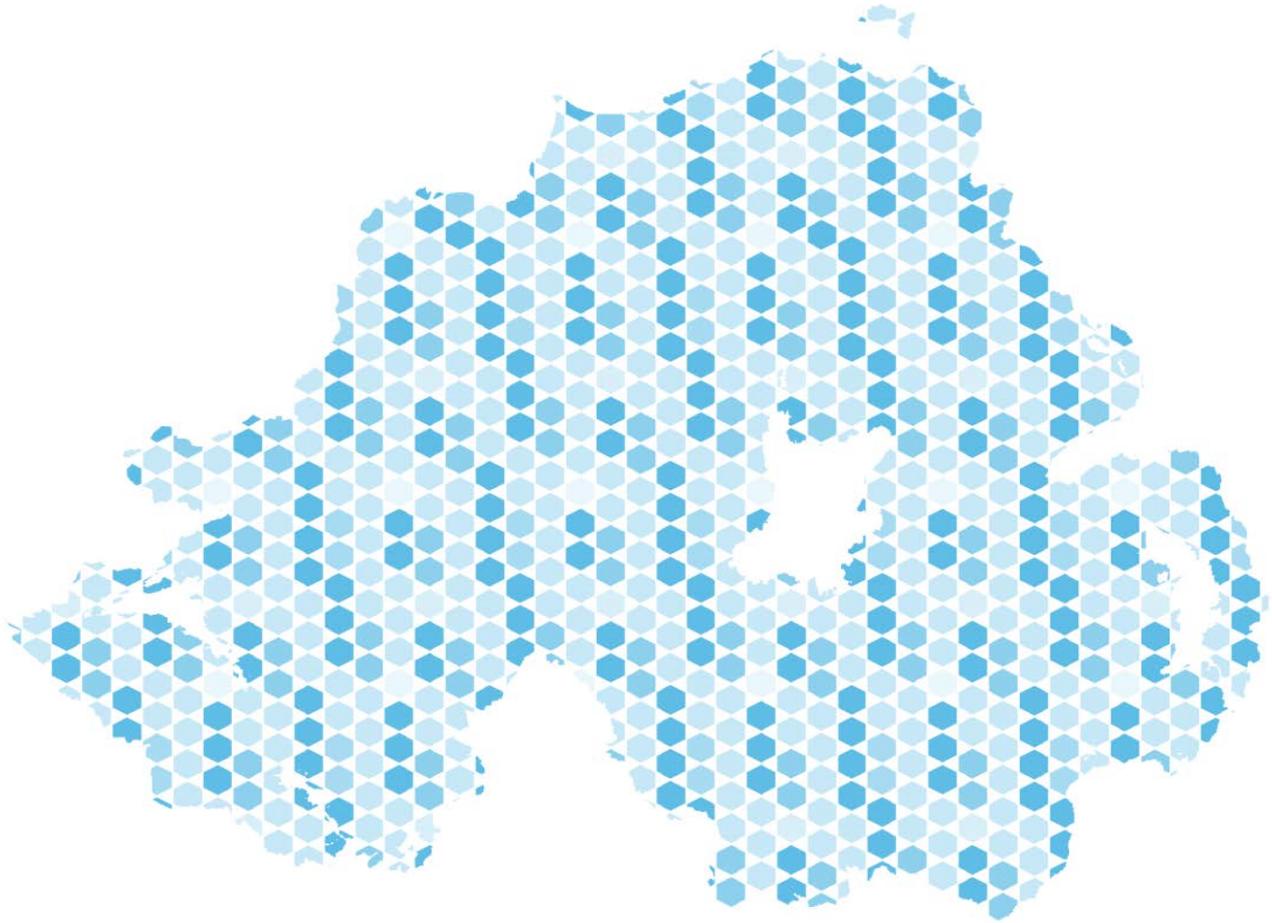


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Newtownards Model Primary
School, Newtownards,
County Down

Report of an Inspection in
May 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



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

Fourteen percent of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. Their responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted: their appreciation of the approachable, hard-working and caring staff; the high expectations of the staff for the children's learning; and the range of extra-curricular opportunities afforded to their children. Fifty-two percent of the staff (teaching and non-teaching) completed the confidential questionnaire; their responses were also highly positive. They emphasised: the many opportunities for professional development; the good quality of the working relationships; the supportive, collegial ethos across the school; and the effectiveness of the senior leadership team. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors all of the views expressed in the confidential questionnaires.

