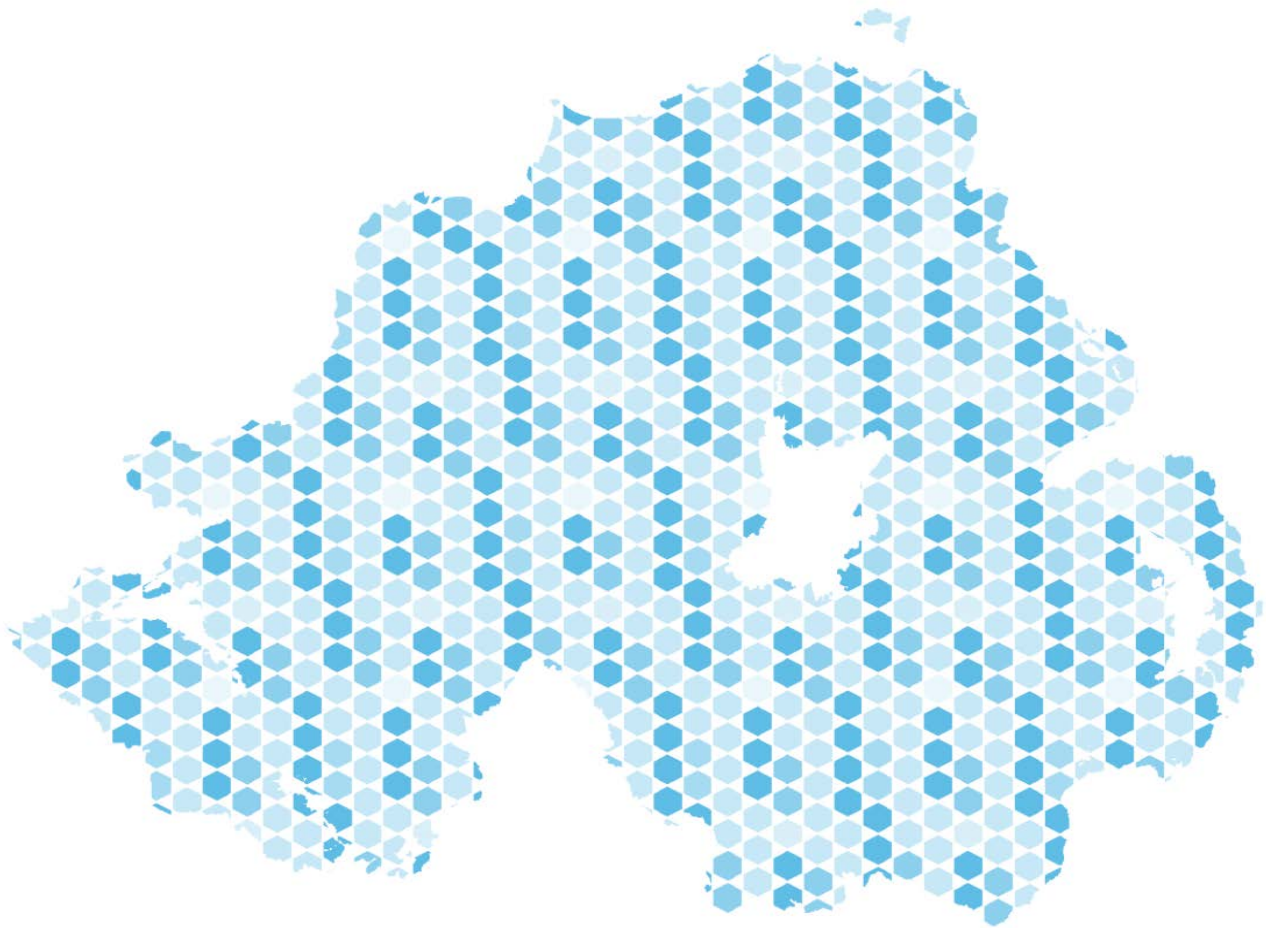


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Leaney Primary School,
Ballymoney, County Antrim

Inspection completed in
May 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities

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.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	3
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Overall effectiveness	5

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 a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Six percent of parents responded to the questionnaires and nine of the responses contained additional written comments. In particular, the parents praised, the caring ethos of the school, the diligent work of the staff and the effective leadership of the principal. A very small number of issues raised in the written comments was discussed with the governors and the principal. A small number of the teachers and a minority of the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were positive.

