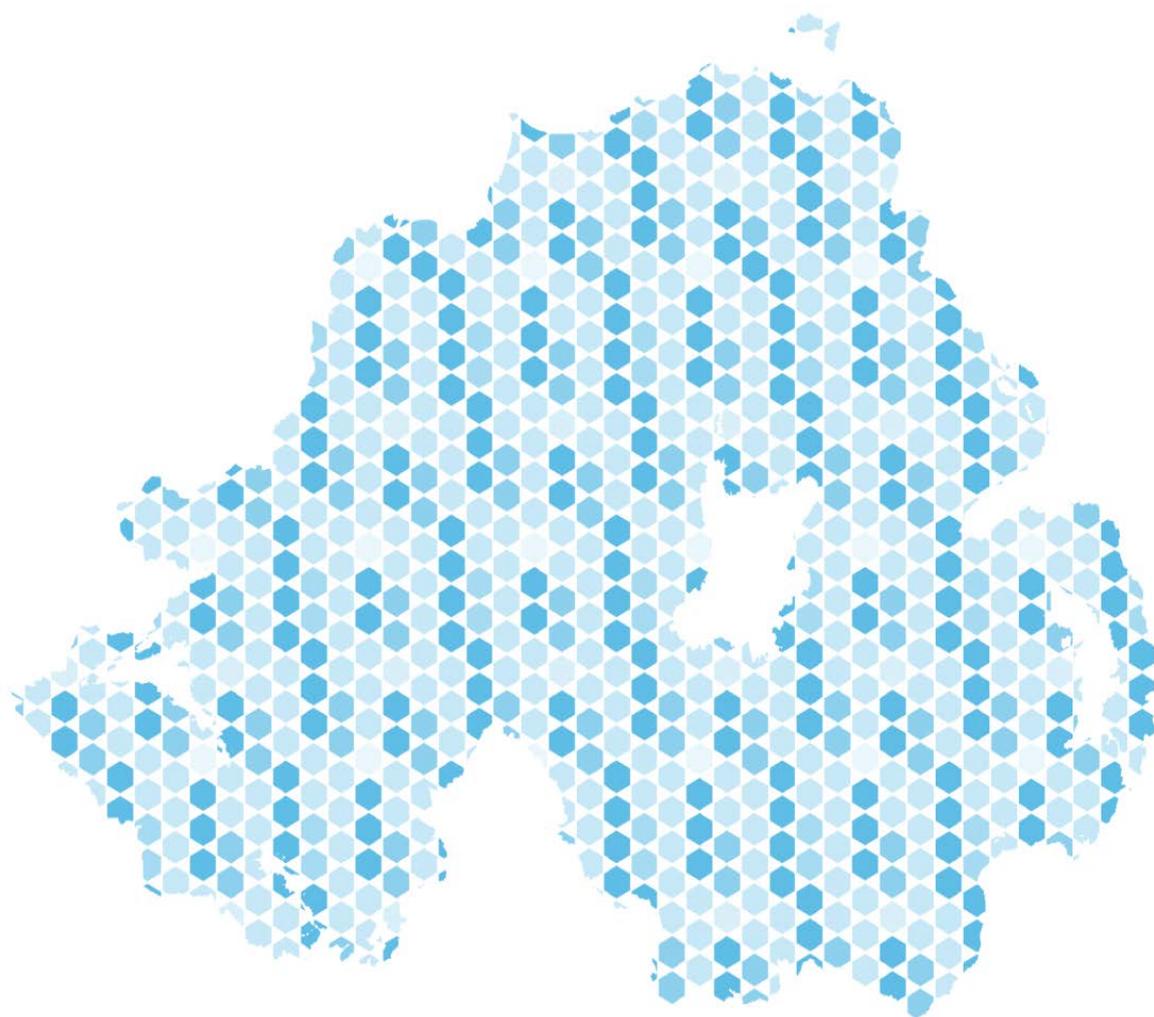


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dunclug Primary School,
Ballymena, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
April 2014

eti

*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
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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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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 Education and Training Inspectorate's (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 teaching and learning, 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 representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number issued (total number in the school per category)	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	71	*	*	*
Teaching staff	6	5	83%	5
Support staff	13	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

ETI is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents about the life and work of the school. As a result, the response rate to the parental questionnaire may be low.

In the very small number of responses, the parents report that their children are happy in school and are well supported by the teachers. The teaching and support staff indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the work of the school, including the positive and supportive working environment. The governors expressed support for the work of the staff and outlined the important role the school plays in the local community. The year 6 children spoke positively about the aspects of school life they enjoy; they valued highly the support given by their teachers.