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

Newtownards Model Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in the centre of the town. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the town and surrounding area. The enrolment has increased slightly over the last four years and the school currently operates at maximum capacity. Over the same period, the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has decreased slightly.

Newtownards Model Primary School Belfast	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	396	403	405	411
% School attendance	94.7	95.5	95.0	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	29.8	29.8	25.7	30.9
No. of children on SEN register	101	85	94	90
% of children on SEN register	25.5	21.1	23.2	21.8
No. of children with statements of educational need	5	*	6	6
No. of newcomer children	5	11	11	9

Source: data as held by the school.

N/A not available

* less than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- Almost all of the children develop positive attitudes and dispositions to learning. They are articulate, friendly and mannerly; their behaviour is exemplary. They are motivated and settle quickly to work. Across all key stages, nearly all respond well to the learning activities provided which develop effectively and progressively their thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- The school's 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 achieve in line with their ability or above expectation. In mathematics, most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress and achieve in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The children achieve very good standards in English. Throughout the school, almost all of the children's talking and listening skills are well developed; when provided with the opportunity to do so they work together collaboratively in pairs and small groups, expressing their own ideas confidently. The children are developing well their comprehension skills; in particular, higher order thinking skills linked to class novels and guided reading books. In the foundation stage the children are making very good progress in early reading and writing skills; nearly all of the children are willing to 'have a go' at early writing. In year 2, a few of the children were confident and willing enough to read for the inspectors. The most able children in year 7 enjoy reading fiction texts from well-known contemporary authors; they read with fluency and enjoyment and are able to discuss a range of genre.

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

- The children achieve very good standards in numeracy. In the foundation stage, play based learning provides valuable opportunities to promote and develop early mathematical awareness as well as mathematical language. The children use materials creatively and maturely to express their own ideas and sustain high levels of involvement in mathematical activities. By year 7, the most able children have a good knowledge and understanding in all areas of mathematics. They complete calculations accurately, are confident in their use of mathematical language and reasoning; however, there is inconsistency in the children's flexible thinking about mathematical processes.
- The children develop their skills in using information communication technology (ICT); they are confident and competent in using appropriately a wide range of ICT devices and applications to enhance their learning across all key stages and particularly in the foundation stage. As they progress through the school, by year 7, they achieve very good standards in ICT skills.

6. Provision for learning

- The quality of the long- and medium-term planning across the school is variable; the school has rightly identified the need for a more coherent approach to planning so as to guide more effectively the teaching across the key stages in all areas of the curriculum. In the best practice, short-term planning is tailored sufficiently to meet the needs of all the children within the class and the teachers' regular evaluations of the planning guides well the next steps in learning and teaching. However, the best practice is not disseminated consistently across the school. All of the teachers need to focus more clearly on the extent to which learning has been successful, to use more consistently robust evaluations of their planning, and to develop future planning in order to improve the quality of learning and teaching.
- Most of the lessons observed were good or better, and were effective in promoting learning, with just under one-half being highly effective. The teachers know the children well and have established very good working relationships in all of the classes. In the highly effective practice the teachers build on the children's previous learning and employ an appropriate range of strategies and stimulating resources, including ICT. Often, in the best practice, the teachers use active learning approaches to engage and motivate the children; they use effective questioning to elicit extended responses from the children and use the plenary session to consolidate their understanding and evaluate the children's responses to their learning. The classroom assistants provide valuable and effective support for the children's learning and for the development of their social skills.
- In the less effective practice, in a minority of lessons, there is a focus on the completion of activities and tasks rather than on the learning outcomes; the lessons are over-directed by the teacher, and the work is not sufficiently challenging or matched well enough to the abilities of all the children.
- The school's internal data is used well, particularly at individual and class level, to inform the provision and in the best practice it is helping to ensure that the individual needs of the children are being met. While the teachers implement a constructive marking policy and mark the children's work regularly and positively, there is a need for all the teachers to mark for improvement.

