit, nurture unit and learning support centres are developing very positive attitudes and dispositions for learning and show pride in their achievements. They are well motivated and remain focused on their tasks as they work independently, in pairs or in small groups. When provided with appropriate opportunities, in a majority of the classes, the children self-manage very well aspects of their own learning and work collaboratively to solve problems and think creatively. The children in the nurture unit make very good progress and re-integrate well with their year group. A significant feature of the whole school is the extent to which the children make progress in developing their confidence, self-esteem, social skills and behaviours in conjunction with the development of their literacy and numeracy.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children in key stage (KS) 2, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The children achieve very good standards in numeracy. In the foundation stage, the children make good progress in developing an understanding of number bonds, shape and space, measures and in using the associated mathematical language. Throughout the school, they show high levels of engagement and enthusiasm and work collaboratively to complete mathematical activities and investigations, and evaluate their learning. By year 7, the most able children demonstrate very good mathematical knowledge and flexibility in applying mathematics to problem solving activities. In the best practice, the children articulate very well their mathematical thinking.
- The children achieve very good standards in their literacy. In the foundation stage, the children make very good progress in developing their levels of attention and their talking and listening skills. They enjoy stories and are beginning to show an understanding of sounds and syllables. As they move through the key stages, the children make very good progress in developing confidence, fluency and comprehension in reading. By year 7, they talk maturely about their favourite authors, understand characterisation and features of different types of books. Across the school, the children write to a good standard across a wide range of writing types for different purposes and audiences.
- The children in the nursery unit are well settled, confident in the daily routines and make independent choices. They play purposefully for sustained periods and a small number of the children are beginning to play collaboratively. A majority of the children require additional support with aspects of their learning and a large number have been identified with speech and language difficulties; however, they are confident in approaching adults for help and support. The children enjoy books, listen well to stories and join in songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. Small groups of the children engage confidently in early mark making and a number of the children participate in sorting and matching activities and show a good awareness of counting and measures. The children have a keen interest in the World Around Us and engage very purposefully in the high quality of the outdoor play activities.

- The children in the learning support centres enjoy and are well engaged in their learning. The younger children make good progress in their standard of work with significant levels of adult support. By KS2, they continue to produce good levels of work with increasing independence.
- The children who attend the nurture group make very good progress in developing their attention, communication and social skills. They make good progress in moving from relying on practical experiences only to being able to record their work.
- The children use a range of technological devices and programmes with increasing confidence and as an integral part of their learning, for example, they research topics, present their work, practise their skills and consolidate their knowledge and understanding.

6. Provision for learning

- The teachers' planning is well informed by detailed evaluations of the children's previous learning, analysis of data and the teachers' knowledge of their individual need; as a result, there is clear evidence of effective differentiation in the classroom practice. The high quality learning and teaching is underpinned by a positive and supportive culture within the classrooms. In the best practice, in the majority of the lessons observed in the primary school and the learning support unit, the effective questioning to promote thinking and problem solving, well-planned teaching strategies and creative contexts for learning, ensure the active engagement of the children. The teachers provide meaningful oral and written feedback to help the children assess and improve further their work. The effective use of interactive whiteboards and tablet technology stimulate the children's interest and build the children's confidence in their learning in both numeracy and literacy.
- In response to the high level of recent changes in staff roles and responsibilities, it is appropriate that the leadership team and staff have prioritised the ongoing sharing of best practice among the staff team, as a priority to promote consistency in all aspects of teaching and learning across the school. In the less effective teaching, in a minority of the lessons observed, the pace of the lesson was too slow and over-direction by the adults reduced the opportunities for the children to make their own oral and creative responses and develop fully their learning.
- The provision for special educational needs is a particular strength in the school. The children with additional learning needs are identified early and an excellent range of intervention and support programmes is in place within both the school and nursery unit. The individual education plans for literacy and numeracy are detailed, well focused and the children's progress is monitored closely by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The quality of the withdrawal support for literacy and numeracy and the nurture room practice is of a very high standard. The support is planned in liaison with the class teachers and provides very good educational experiences for the children. The nursery unit makes very effective use of small-group work to support children with their language development. Throughout the school and the nursery unit, the classroom assistants provide valuable support and contribute very effectively to the educational provision and support for the children.

