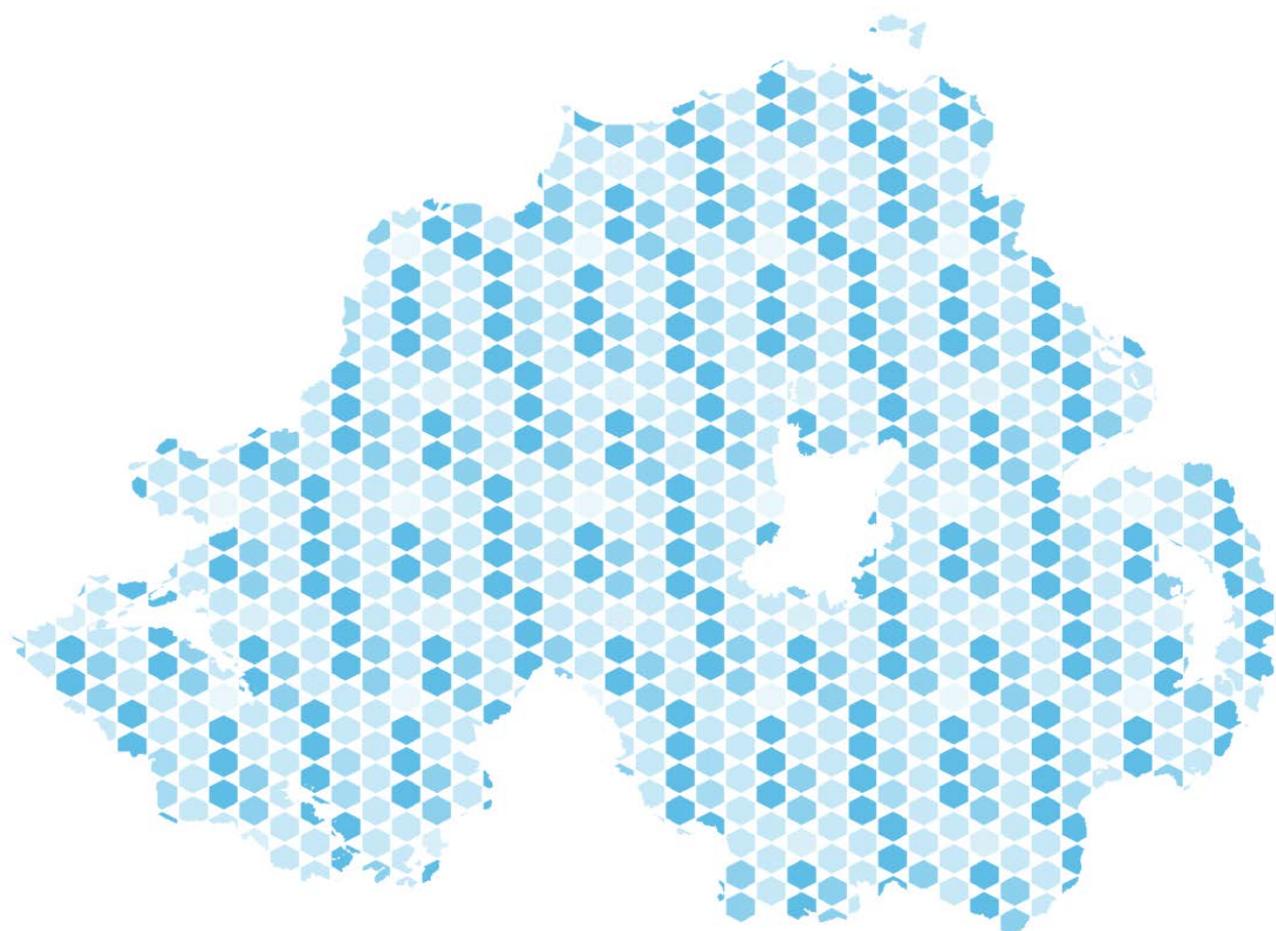


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

The Diamond Primary School,
Cullybackey, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
December 2015

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

Twenty-six percent of the parents responded to the questionnaires. Nearly all of the responses from the parental questionnaires were highly affirmative, indicating strong support for the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents acknowledged the caring, dedicated staff; the inspirational principal; and, the homely atmosphere in the school. Fifty percent of the teaching staff and all of the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were wholly positive; in particular, the staff highlighted their enjoyment of working in the school, their appreciation of the caring, forward thinking principal and the positive working relationships between the staff, children and parents. The ETI has reported to the principal and the chair of the board of governors, and discussed with them the main issues arising from the questionnaires.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests 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, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on numeracy; and,
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

The Diamond Primary School is a controlled school situated in a rural environment approximately two miles from Cullybackey. Almost all of the children who attend the school come from the village of Cullybackey and the surrounding rural area. The school's enrolment has remained steady over the last four years with an increase to 139 children in 2015. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals and those children who require additional help with aspects of their learning has fluctuated over the last four years. At the time of the inspection the principal and numeracy co-ordinator had been in post since September.