2. Context

Dunclug Primary School is situated in the north of Ballymena and shares a spacious site with Dunclug Nursery School and Dunclug College. The enrolment has remained steady over that past four years and currently stands at 84. The children come from the immediate vicinity, and increasingly from the two main communities. At the time of the inspection, approximately 68% of the children were entitled to free school meals. The school has identified approximately one-half of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	90	86	89	84
% Attendance (NI average 94.7%)	90.7	93.1	92.63	92.88
FSME Percentage ¹	52	62	59	68
% of children on SEN register	42	35	34	51
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	5
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

Source: data as held by the school.

*fewer than 5

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall finding

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children demonstrate good learning behaviours. They are respectful to one another, their teachers and visitors to the school. They work well in pairs and groups to share ideas and support one another. They respond well to activities that challenge and extend their thinking and understanding. Throughout the school most of the children have good oral skills; they pose, and respond to, a range of effective questions and by the end of key stage (KS) 2 most of the children's reading is developing well and they can write in a variety of forms. In mathematics, most of the children have a good knowledge of number operations and, by the end of key stage (KS)2, they are developing effectively a range of mental strategies to solve a variety of mathematical problems.

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

- An analysis of the KS2 performance data in three of the past four years² shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance has fluctuated from above to below the Northern Ireland (NI) average³. Compared with schools in a similar free school meals category, the levels of attainment in English and mathematics are broadly in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average. The school's internal performance data shows that in English most of the children achieve standards that are in line with their ability or above expectation, reflecting the appropriate emphasis in developing literacy throughout the school over the past few years. In mathematics, the majority of children achieve standards that are in line with their ability or above expectation. The school has begun to raise the profile of numeracy throughout the school and has identified appropriately the need to develop the provision and raise the standards further.
- The children with statements of special educational needs are integrated fully into all aspects of the school life; they work well alongside their peers and make good progress in their learning in line with their ability.
- The children are competent in using a range of information and communications technology (ICT) applications and, last year, all the children achieved the expected levels in the information and communications technology (ICT) Accreditation Scheme from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

6. Provision

- The quality of almost all of the teaching observed was good and very good in equal measure. In the most effective practice, the lessons are well planned with a good range of activities and resources, the teachers build appropriately on the children's prior learning and use effective questions and prompts which lead to extended responses from the children. The children have good opportunities to reflect on their own thinking and learning, and to share their ideas and strategies during and at the end of lessons. The teachers integrate ICT well into classroom activities to support and extend the children's learning, in particular, through the very effective use of handheld tablet devices.
- The teachers plan their work conscientiously and, in the best practice, their evaluations focus on the quality and extent of the children's learning. The medium-term and longer-term planning needs to provide more detail and to focus clearly on broadening the range of teaching strategies to meet the identified needs of all the children. The teachers mark the children's work conscientiously and positively; the written feedback needs to include more specific and targeted guidance to help the children improve the quality of their work further.

² Due to the current transition period in the arrangements for statutory assessment, this analysis of the end of KS2 performance data is based on the outcomes up to but not including the 2012/13 school year.

³ The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is very good. The school has a welcoming and inclusive ethos. The teachers and learning support assistants know the children well and provide high levels of care, guidance and support. There is an appropriate focus on promoting positive behaviour and in developing the children's sense of fairness and respect for others; as a result, there are very good working relationships at all levels throughout the school. The children take part, in significant numbers, in a range of activities beyond the classroom which develops well their personal and social skills.
- The school identifies at an early stage, and supports effectively those children who require additional help with aspects of their learning. The children's learning benefits from the well-structured withdrawal classes and the effective work of their learning support assistants and teachers in class. This work is guided appropriately by comprehensive and well-focused individual education plans.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity.

7. Leadership and management

- The teaching-principal and staff are committed to meeting the individual needs of the children. They have placed an appropriate emphasis on building the children's self-esteem, improving the standards they attain and developing purposeful links with the parents. There is a collegial approach to the on-going improvement agenda which is supported by well-developed self-evaluation processes and an effective focus on seeking out and accessing staff development opportunities in support of the school's priorities. School development planning is informed well by appropriate consultation with the parents, the children, the staff and the governors.
- The action plans for literacy and numeracy need to make more effective use of all the evidence available, including the internal assessment outcomes, and to identify more clearly, the specific actions and classroom activities that would bring about further improvements in the quality of the provision and the standards the children attain. The co-ordinators have identified appropriately the need to review and update the whole-school planning for literacy and numeracy to ensure greater continuity and progression in the children's learning.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well informed about all aspects of the work of the school. They carry out their duties conscientiously and supportively, and understand well the challenges and opportunities facing the school.
- 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.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, 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 year 6 children reported that they felt secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The key area identified for improvement is the need to:

- develop a more strategic and consistent approach to planning at all levels, making more effective use of all the information available, to improve further the quality of the provision and the standards the children attain.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress in the areas for improvement.

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