- The children have very good opportunities to develop confidence in their communication skills through their involvement in wider aspects of school life such as the school's council, class assemblies, choir, young enterprise projects and involvement in local festivals. The staff have developed well the planning, resources and approaches to support the effective teaching of reading. The 'Reading Together Programme', literacy withdrawal sessions, the introduction of a computerised reading programme and the effective withdrawal booster groups are all contributing to the children's motivation to read and to raise further their reading standards. The writing scheme is an effective framework to ensure the skills of writing are taught progressively across a wide range of genre. The teachers need to provide further opportunities for the children to develop their independent, creative writing styles and transfer their writing skills across all areas of the curriculum.
- The school provides a comprehensive programme of mathematics and the teachers have placed appropriate emphasis on the integration of concrete materials, practical approaches and the explicit teaching of problem-solving and mental mathematics strategies. The numeracy withdrawal sessions, parents support and booster groups are developing children's confidence and achievements. The staff need to develop further the children's transfer of mathematical understanding across the areas of learning.
- The broad and balanced range of interesting and creative activities in the nursery unit provides high quality opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The quality of the staff's interactions with the children is consistently very good or better and, in the best practice, the staff develop very effectively the children's problem-solving skills and extend their vocabulary. All staff are involved in planning the programme for the children and have a clear understanding of the potential learning opportunities within the activities. The careful and regular observations and assessment of the children's learning are used well by the staff to inform a programme which meets the needs and interests of all children.
- There is a very positive ethos in the learning support centre and respect for the individual needs and learning styles of the children. They understand and co-operate well with the daily routines, are confident to contribute their own ideas and respond well to the range of teaching strategies employed. The planning is tailored to individual children, evaluated regularly and incorporates the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and teaching. The children benefit from integration with the main-stream classes during the school day and participate in both whole-school and specifically tailored extra-curricular activities. The staff use a good range of practical resources to enhance creativity and to support problem solving. They track the children's progress through regular monitoring of their individual education plans and plan to develop further their assessment using the methods employed successfully in the nurture unit.

- The quality of the learning and teaching in the nurture unit is an example of best practice. The excellent family ethos fosters a sense of security and confidence in the children. The key features of the highly effective provision in the nurture unit include the holistic, enjoyable and activity-based approach to learning and teaching which is setting firm foundations for the effective development of the children's attitudes to, and engagement in, their learning. The staff work closely as a team to plan and assess rigorously the children's progress, both within the nurture unit and with the class teachers. The welcome extended to parents and the promotion of their involvement in their child's learning and development is a core component of the work.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school, learning support centres and the nursery unit is outstanding. The nurturing and inclusive ethos permeates all aspects of school life. The culture of care and mutual respect is linked to high expectations and is helping the children and their families to overcome a range of potential barriers to learning and to achieve success. The children are developing well their leadership skills and contribute to improvements in their school experience through the well organised school's council. The children's personal development is enhanced further through the wide range of trips, visits and extra-curricular activities.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. Key features include the extra-curricular sports activities, growing vegetables in the school grounds and relevant themes incorporated through the curriculum.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management provide clear and effective strategic leadership at all levels to bring about and sustain improvement. The senior leadership team develop high quality learning and teaching underpinned by professional knowledge and expertise focusing on raising the standards for all children within an atmosphere of high expectation and pastoral care. This is in line with their school motto, "Achieving Success through Respect and Encouragement." They model an open and pastoral approach to the children, families and staff, work very effectively as a team and display an inspirational approach to surmounting challenges.
- The co-ordinators are very effective in leading and managing their areas of responsibility. They audit systematically and rigorously the provision, identify relevant priorities focused on raising standards, set clear targets in the action plans, monitor and evaluate improvements and provide very detailed feedback.
- The culture of reflection and continuous self-evaluation is very well embedded at all levels throughout the school. The staff, governors, children and parents all contribute to the school development planning process. The school improvement process is very well informed by the excellent analysis and use of qualitative and quantitative data, to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of actions taken and to track the children's progress. The ongoing professional development of teaching and non-teaching staff through well focused training, the development of curricular teams and the sharing of best practice all contribute significantly to whole school improvement.

- The excellent links with parents and the partnerships within the local community are strengths of the school and the nursery unit. Parents are welcomed and encouraged actively to be involved in their children's education from the early years and throughout the school. Particular strengths include: the regular involvement of parents in shared activities with their children in the nursery unit; the involvement of the more senior members of the local community in gardening and the weekly opportunity for them to join the children for a school lunch; and, the very effective targeting of extended schools and Coleraine Education Community Programme (CECP) funding to support the development of the children's literacy and numeracy. The school has very close links with the local family centre in which the nursery unit is accommodated; these are being developed further to ensure progression in learning and development in the early years across the two-year old programme, playgroup, nursery unit and the foundation stage. The school links effectively with a range of other primary and post primary schools to promote smooth transitions in learning.
- Based on the evidence at the time of the inspection, 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 all aspects of school life, including the standards achieved by the children, and are involved actively in the school development planning process that contributes to continuous improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and the nursery unit have comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussion with the Inspectors, the children in year 6 spoke confidently about their enjoyment of school and reported that they feel safe and know who to go to if they have a concern.

8. Overall effectiveness

The school and the nursery unit have a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school and the nursery unit sustain improvement.

Health and Safety

1. The staff's implementation of the actions set out in the risk assessment for safe play around the school pond need to be monitored closely to ensure consistency of practice.

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