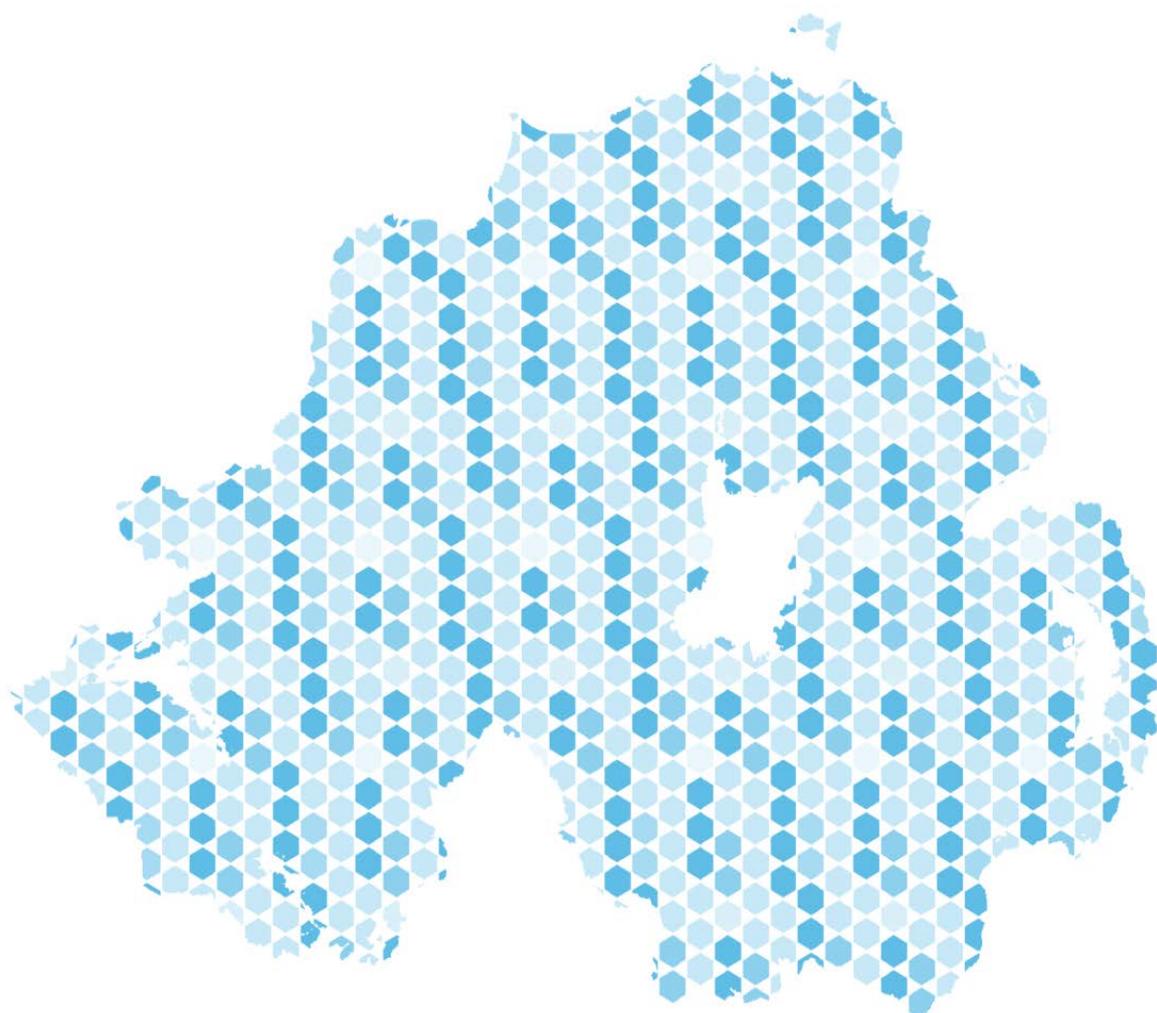


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

New Row Primary School,
Castledawson, Co Derry

Report of an Inspection in
May 2014

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 | Number returned | Percentage returned | Number with comments |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Parents | 117 | 21 | 18 | 15 |
| Teachers | 8 | 8 | 100 | 6 |
| Support Staff | * | * | 25 | * |

* fewer than 5

The ETI is trialling a range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the percentage questionnaires returned may be low.

The ETI reported to the principal and representatives of the governors the many positive responses and the few concerns emerging from the questionnaires.

