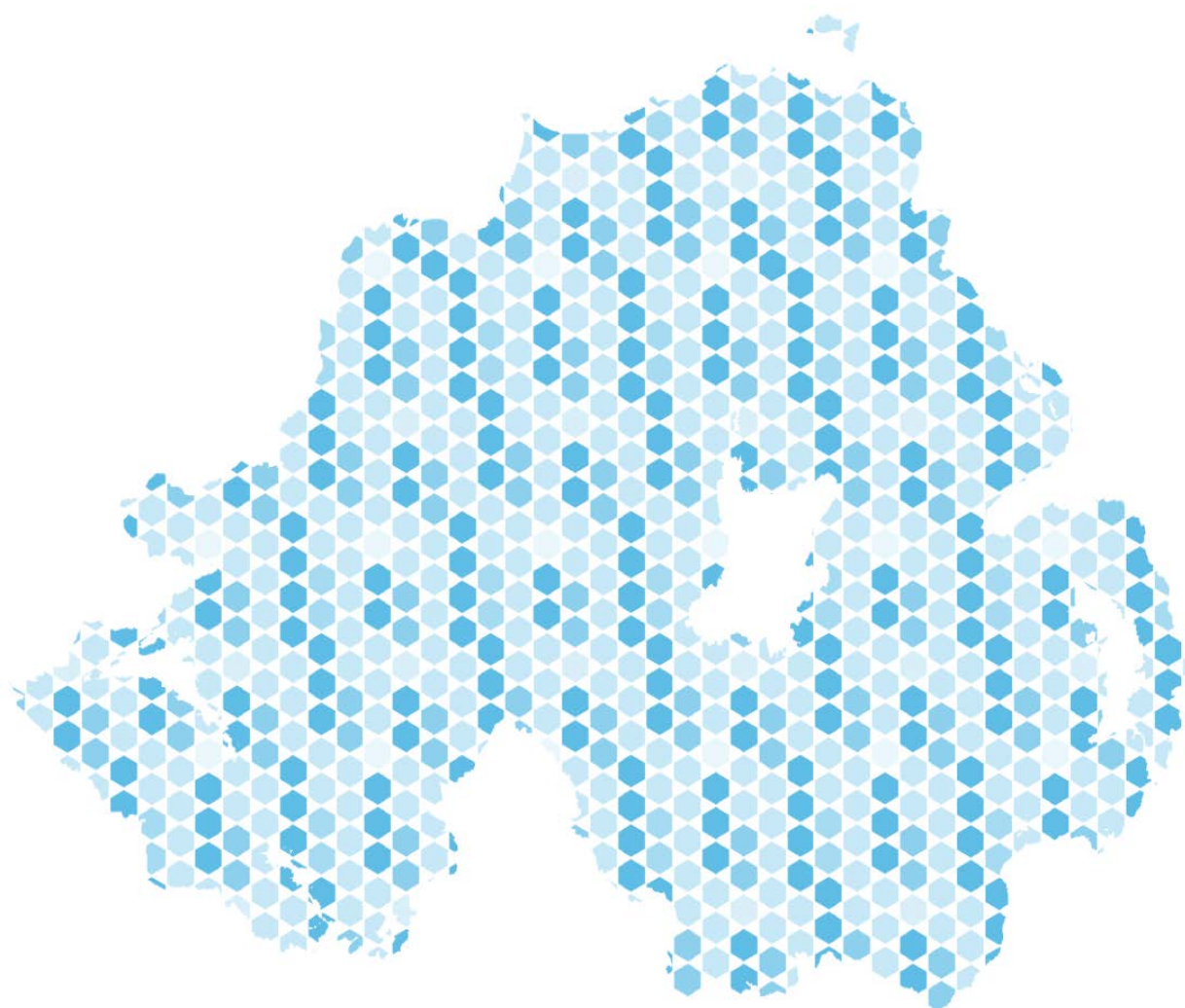


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Teresa's Primary School
including the Speech,
Language and Communication
Centre, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
December 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
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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.eti.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed teaching and learning, and the children's written work. They held formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- meetings 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.