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; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Leaney Primary School is a controlled primary school in Ballymoney, County Antrim. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the town and the surrounding area. There has been a slight decline in enrolment over the last three years and stands currently at 291 children. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals, and those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, has increased over the last four years. The school holds proudly the Eco-school Green Flag Award. The fostering of the children's musical and sporting talents is a key aspect of the school's provision and contributes significantly to their personal development. The school is an active member of the Ballymoney Learning Hub and has well-established links with other schools in the local area.

An inspection of Leaney Primary School, Ballymoney was due to be carried out in June 2015. This inspection¹ commenced but was not completed due to the involvement of nearly all of the senior leadership team and the teachers in action-short-of-strike in relation to pay, pensions and terms and conditions of employment and reductions in the education budget. An inspection team re-visited the school in May 2016, to complete the inspection. The following report contains the combined evaluations from June 2015 and May 2016.

Leaney Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	310	313	300	291
% School attendance	94.6	95.5	95.7	95.9
% NI Primary school average	90.4	92.1	95.1	95.6
FSME Percentage ²	38	39	40	46.4
% of children on SEN register	14	22	21	33
No. of children with statements of educational need	10	9	9	11
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement.
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are friendly, welcoming and courteous, they take pride in their school and their behaviour is exemplary. As they progress through the school, they develop a wide range of personal and social skills and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The children benefit from participation in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities that enriches their learning and enhances their social development.
- The school's internal assessment data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with or above expectation.
- Across all key stages the standards achieved by the children in literacy are good. The children, particularly those with low to average ability, progress very well in English during their time in school. The internal tracking of data shows a modestly improving trend of achievement across the last three years with a notable rise in attainment in the last two years. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, most of the children are independent in their reading and writing; they use sophisticated vocabulary and sentence construction in order to write for a varying range of audience and purpose.

¹ The inspection letter for the incomplete inspection can be accessed at:
Inspection letter-[Leaney Primary School](#), Ballymoney; Education and Training Inspectorate

² The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

- The standards achieved by the children in numeracy are good. In all key stages, the children enjoy learning mathematics, talk confidently about their work and most present their work to a good standard. By year 7, the most able children have a good knowledge and understanding of the mathematics curriculum. They can think flexibly in problem-solving tasks, apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts and most of the children use appropriate mathematical language to explain the strategies they use.
- The children develop well their skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) as they progress through the school. By year 7, they achieve good standards and are able to use competently a range of ICT applications to enhance their learning.

6. Provision for learning

- There is a good, whole-school approach to planning, learning, teaching and assessment throughout the school. The teachers plan conscientiously to ensure continuity and progression in the children's learning. There is variation in the quality of the teachers' evaluations of the planning across the year groups. They need to agree a more discerning and consistent approach to the evaluation of the impact of their teaching to inform future learning for identified individuals and groups. The children's work is marked regularly and supportively and, in the most effective practice, in three-fifths of the lessons observed, the teachers' feedback enables the children to improve their work. There is, however, inconsistency in the quality of marking for improvement and in the outworking of the school's marking policy; the staff have identified appropriately the need to monitor and implement more consistently the marking policy across the school.
- Most of the lessons observed were effective in progressing the children's learning, the quality of learning and teaching was very good in three-fifths of the lessons. In these lessons, the teachers built very well on the children's prior knowledge and experiences; they made skilful use of open-ended questions to develop the children's understanding, extend their learning and challenge their thinking. A key strength was the use of regular checks that teachers made to ensure the children understood what they were learning; this provided time to discuss and resolve any learning difficulties and to consolidate their learning. Although the overall quality of learning and teaching is very good, the teachers do not always challenge sufficiently the more able children. The classroom assistants provide valuable support to the children.
- The children who require help with aspects of their learning receive very good, well-considered and appropriately personalised support that is tailored to need. Through the provision of effective individual and small group withdrawal support programmes, combined with in-class support and help from external providers, the children's social, emotional and educational needs are being met very well. The targets identified in the individual education plans are reviewed and amended appropriately to provide clarity in learning and enable the children to achieve and experience success.