Diamond Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	133	136	135	139
% Attendance	96.5	96.5	96.2	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	12	5	10	8
No of children on SEN register	17	18	20	17
% of children on SEN register	13	13	15	12
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are very polite and welcoming. They engage enthusiastically in the learning process and respond positively to the teachers' high expectations. The children articulate well their ideas and opinions, they take pride in their achievements and present their work to a high standard. Their behaviour both in and out of class is exemplary and they engage easily with visitors to the school.
- The school's internal assessment data shows that the majority of the children make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The children achieve very good standards in numeracy. By year 7, the children are able to address confidently a variety of mathematical challenges, have a sound knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts and demonstrate good flexibility in their mathematical thinking. The work in the children's books is of a very good standard.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making progress, the majority are working in line with their ability and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Throughout the school the children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and creatively to enhance their learning.

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

6. Provision for learning

- The teachers plan conscientiously to ensure consistency, variety, continuity and progression in the children's learning. The planning is matched closely to the needs of the children, and in the best practice, the teachers' evaluations inform appropriately future action for individuals and groups.
- All of the teaching observed was effective in promoting learning. In the best practice, in just under half of the lessons observed, the teachers: build effectively on the children's prior knowledge and make meaningful connections in the children's learning; provide well planned opportunities for the children to work together and learn from one another; use effective open-ended questioning allowing the children to make confident, extended oral responses; and, the plenary sessions are used very well to consolidate learning. The classroom assistants provide valuable support to the teachers and contribute very well to the children's learning experiences, and their personal and social development.
- A notable strength of the school's provision is the highly effective use of ICT to support learning and teaching and to engage the parents in supporting their children's learning at home.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified at an early stage and specific diagnostic tests are used very well to inform support. A key strength of the provision is the child-friendly, individual education plans which are reviewed regularly and updated based on input from the teachers, children and their parents. There is a need to develop further the teachers' understanding of how to address more effectively the range and complexity of needs in the school and to monitor more robustly the progression of the children's learning.
- Across the school all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered with sufficient frequency to support the development of the children's knowledge and understanding. A particular strength of the provision is the development of the children's problem-solving and investigative skills in topical and real-life contexts throughout the key stages.
- The quality of pastoral care in the school is very good. The school's motto, "We are all different, unique and special," is evident throughout the school. A strong sense of family exists in the school underpinned by a caring, supportive and inclusive ethos. A very effective, whole school approach to promoting and rewarding positive behaviour encourages the children to develop their talents as well as raising their confidence and self-esteem. In addition, the extensive range of extra curricular activities enriches the learning experiences for the children. The children in year 6, talked enthusiastically about their experiences in school; in particular, they highlighted their enjoyment of learning and the very positive working relationships they have with their teachers.

7. Leadership and management

- There is effective strategic leadership in the school and a clear understanding of school improvement. The review of the leadership structure to develop distributive leadership across the school is having a positive impact on the school's development and is supporting further whole-school improvement. All of the staff work very well as a team and are highly committed to meeting the academic and pastoral needs of the children. There is a developing culture of self-evaluation across the school in order to bring about improvement.
- The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed school development plan and the associated action plans which inform and guide well the improvement agenda. In taking the school improvement work forward, there is a need to develop further the capacity of the staff to monitor and evaluate more effectively the quality and consistency of provision across the curriculum areas.
- 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. The governors have a very good range of complementary skills, provide appropriate support and challenge to the senior leaders and have a clear understanding of the work and context of the school.
- 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 very secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

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.

There is an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The area is to:

- develop further the capacity of the staff, particularly the co-ordinators, to monitor and evaluate more effectively the quality and consistency of provision across the school in order to raise further the standards attained by the children.

Health and safety

1. There is a need for secure fencing around the playground area to separate it from the main entrance and parking area.

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