Twenty-seven percent of the parents (91 in total) responded to the questionnaires; their responses indicated very high levels of support and satisfaction with the work of the school. In particular, the parents commented positively: on the caring, dedicated staff; the leadership of the dynamic, innovative principal; and, the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available to all the children. Ninety-one percent of the staff (41 in total) completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive about almost all aspects of school life. In particular, they highlighted the strong sense of community and teamwork within the school, the excellent working relationships among the staff and their enjoyment of working in the school. The ETI has reported the responses to the principal and the governors, and has discussed with them the small number of minor issues arising from the questionnaires.

2. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

3. Context

St Teresa's Primary School is situated on the Glen Road in West Belfast. Almost all of the children who attend the school come from the local community and the surrounding area. The school's enrolment has risen in the last three years, with a significant increase of almost 10% to 463 children in this academic year. The school has a Speech, Language and Communication Centre (SLCC), consisting of three classes for year 1 to year 4 children. Thirty-five children attend the SLCC all of whom have statements of educational need. Approximately 44% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 30% of the children, including those in the SLCC, require additional help with aspects of their learning.

St Teresa's Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	396	393	415	463
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.1 (95)	93.5 (95.2)	94.8 (94.9)	n/a
FSME Percentage ¹	34%	42%	48%	44%
% (No) of children on SEN register	32 % (126)	35 % (137)	36 % (149)	30 % (139)
No. of children with statements of educational needs	31	32	42	47
No. of newcomers	10	12	16	14

Source: data as held by the school.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good
Speech Language and Communication Centre	Very Good

5. Achievements and Standards

- The children are very welcoming, well motivated and their behaviour is exemplary. They engage enthusiastically with the learning process and, when given the opportunity, articulate well their ideas and opinions. They are very willing to help others, interact confidently with their peers, take pride in their achievements and present their work to a good standard. The children have a keen sense of social justice through their participation in a wide range of community and global projects. They achieve very well in sport, musical events and in creative competitions; the fostering of the children's musical, creative and sporting talents is a significant feature of the school's provision.
- The school's internal assessment data shows that most of the children make good progress in English and mathematics, in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Nearly all of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are working in line with their ability and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The children in the SLCC demonstrate increasing levels of confidence, effective social skills and make very good progress in line with their ability.

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

- Throughout the three key stages, the children communicate confidently and, when given the opportunity, share their views during class or group discussions. The children's enjoyment of, and competence in, reading develops well through the use of appropriate reading schemes, and, in key stage (KS) 2, the children's analysis of text is progressed effectively through the detailed study of novels. By year 7, the most able children read with fluency and expression and explain their understanding of key phrases, text and imagery. In the foundation stage (FS), the children are developing a good range of vocabulary enabling them to write personal recounts based on their experiences. In key stage (KS) 1 and KS2, the children produce good examples of persuasive and recount writing and poetry. Overall, the children need further experience of different writing styles; they require more regular opportunities for personal and extended writing both in English and across the other areas of learning, with greater attention being given to developing accuracy in spelling.
- Across all key stages, the children's enjoyment in the learning of mathematics is evident. They gain appropriate knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts, particularly in the area of number. By year 7, the more able children can apply skilfully a range of mathematical strategies and can self-correct when appropriate. They can think flexibly in problem-solving tasks and can apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts.
- In the foundation stage and KS1, the children attain high standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and use it to enhance their learning. In KS2, the children need more opportunities to build on and further develop their ICT skills; the school has identified appropriately this as an area for development in the school development plan.

6. Provision

- The teachers medium-term planning focuses appropriately on what the children will be able to do, know, and understand; however, there is inconsistency in the quality of long, medium and short-term term planning across the school. There is a need to review and further develop the planning throughout the school in order to ensure appropriate challenge and progression in the children's learning and to further improve the good standards they attain. It is appropriate that planning has been identified as a significant aspect in the school development plan and the staff have begun to evaluate the effectiveness of the planning across the school.
- Nearly all of the teaching observed was effective in promoting learning. The classroom assistants provide valuable support to the teachers and the children. In the best practice: the teachers have high expectations for what the children can achieve; the teachers build effectively on the children's prior knowledge and make meaningful connections in the children's learning; and, effective use is made of plenary sessions to consolidate the children's understanding. In order to improve further the quality of learning the children need more opportunities to develop as independent learners, particularly at KS2.

