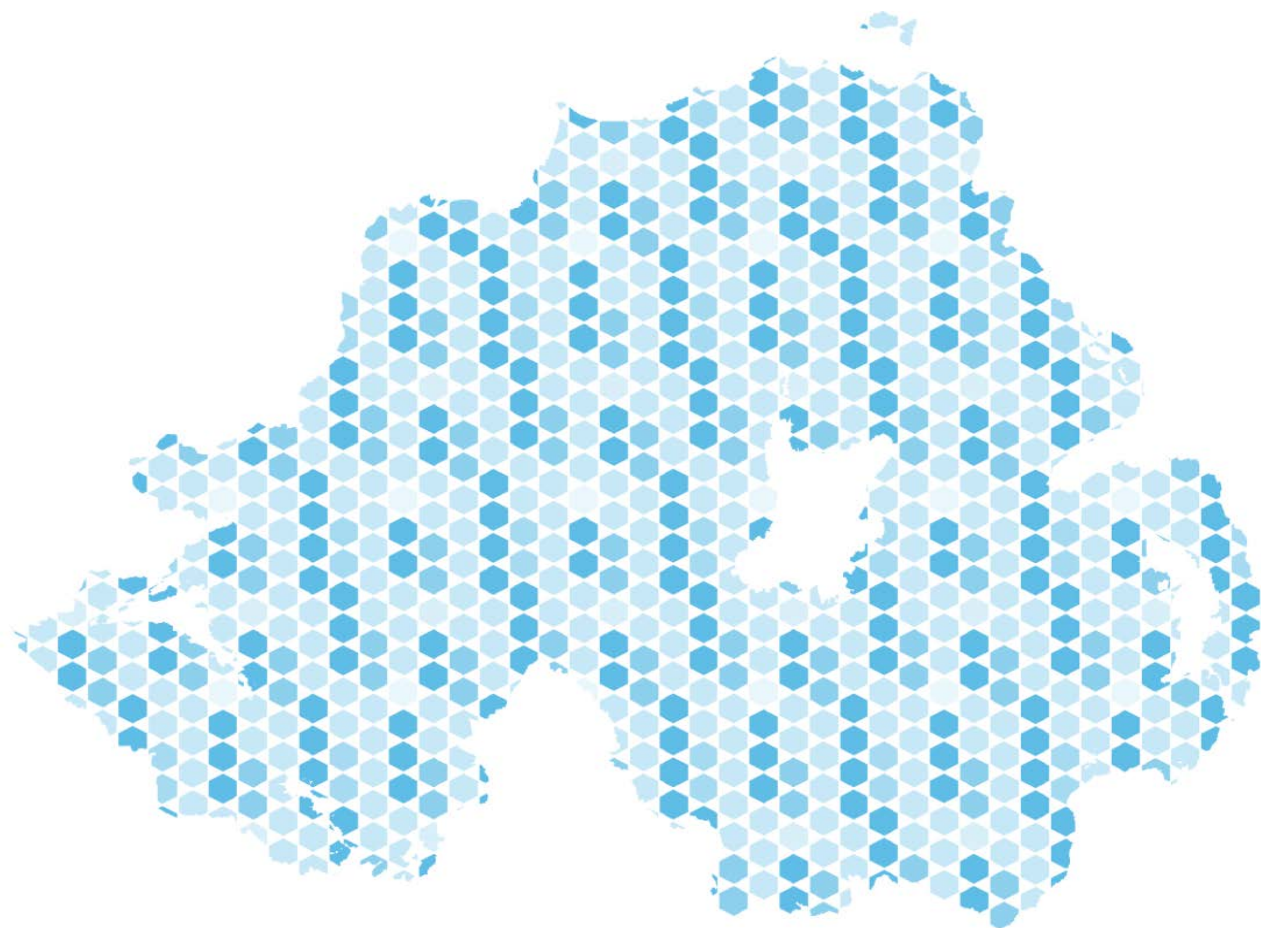


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary
School, Belfast

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.

Ten percent of parents responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents commended the school's leadership team, the helpful and approachable teachers, and the provision for children who have additional needs in their learning. Sixty-eight percent of the teaching and non-teaching staff completed questionnaires and were highly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the school. They emphasised the child-centred ethos, the shared high expectations for the children and the cohesiveness of the staff team. 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.

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

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, also known locally as Park Lodge, is a maintained primary school which serves mainly the communities of the upper Antrim Road and Glengormley. Enrolment has been steady over the last four years and the school is regularly over-subscribed. The school community benefits from well-established educational links with other local controlled primary schools in cross-community initiatives.

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	620	611	609	618
% School attendance	96.9	96.5	96.4	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	9	9	13	13
No. of children on SEN register	109	100	113	114
% of children on SEN register	17.5	25	25	18.4
No. of children with statements of educational need	8	19	19	21
No. of newcomer children	*	7	9	14

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	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are quietly confident, highly motivated to learn and loyal to their school. They engage enthusiastically in their lessons, place a high priority on accuracy and take pride in the presentation of their work. The children are equally at ease when working independently or interacting with their peers, engaging respectfully with one another. They reflect maturely on their learning and consider alternative approaches and solutions before selecting the most appropriate strategy. A significant strength of the school is the development of the children's creativity, as demonstrated in the standards they attain in music, both in class and in local festivals where individuals and ensembles have recently won awards.
- The school's internal performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and in mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.

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

- The highly articulate children organise and express their ideas clearly and coherently. From the foundation stage, they listen attentively to one another and reconsider their thinking in response to the contributions from their peers, displaying outstanding oral skills. The children use precise, sophisticated vocabulary to write competently and with increasing individual flair for a range of purposes and audiences. The children's opportunities for creative writing are very well conceived; as a consequence, the standard of their writing in both poetry and prose is very high. During the inspection, the year 7 children read with a high degree of fluency and expression. Their mature understanding and enjoyment of literature is reflected in their knowledgeable comments about their favourite authors and novels.
- In mathematics, the children apply accurately their understanding of concepts when making decisions and finding solutions in their mathematical learning, and to justify the calculation strategies they are using. Beginning at the foundation stage, the children use precise mathematical language with increasing confidence and accuracy. As they progress through the key stages, the children can handle simple and more complex computation competently and are skilled, confident and flexible in their mathematical thinking. By year 7, the most able children know and apply an extensive range of mental strategies to solve mathematical problems.
- The children who require additional help with aspects of their learning are supported effectively to become independent, enthusiastic learners who are well-equipped to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. The marked improvements in their all-round development enable the children to progress successfully to the next stage of their learning.
- The children's achievements and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are very good. The children acquire progressively a range of key ICT skills so that, by year 7, they are adept in researching, evaluating and presenting their work.

6. Provision for learning

- Almost all of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective in deepening the children's understanding of key concepts and progressing their learning. In these lessons, the intended learning is clear and builds on the children's previous experience. The teachers and classroom assistants use a range of strategies which are closely matched to the children's needs and abilities. As a consequence, the children are highly engaged in well-planned activities. The teachers' use of practical resources and high-level questioning help extend the children's thinking and improve the quality of their work. The assessment of learning is detailed and thorough, informing the next stage in the teachers' planning. While most of the teachers use assessment for learning strategies well, marking for improvement is not implemented consistently across the year groups. The teachers have identified appropriately the need to develop further this area of their practice. The school retains a specialist music teacher who extends the children's appreciation and experience of making music. The children use their ICT skills very competently during lessons to consolidate aspects of their knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator has appropriately identified the need to broaden the opportunities for the children to use ICT for data handling, interactive design and extend their creativity across the curriculum.

- The provision for those children who require additional support in aspects of their learning is highly effective. There is a well-balanced blend of individualised and small group programmes, including carefully tailored withdrawal sessions and the support of relevant external agencies, to meet the children's literacy, numeracy, social, emotional and sensory needs. The skilled classroom assistants provide high levels of support for the children and are involved meaningfully in planning for, and delivering, important aspects of the provision. The intervention strategies are reviewed rigorously with a view to enhancing the children's achievements and promoting their holistic development. The individual and group education plans are informed well by systematic analysis and tracking of the children's progress; the focused targets are shared regularly with the children and their parents.
- The provision for literacy is underpinned by a policy which outlines the school's understanding of, and approach to, developing high-level language and literacy skills. Across the three key stages, the literacy lessons are very well structured to develop the children's inter-connected skills in reading, writing and talking and listening. Reading is promoted very successfully through the literacy-rich environment and the varied and challenging reading-related activities which complement the children's experiences and interests in, for example, art and music. The children have excellent opportunities to write in a variety of real contexts. A particular strength of the school's provision is the highly effective development of the children's literacy skills across other areas of learning, most notably in the World Around Us, and in the important work of the Eco-council. Additionally, in art and design the children learn about painters and produce mature pieces in that style. The writing emerging from, and inspired by, these studies is of an equally high quality.
- The whole-school programme for mathematics is comprehensive and provides for balanced coverage across the areas of mathematics and clear progression through the school. A key feature of the provision for numeracy is the range of varied and engaging mathematics tasks which extend the children's thinking and enable them to make connections between their mathematical learning and everyday life. Across the three key stages, well-focused mental mathematics activities provide an enjoyable and challenging introduction to lessons and the teachers make effective use of resources, including ICT, to engage the children's mathematical curiosity, develop their financial capabilities and deepen their mathematical understanding.
- The provision for pastoral care is outstanding. The mutually respectful, inclusive ethos ensures that all members of the school community are valued. The pastoral and academic elements are intrinsically linked, reflecting the core values of the school in developing the children in a holistic manner. The promotion of positive behaviour is very effective; the children's personal and academic achievements are recognised and celebrated regularly. The children hold positions of responsibility, for example, as year 7 prefects and in the combined school and Eco council. The children have contributed significantly to the recent developments within the school through the planning and the organisation of, for example, extensive fundraising for the outdoor classroom. The whole-school focus on the environment, allied with the effective programme for personal development and mutual understanding, contributes significantly to the development of the children's social awareness and prepares them to become active citizens in society.

- The staff give very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through a focus across the year groups on healthy breaks and lunches, a well-balanced programme for physical education and a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The members of the senior leadership team demonstrate complementary strengths and enjoy the support of the staff and the parents. They set high standards for themselves and for all members of the school community. The senior leadership team has developed, and articulated, a clear strategic vision for sustained improvement, based on a well-embedded culture of reflection and continuous professional development for all staff. They work closely with the children, parents, staff and governors in the school development planning process.
- The school development plan and associated action plans are focused on appropriate priorities for improvement. The processes for monitoring, evaluating and review are implemented consistently across all areas of the school's provision. These systematic processes are well informed by an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative evidence, including the rigorous analysis and use of assessment data, complemented by meaningful consultation with all stakeholders. There is clear evidence of the impact of this improvement work on the quality of the children's learning and on the standards they attain.
- The co-ordinators provide highly effective leadership in their respective areas of responsibility. Their work is underpinned by high levels of specialist knowledge and experience which enable them to plan for, and implement, change in a measured way. The strategic establishment of curricular teams has supported the on-going monitoring and review of the provision to ensure continuity, progression and consistency across the year groups.
- The school has very effective links with the parents and the local community, with parent volunteers supporting regularly the children in the school and Eco council. The parent-teacher association is very well supported and raises substantial funds for curricular developments. Local business volunteers contribute to the upkeep of the outdoor planting area and participate in the Reading Partnership scheme. The children benefit from a wide range of cross-community initiatives including video-conferencing, sporting, curricular and business links, and the recent planting of a wildflower meadow with children from the adjacent preparatory school.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that the community can have a high level of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors benefit from detailed first-hand evidence provided by the post-holders and are involved directly in such key aspects of the school's provision as safeguarding, health and safety and curriculum development.

- The school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 said that they were happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

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.

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