- Planning, learning, teaching and assessment in literacy is good. The children's proficiency in their literacy skills progress well through a broad and balanced programme that develops systematically their higher-level skills in reading, writing, talking and listening. In the foundation stage, the children read and write with increasing levels of confidence and independence. As they progress through the school, the children improve their literacy skills through the completion of more complex reading and writing challenges that enable them to engage with a good range of non-fiction texts, digital sources and contemporary reading resources.
- The numeracy and mental mathematics benchmarks that have been compiled by the school outline clearly a progression in the knowledge and skills across each year group in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. They provide good guidance for the teachers to create appropriate medium and short-term plans. In all of the numeracy lessons observed, the learning and teaching was good or better, and it was very good in four-fifths of the lessons. In these lessons, the learning was differentiated appropriately with well structured, active learning activities. The introductions to the lessons were engaging, reviewed well the prior learning and consolidated mental mathematics skills in meaningful contexts.
- The quality of pastoral care in the school is very good. The outworking of the school's vision "to allow all children to shine" permeates the life and work of the school. The inclusive, family atmosphere is welcoming to all and a strong sense of community exists in the school. There are positive working relationships at all levels throughout the school. The staff are highly committed to the children in their care and they work diligently together to provide a caring, learning environment where all children are valued and respected. As they progress through the school, the children accept responsibility for improving their school's practices through membership of the school-council, Eco-committee and engagement in the peer-mentoring scheme; all of which assist in developing the children's confidence, resilience and leadership skills.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through the provision of healthy breaks, the "Healthy New You" programme and the very good range of physical activities provided for the children thereby encouraging them to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- Overall the senior leadership team provide effective strategic leadership. They have a shared, child-centred vision for the work and development of the school that is underpinned by the embedding of, a more distributed model of leadership, where post holders are proactive in developing a culture of self-evaluation across the school to bring about further improvement in the children's attainment. There is, however, an imbalance in the workload of the senior leaders. The board of governors and principal need to review, with expediency, the roles of the senior leaders to bring about a more equitable distribution of responsibility and allocation of duties to ensure all senior leaders play a substantive role in school improvement.

- The school improvement process is linked to a well constructed school development plan³ that has involved very good consultation with all stakeholders. The key priorities identified guide very well the development and improvement work of the school. Almost all of the related action plans are purposeful and well informed through the effective use of qualitative and quantitative data to identify the children's needs. There is an appropriate focus on the quality of the learning experiences provided for the children and raising further the standards they attain. In taking the school improvement work forward, the middle leaders and staff need to monitor and evaluate more effectively the quality and consistency of provision across the areas of learning; particularly in relation to marking and in challenging the more able children.
- The school has effective links with the parents and local community. The parents are informed well about the life and work of the school through weekly notes, the school website, reports and a range of parent information workshops.
- The parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance inspected. The governors understand and exercise appropriately their role in providing an effective challenge and support function to the principal. They have identified the need to develop further their role to challenge, where necessary, the effectiveness of the action being taken to raise standards across all key areas of learning. The inspection would endorse this as an appropriate priority.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the incomplete inspection, the school had comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. During the incomplete inspection, the inspectors met with a group of year 6 children. The children spoke with enthusiasm and confidence about their experiences in school. They reported that they feel happy and safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns.

8. Overall effectiveness

Leaney Primary 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 areas for improvement include the need to:

- review the roles of senior leaders to bring about a more equitable distribution of responsibility to ensure that all leaders undertake appropriate, substantive leadership and management duties that will lead to further improvement; and
- develop further the capacity of the staff, at all levels, to monitor and evaluate more effectively the quality and consistency of provision across the school in order to raise further the standards attained by the children.

³ The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

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