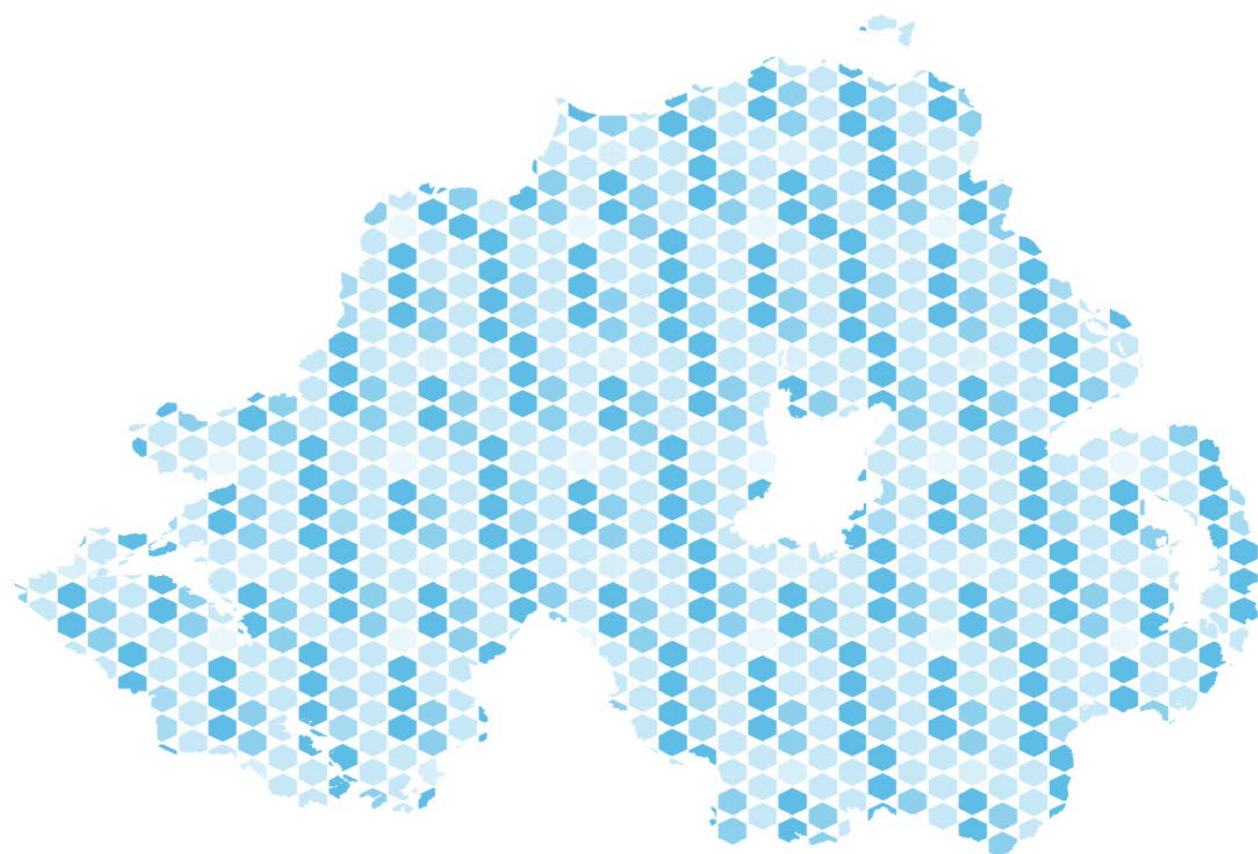


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Millisle Primary School,
County Down

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in
February 2017



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

Millisle Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in Millisle, County Down. There is a single class nursery unit within the school. Enrolment in the school has risen steadily and almost all of the children attending come from the immediate and surrounding areas. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has fluctuated over the last four years, while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has increased over this time.

Millisle Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	202	215	225	223
% School attendance	95.7	95.7	94.6	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	43.1	39.5	41.8	36.6
No. of children on SEN register	40	47	51	59
% of children on SEN register	19.8	21.96	22.7	26.45
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	9	8	9
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	0

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of parents and 77% of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire were highly positive. In particular, the parents praised the caring, nurturing learning environment within the school; the leadership of the principal, the hard work of the staff and the support provided for children with additional needs. The responses to the staff questionnaire were wholly positive; the staff highlighted their enjoyment in working in the school, the collegial nature of the staff team and their appreciation of the leadership of the principal. The ETI has discussed with the principal and representatives of the board of governors the responses to, and the additional comments within, the parental and staff questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum (and how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable);
- 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.