- In literacy, the children acquire systematically the core reading skills through the development of their phonological awareness and through modelled, shared and guided reading. A range of intervention programmes, involving school staff and the wider community, support the children to develop their confidence and progress their reading skills. The current literacy action plan identifies appropriately the need for the teachers to develop a coherent writing programme.
- The teachers plan well for the active engagement of children in numeracy lessons and use a wide range of teaching strategies to promote the children's enjoyment in their learning. The programme has a balanced coverage of all areas of mathematics but does not provide sufficient continuity and progression within and across the year groups, particularly in shape and space, data-handling and mental mathematics. In the best practice, the teachers exploit opportunities to set mathematics in real-life contexts and promote mathematical language and understanding in other areas of learning.
- The school has a very inclusive approach to special educational needs provision. The staff provides appropriate, individual support for those children who are identified as having difficulty with aspects of their learning. They benefit from a range of support programmes to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, such as small group withdrawal sessions, reading partnerships and volunteer reading sessions. Currently, in the mainstream, the individual education plans (IEPs) are not specific enough to inform the teachers' planning or to support well the children's progress. There is a need to review the IEP's to include specific, measurable targets to enable the teachers to monitor and track more effectively the children's progress in their learning. A wide range of external support is used to address individual children's needs and the effective liaison between teachers and outside agencies supports well the children's learning and development.
- The children in the SLCC enjoy the calm and nurturing environment within the centre. The teachers and classroom assistants know the children well and plan effectively to provide stimulating and challenging lessons. They set appropriate individual targets for each child and use a range of effective strategies to develop the children's language skills and build their self confidence. The teachers liaise effectively with parents and they are well informed on how to support the children in their learning. The children enjoy regular opportunities to integrate with their peers and by KS2 the more able children reintegrate successfully to mainstream classes.
- The quality of pastoral care in the school is very good and the outworking of the school's vision "deeds not words" permeates the life and work of the school. There is an inclusive and supportive ethos throughout the school and high quality working relationships at all levels. The children's views and opinions are sought and valued. They make meaningful contributions to the life and work of the school, through initiatives, such as the playground 'buddies scheme' and the school council. The children in year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their experiences in school including their enjoyment of learning and the high level of support they receive from their teachers.

- There are effective arrangements in place for communicating and consulting with parents to involve them appropriately in their children's education and the ongoing development of the school. The school fosters and maintains very good links with other schools in the West Belfast area and the wider community. There are excellent international links through initiatives, such as, the Comenius and Ugandan project; these links enhance, develop and enrich the learning experiences for both the children and the staff.
- The school gives good attention to healthy eating and physical activity through the promotion of healthy breaks and provides regular opportunities for the children to engage in energetic physical activity, which encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The recently appointed principal provides highly effective, strategic leadership based on professional knowledge and an excellent understanding of school improvement processes. He is supported well by the vice-principal, senior leadership team and all the staff. They work effectively as a team and are highly committed to meeting the pastoral and academic needs of all the children.
- The co-ordinators are enthusiastic and manage well their respective areas of responsibility. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop the evaluative role of the curriculum co-ordinators to include more robust monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision and the dissemination of the existing good practice.
- The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed school development plan (SDP) that has involved extensive consultation with all stakeholders. The key priorities of the school development plan focus appropriately on improving further the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards that they attain.
- Based on the evidence presented 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. It is clear that the governors have a well-developed strategic overview of the school and knowledge of the school's place within the community; they engage in staff development and provide high levels of challenge and support to the work of the senior leadership team.
- 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 children reported that they felt safe and 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 which includes the need:

- for all teachers to review and improve the quality of planning at all levels throughout the school to ensure appropriate challenge and progression in the children's learning and improve further the good standards they attain.

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

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