

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Lislagan Primary School,
Ballymoney, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
April 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 | 3 |
| 8. Overall effectiveness | 4 |

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.

Forty-six percent of parents and most of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire indicate high levels of support for the work of the school. In particular, the parents commented positively on their children's progress and their enjoyment of school. They praised the staff for creating a caring learning environment and their attention to the children's individual needs. The staff responses were wholly positive. The ETI reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main points, including a small number of individual concerns, emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

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 numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on numeracy; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Lislagan Primary School is a controlled primary school situated approximately four miles from Ballymoney. Most of the children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The number of children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning has increased over the last four years. Over the same period, the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has decreased.

| Lislagan Primary School | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Enrolment | 107 | 114 | 112 | 116 |
| % School attendance | 96 | 95.9 | 95.9 | N/A |
| % NI Primary school average | 94.9 | 95.6 | 95.4 | N/A |
| FSME Percentage ¹ | 25 | 29 | 20 | 19 |
| No. of children on SEN register | 6 | 10 | 12 | 17 |
| % of children on SEN register | 6 | 9 | 11 | 15 |
| No. of children with statements of educational need | 0 | * | * | * |

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

| Overall effectiveness | Address important areas for improvement |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Achievements and standards | Good |
| Provision for learning | Good |
| Leadership and management | Important areas for improvement |

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are motivated, enthusiastic learners. They show respect for and sensitivity to the needs of others when working in pairs and groups. When given the opportunity, in a majority of the lessons, the children share and discuss confidently their ideas and opinions, and take responsibility for managing their own learning. Throughout the school, the children organise and present their work to a high standard.
- The school's performance data shows that a majority of the children, 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.
- During the inspection, in discussion with a group of the more able children in year 7 regarding their understanding of mathematics, they were secure in all areas of the mathematics curriculum. They were flexible in their thinking, and explained and justified their choice of strategies, using the appropriate mathematical language. Across the key stages, the children enjoy practical, problem-solving activities and use confidently a wide range of resources, including information and communication technology, to support and enhance their learning. The children need to develop further their mathematical understanding through investigative activities.

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

6. Provision for learning

- Most of the lessons observed were effective in progressing the children's learning. The quality of learning and teaching in one-third of the lessons was very good; in these lessons, the teachers had high expectations for what the children can achieve and the work was matched carefully to their needs and interests. The teachers' use of effective questioning developed the children's ideas and their oral responses, and enabled the children to reflect on and improve their learning. In the less effective practice, the planning and activities for mathematics did not take sufficient account of the children's abilities and the intended learning was unclear. Overall, the evaluations of the children's learning need to be more incisive, in order to inform better the teaching programme and provide greater challenge in the learning.
- The staff know the children well; those who require additional support benefit from early diagnosis and intervention to support them in their learning and their social and emotional development. In the best practice, the targets in the individual education plans are well focused, measureable and inform well the planning, teaching and assessment. This practice needs to be consistent across all year groups to ensure that the short-term targets are precise, the activities are relevant, to progress the children's learning, and that their incremental progress is recorded and evaluated consistently to inform future learning. The classroom assistants make an important contribution to the children's learning and pastoral needs.
- The whole-school programme for numeracy is comprehensive and provides for continuity and progression in the children's learning. The teachers use a wide range of mental mathematics strategies effectively to reinforce number facts and key mathematical language. In the best practice, in a minority of lessons, they enable the children to reflect on and discuss their learning and to apply their learning in numeracy to other areas of the curriculum. The children would benefit from further and consistent opportunities to apply their mathematical understanding to open-ended investigations and to collate and use real data across other areas of the curriculum.
- The quality of pastoral care is very good. The children's behaviour is exemplary and they demonstrate a strong identity with and belonging to their school community. The staff create a nurturing learning environment and the working relationships between the children and adults are mutually respectful.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a collegial approach to school improvement across the staff and governors, and a strong commitment to the welfare of the children. The teachers reflect on their practice and support each other sensitively in developing and improving further the learning experiences provided for the children. In taking this work forward, it will be important to disseminate the very good practice identified in the inspection to provide consistently high quality learning experiences for all children.

- Whilst the school has agreed arrangements in place for self-evaluation to monitor and evaluate the provision, these arrangements lack rigour. As a result, there is insufficient evaluation of the school's provision, including the learning and teaching and the standards achieved by the children, in the school development plan². The associated action plans need to focus clearly on learning and teaching, and set out a clear baseline to inform actions for improvement.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors play an important role in the financial management of the school and support the staff well in taking forward identified areas for development, most notably, in aspects of learning and teaching. The governors need to work with the principal and staff to ensure a more rigorous oversight of the impact of the school's development planning process to effect further improvement in the children's attainment, provide an annual report to parents and an updated school prospectus in order to comply with statutory regulations.
- 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 broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following areas need to be addressed:
 - to put in place record keeping arrangements in relation to the school's safeguarding procedures and practices, including training for staff and governors; and
 - to ensure all parents are informed of safeguarding arrangements every two years, and are consulted as part of the review of pastoral policies.
- In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 spoke of their enjoyment of school and reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Lislagan Primary School needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are to:

- monitor and evaluate more rigorously the provision to inform the school's self-evaluation and school development planning processes;
- develop further the action plans to focus clearly on learning and teaching in order to raise further the standards attained by the children;

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

- provide parents with an annual report and put in place an updated prospectus;
and
- address the reported safeguarding issues.

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 12 to 18 months.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2016

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk