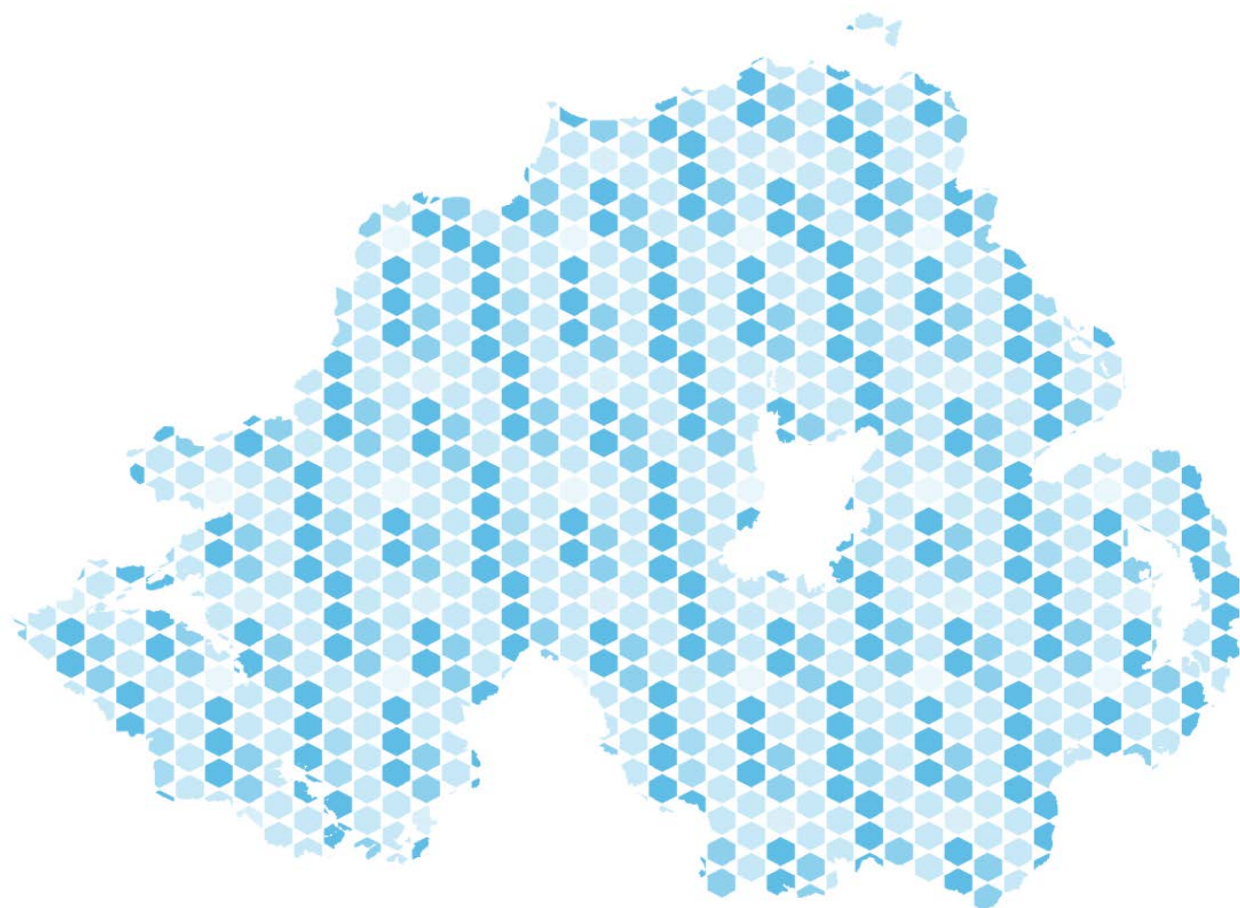


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Upper Ballyboley Primary
School, Ballyclare,
County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
October 2015



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

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
Appendix 1: Health and Safety	
Appendix 2: Accommodation	

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

Twenty-one percent of parents and 43% of staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents expressed their appreciation of the staff's care and dedication in meeting the children's needs and their support for the recently-appointed principal. Just under half of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were also positive. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors on the questionnaire responses 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;
- the quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on numeracy; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Upper Ballyboley Primary School is a small controlled primary school situated in an attractive rural location approximately midway between Ballyclare and Larne in County Antrim. Children attend from the wider surrounding area. The enrolment has remained steady over the past four years; the school is operating at approximately 40% capacity. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has reduced significantly in the past four years while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has increased. At the time of the inspection, the new principal had been in post for less than a year.

Upper Ballyboley Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	41	44	44	41
% School attendance	97.9	96.9	96.1	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	15	18	25	9
No. of children on SEN register	5	8	7	10
% of children on SEN register	13	18	16	23
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Important areas for improvement
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Requires significant improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are well-motivated to learn; they settle quickly to their work and listen attentively to one another. From an early stage, with teacher direction and guidance, most of the children present their written work neatly and carefully. The younger children play collaboratively and share their resources well and across the school, when they are given the opportunity, the children co-operate well with their peers.
- Overall, the children need more consistent opportunities throughout the school to acquire and develop their thinking skills and personal capabilities. This includes developing the confidence to take risks in their learning and to explain more fully their reasoning. The children would benefit from more consistent opportunities to extend their learning through effective and more regular use of information and communication technology.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. In English, a majority of the children are progressing in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Most of the children achieve satisfactory or better standards in numeracy although there is some variation in their year-on-year progress. The younger children are working towards a secure knowledge of basic mathematical concepts and number facts. They need more challenging opportunities to apply these at an appropriate level in their play and daily routines. The children in year 7 demonstrate a good knowledge of most of the areas of the mathematics curriculum.