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

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Very good

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- Most of the children make very good progress in English and their outcomes are very good. The children talk confidently about their learning and share their views willingly with their teachers and peers; they write in different forms and for a variety of purposes and in key stage (KS) 2, the children have very good opportunities to plan and redraft their work to improve the quality of their writing. In discussion with the inspectors, the children in year 7 read with fluency and expression, talked about their enjoyment in reading and spoke knowledgeably about a wide range of books, including classic literature.
- The children achieve very good outcomes in numeracy. In the foundation stage, the children engage positively with practical mathematical activities. Across the school, most of the children have a clear understanding of key mathematical concepts and mental mathematics strategies; they are continuing to improve their use of relevant mathematical vocabulary to explain their reasoning. By year 7, the children are competent in mathematical processes and display flexible thinking when attempting more complex number calculations and unfamiliar problems.
- In the nursery unit, the children select independently their areas of play and resources and self-manage their daily routines. Almost all of the children develop well their language skills through imaginative role-play and the highly effective group story, song and rhyme sessions. Most of the children can count, match, sort, use language associated with position and develop their understanding of ordinal number. The children's investigative, scientific and technological skills are developing effectively through their creative play in the construction, sand and water areas.
- The children are confident, motivated and very well disposed towards learning; they are respectful, courteous and their behaviour is exemplary. The children demonstrate very good skills in decision-making and problem solving. In discussion with the inspectors, a group of children talked about the school's unique history as a refuge for Jewish children during World War 2 and demonstrated well their understanding of diversity and the importance of respecting and accepting others of different religions and cultures.

6. Quality of provision

- The children benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum and access to wide-ranging and enriching extra-curricular opportunities, trips and visitors; these support very well the development of the children's knowledge, interests and wider skills.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning and development benefit very well from the in-class support and the high quality interventions provided. The children are involved fully in the creation and review of their individual education plans and make very good progress against the targets set.
- The planning, learning, teaching and assessment across the school are highly effective in meeting the children's needs. Almost all of the lessons observed were good or better; just under 70% of the lessons were very good. This high quality classroom practice was characterised by: high expectations of, and for, the children's learning; active, investigative approaches; and, suitably differentiated learning tasks. The classroom assistants are highly valued for their work and make a very effective contribution to the children's learning.
- The staff have created a literacy rich environment and the school's programme for language and literacy; this enables progression across the key stages in talking and listening, reading and writing. A key strength of the school's provision is the well planned reading programme where children develop effectively their fluency and enjoyment of reading using a wide range of levelled reading books, class novels, guided reading activities and regular visits to the school library.
- In the mathematics lessons, the teachers provide stimulating activities to meet the children's needs and ask probing questions to help the children clarify and consolidate their mathematical thinking. The children experience a well-balanced coverage of processes, number, shape and space, measures and handling data across all key stages. Overall, very good levels of challenge and progression are maintained from year to year. Across the school, the teachers are developing and improving systematically how the children acquire, use and explain their mental mathematics strategies and extending the cross-curricular and real-life application of mathematics both in and beyond the classroom.
- The school has made a considerable investment in the provision of information and communication technology resources; these support, enrich and extend very well the children's learning across the curriculum.
- The quality of the provision in the nursery unit is very good. The observations and evaluations of the children's learning are systematic and rigorous and ensure that individual learning needs are met effectively. The quality of the staff's interactions is consistently very good; in particular, the staff extend the children's language, mathematical and thinking skills by listening and responding appropriately to their ideas. The nursery team's capacity to review, implement change and bring about improvement in their practice is highly effective.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the children benefit from the school's holistic approach to care and welfare; this impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership team is led by a long-serving principal who inspires the respect and confidence of the whole school community and provides outstanding leadership. The team is highly effective in promoting a collegial approach to the school development process, which is focused on empowering staff, creating a coherent school community and improving the children's learning and outcomes.
- 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 very well informed about the life and work of the school. They take a proactive role in the school improvement process, allocate resources appropriately and effectively and monitor closely the progress and standards of the children and the developmental work carried out by the staff.
- The middle leaders provide very effective leadership of their areas of responsibility. Self-evaluation is well-embedded into their practices and facilitates well the ongoing improvement. The continuous professional development of all of the staff is a key feature in this work.
- The school development plan (SDP) is informed by the school's very effective self-evaluation processes, including the meticulous analysis of the school's internal data and the high levels of consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors. The SDP is underpinned by clear and appropriate action plans, which guide very well the improvement work; the outworking of the action plans is evident in the high quality of the provision for learning and in the children's outcomes.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

8. Overall effectiveness

Millisle Primary School and Nursery Unit 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.

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

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 management²:

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.

² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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