- Most of the literacy lessons observed were effective in promoting learning. Often, the teachers use very well a range of interactive reading approaches to stimulate the children's interest and to broaden their thinking and vocabulary. The quality of the presentation of the children's written work is generally of a high standard and they write independently and for a variety of purposes and audiences in most year groups. The teachers need to ensure there are more consistent opportunities for extended writing to foster further the children's creativity and provide greater challenge.
- While most of the mathematics lessons observed were effective in promoting learning across the school, there is inconsistency in the quality of the children's learning experiences and their mathematical competence. In the most effective practice in mathematics, the teachers use a variety of strategies, ask open-ended questions to challenge the children's thinking and provide appropriate differentiated tasks that meet well the range of individual needs within the classroom. The inspection confirms that the school has identified necessary areas for improvement in the provision for mathematics and numeracy, including the need to develop a more consistent approach to short-term planning in order to guide the teachers and ensure consistency across the key stages.
- There are well-established processes for the early identification of the learning needs of the children. The sound knowledge of the teachers of the social, emotional and educational needs of the children informs the effective intervention programme of withdrawal and in-class support for those who require additional help with aspects of their learning. Some of the targets on the individual education plans are realistic and clear, enabling progress to be measured and celebrated; more work is needed to streamline the target-setting and to engage the children and the parents more meaningfully in this process.
- The highly effective pastoral care is characterised by mutual respect and supportive relationships. All staff place an agreed and valued focus on developing and sustaining the children's health and well-being. The commitment to the welfare of the children is evident in the caring and inclusive school ethos. The children contribute valuably, through the school council, to the school rules and 'behaviour for learning' policy; they take on these important responsibilities maturely. They benefit from participating in well-planned activities with a wide variety of visiting organisations. The children's engagement develops their confidence and prepares them well for the next stage of their learning. Through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which include sport, music and drama, the children's interests develop and their learning advances.
- The school promotes healthy eating and physical well-being by providing healthy snacks and a physical education programme.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership is highly committed to the well-being of the children and the staff. They have developed an ethos throughout the school which supports learning and they have adopted a collaborative approach to coordinating the areas of learning. Continuing professional development is a priority; the teaching and support staff engage in development opportunities aligned closely to the priorities identified in the school development plan (SDP).

- A comprehensive SDP² and associated action plans are informed by the needs of the children, detailed analysis of internal performance data, and meaningful consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors. The school has identified appropriately the need to create more specific and measurable action planning targets. The curriculum co-ordinators are effective in leading and managing their areas of responsibility and are developing well a range of monitoring and evaluation practices however, the senior leaders need to build the capacity of the co-ordinators to develop more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the impact of teaching on improving the children's experiences and outcomes.
- The school maintains effective links with the parents who are actively encouraged and supported by the school to become involved in their children's education. The parents are kept informed about the life and work of the school through a well-maintained school website, newsletters and the active parent and teachers association. While the school links with local primary schools to discuss teaching and learning, they have identified the need to extend further their partnerships with the local community and schools to develop the children's learning and wider achievements.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are actively involved in the life and work of the school and provide appropriate support in relation to the areas of achievements and standards, finance and provision for learning. They need to provide a challenge function to the senior school leaders.
- 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 feel safe at school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns.

8. Overall effectiveness

The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The inspection has identified the need for senior leaders, governors and co-ordinators to use action planning more effectively to monitor and evaluate rigorously the quality of the planning, teaching and learning across the school.

The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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

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