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

- There is, however, some inconsistency in the level of flexibility in the children's mathematical thinking: they rely on a limited range of mathematical strategies to solve problems and to explain their methods of calculation. Across the key stages, the children need to experience greater challenge in their learning activities and acquire systematically the associated mathematical language to help them clarify and explain their understanding of key mathematical concepts.
- The children identified with special educational needs in the school are progressing well in all aspects of their learning and personal development both in relation to their identified needs and in line with their ability.

6. Provision for learning

- Appropriately, the teachers have begun to improve the planning, evaluation and assessment to match more closely the needs of all the children. Assessment for learning and other strategies to encourage the children to reflect on and improve the quality of their work are at an early stage of development.
- The teaching observed during the inspection ranged from important areas for improvement to good. In just under one-half of the lessons, the teaching had significant strengths: in the remaining proportion, there were important areas for improvement. In the most effective practice, the teachers ensure that the purpose for learning is clear and is linked well across the curriculum; they extend the children's thinking through well-targeted questioning. In order to ensure greater consistency in the children's learning experiences, the staff need to develop a shared understanding of high quality learning and teaching.
- A strength in the school is the extent to which the children with special educational needs are cared for and integrated fully in all aspects of school life. The school has developed appropriate processes for early identification and provides regular withdrawal sessions to address the children's varying needs. The targets for learning in the individual education plans, however, are not precise enough to track the children's progress. The individual education plans need to contain more explicit detail including measurable targets, specific teaching strategies and greater opportunities to involve the children in improving their own work. The classroom assistants support the children's learning well.
- The teachers are currently improving the school's numeracy programme to provide a clear line of progression from year 1 to year 7 and to ensure more balanced coverage and greater continuity in the development of the children's skills, knowledge and understanding. In the foundation stage, the children's early understanding of aspects of mathematics needs to build more clearly on their pre-school experiences to ensure suitable levels of progression and to exploit more fully the potential mathematical learning in the regular routines and in learning through play. There is inconsistency in the level of challenge in the numeracy activities; the teachers need to ensure that the learning experiences and teaching strategies employed in each class are matched more closely to the range of the children's abilities. The children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to apply mental strategies to problem-solving and to discuss their approaches using mathematical language in order to develop greater flexibility in their mathematical thinking.

- The good quality of the pastoral care is evident in the very caring, inclusive family ethos which is clearly valued by the children, staff, governors and the parents. The school council and the Eco-council provide increasing opportunities for the children to take on roles and responsibilities and to contribute their ideas and opinions. The children show respect and care for one another and their environment; during the inspection, their behaviour was exemplary.
- The school gives good attention to healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, promoting the provision of healthy snacks and a good range of after-school sports activities to promote healthy lifestyle choices. The younger children would benefit from more regular, planned opportunities for outdoor play.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership has identified accurately and begun to address, with the support of the staff and governors, important areas for improvement in the school's provision and leadership and management. There are improved arrangements for consultation to seek the views of the children, parents, staff and governors and increased use of performance data to identify low achieving and underachieving learners. These approaches are beginning to inform school development planning and are promoting the culture and ethos of collegiality which is essential for improvement to be effected. The parents, staff and governors are fully supportive of the school's commitment to further improvement work.
- The school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement are at an early stage. Leadership and management at all levels within the school needs to be developed further as soon as possible in order to enable those in post to carry out more effectively their respective responsibilities and, in particular, to lead improvements in: the quality of the learning and teaching; the use of efficient systems to monitor and evaluate the provision; and the standards which the children attain. The staff need to ensure that their action plans contain measurable targets for the actions which are intended to address the inconsistencies in the quality of the provision and bring about further improvement in the children's learning.
- The governors are increasingly informed and active in key aspects of the life and work of the school and are intent on improving further the quality of the provision for all the children. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors need to be better informed about developments in the primary phase and continue to access further relevant governor training.
- 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:
 - the designated governor and the designated teacher need to complete their training;
 - the policy to promote positive behaviour needs to be completed fully and shared with the parents;

- the arrangements for toileting and changing of children needs to be agreed and fully understood by all of the staff; and
- appropriate written risk assessments need to be carried out for all trips and visits.

In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 said that they feel safe and happy in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

8. Overall effectiveness

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 areas for improvement are to:

- improve the quality of the learning and teaching;
- raise further the standards the children attain; and
- develop effective processes for self-evaluation to inform strategic decision-making and effective action-planning at all levels.

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.

APPENDIX 1

Health and Safety

1. For vehicles leaving the school premises there is restricted vision of oncoming traffic on the main road. This poses a potential hazard.

Accommodation

1. The children in the foundation stage are accommodated in a mobile with no toileting facilities.

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