2. Context

New Row Primary School is situated in the village of Castledawson in County Derry. Many of the children live in the immediate area; a minority travel from further afield. The school is a popular one and regularly oversubscribed. At the time of the inspection, approximately 18% of the children were entitled to free school meals and approximately 19% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

| New Row Primary School | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Enrolment | 169 | 177 | 181 | 174 |
| % Attendance | 96.3 | 96.0 | 96.0 | 97.0 |
| FSME Percentage ¹ | 12.4 | 15.8 | 19.3 | 17.9 |
| % (No) of children on SEN register | 24.7 (42) | 21.4 (38) | 18.8 (34) | 19.3 (35) |
| No. of children with statements of educational needs | * | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| No. of newcomers | * | 5 | 9 | 6 |

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

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

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 under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall finding

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Overall Performance Level | Very good |
| Achievements and Standards | Very good |
| Provision | Very good |
| Leadership and Management | Very good |

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are motivated and have a very positive disposition towards their learning. They are clearly proud of their school and their behaviour is exemplary. The children settle quickly in their lessons, listen carefully and respectfully to the adults and to each other, and are keen to contribute to discussions and to present their ideas. When given the opportunity, they work well with one another in paired and group work, and take responsibility for their own learning; a majority display high levels of critical thinking.
- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meal category, the performance in English and mathematics is well above the average in three of the past four years. For the year below average, the school's internal analysis shows that most of children who did not achieve a level four at key stage (KS) 2 had statements of special education needs or were at least stage 3 on the Code of Practice.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.

- Across the school, the children have very good talking and listening skills. By year 7, the most able children read fluently and can discuss the themes, characters and content of texts. They write fluently and with creativity for a variety of purposes and for different audiences. There is a need for better progression in a minority of the children's handwriting skills.
- The children have a very good understanding of key concepts across the mathematics curriculum. In most of the lessons observed, the children applied their knowledge very well to problem-solving and practical investigations. In most classes, the children's mental mathematics strategies are developing very well, and support well their learning and thinking in mathematics.
- The children who have statements of special educational needs work well alongside their peers, and most make good progress in reaching their identified targets, attaining standards in line with their ability.
- The achievements and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are very good. The children in year 4 and year 7 were entered for the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) information and communication technology (ICT) Accreditation scheme, and achieved standards which in recent years were at or above the Northern Ireland average.

6. Provision

- The quality of the lessons ranged from outstanding to good. In most of the lessons, it was very good or outstanding. In the most effective practice, the children benefited from well-planned, structured lessons which were linked well to previous learning. The teachers used skilful questioning to encourage children to think and express their opinions; the skills and knowledge acquired were consolidated effectively through well-planned plenary sessions. In a few lessons, the learning and teaching were not matched sufficiently to the needs, interests and abilities of all of the children. The principal and staff have identified appropriately the dissemination of the outstanding or very good practice to all of the classes as a key priority.
- The children's use of ICT, including the forward planning for their use of the most up-to-date ICT tools, including tablets, is very good.
- The individual education plans contain well-focused targets for further improvement. The school makes effective use of a range of performance data, including standardised tests, to identify children who need extra support and track carefully the children's progress. The staff liaise closely with external support agencies to ensure the children's needs are met effectively.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. This is underpinned well by the excellent working relationships at all levels throughout the school community. In particular, the children benefit greatly from the high priority given to the care of the individual child in both academic and pastoral terms. They are given good opportunities to take on a range of roles and responsibilities through, for example, their active participation in assemblies and the student council. There is a wide range of effective reward systems in operation and the children's work and achievements are celebrated well throughout the school. The children's learning experiences are enhanced further through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school has a wide range of effective links with the local community.

- The school gives good attention to promoting a healthy lifestyle through the healthy break and lunch initiatives, and through the range of physical activities on offer.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal has a clear, shared vision for the school, focused very effectively on achieving the highest quality of learning, teaching and pastoral care for all of the children. He leads well the effective collegiate approach among all of the staff in meeting this vision. The school development plan (SDP) is appropriately informed by consultation with the children, the parents, the staff and the community.
- The curriculum co-ordinators, who carry a number of responsibilities, are developing a range of effective methods to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision in their specialist areas. They make good use of external benchmarked performance data to gauge the school's performance compared to other similar schools, and have started to use a much wider range of internal performance data, including standardised tests, to identify those children who are underachieving in literacy and numeracy. To improve further the already very good provision and standards, the school has identified appropriately the need to build further the capacity of the co-ordinators to lead and develop their areas of responsibility, with an accompanying use of a wider range of first-hand evidence to inform their thinking and forward planning.
- The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school; they provide an effective leadership challenge and support function to the principal. The parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance inspected. The governors now need to develop their role further, to review and challenge, where necessary, evidence presented to them from a fuller range of post holders on the effectiveness of the action being taken to raise standards further.
- 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 broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The children who met with members of the inspection team spoke with maturity about their connections with the school community and their wide range of learning experiences. They feel safe and secure in school and reported that they know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children, and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

APPENDIX

Health and safety

- The rear door of the school and the doors of the mobile classrooms do not have a sufficient degree of controlled access.

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