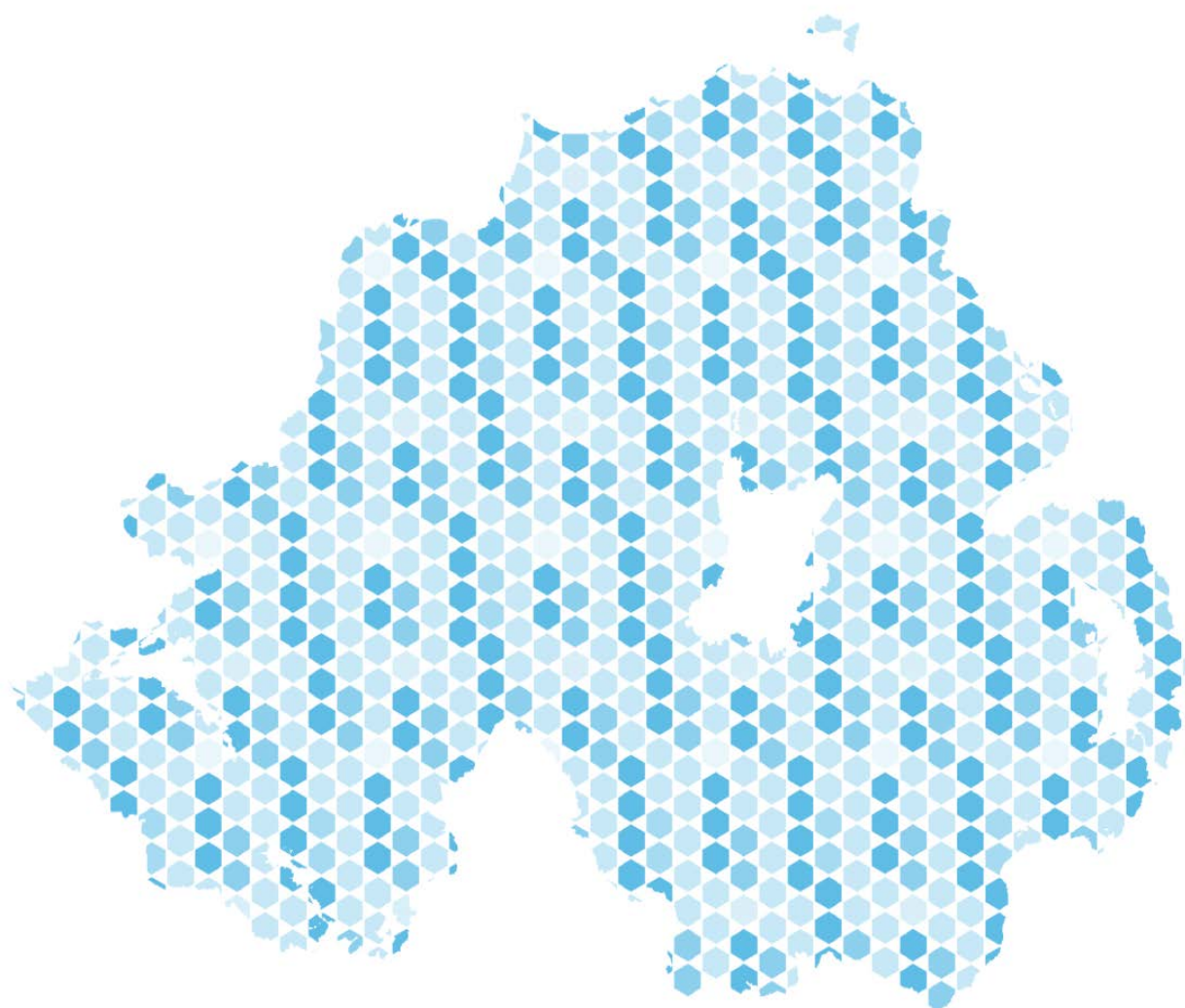


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Pond Park Primary School,
Lisburn, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
January 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
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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.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.

Thirty percent of the parents 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 happy, caring atmosphere in the school, the approachable, dedicated staff; the excellent leadership of the principal; and, the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available to the children. Ninety-six percent of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive about almost all aspects of school life. In particular, they highlighted the welcoming, pastoral ethos in the school, the strong sense of community and teamwork, 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

Pond Park Primary School is situated on Redpoll Avenue, off the Pond Park Road in Lisburn. Almost all of the children who attend the school come from the local area. The school's enrolment has increased significantly over the last four years and currently stands at 622 children. Approximately 18% of the children are entitled to free school meals and 16% of the children require additional help with aspects of their learning.

Pond Park Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	568	589	611	622
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.3 (95)	96.1 (95.2)	96.7 (94.9)	
FSME Percentage ¹	13%	16%	20%	18%
% (No) of children on SEN register	9% (51)	11 % (64)	13 % (79)	16 % (99)
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	5	6	12
No. of newcomers	15	18	21	36

Source: data as held by the school.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and Standards

- The children are very welcoming, highly motivated, inquisitive learners and their behaviour is exemplary. They interact confidently and engage collaboratively with their peers, are able to reflect on their learning in a mature manner and present their work to a very high standard. They respond very well to the positive learning environment that has been created in all of the classrooms and to the high expectations of their teachers and teaching assistants. The children achieve exceptionally well in a wide range of sport and musical events. The fostering of the children's musical and sporting talents is a significant feature of the school's provision and contributes significantly to their personal development.
- The school's internal assessment information shows that, in English and mathematics, most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are achieving in line with their ability or above expectation and are making very good progress in their learning.
- The children display high levels of talking and listening and engage confidently with their peers and adults in discussing their learning. By year 7, most of children are fluent readers and write in a clear, organised manner for a wide range of audiences. During numeracy lessons, the children engage confidently in mental mathematics activities and in investigative, problem-solving challenges within and beyond the classroom. By year 7, most of the children have a very good understanding of key mathematical concepts, show flexibility in their thinking and justify their answers using accurate mathematical language.

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

* less than 5

- The children achieve very good standards in information and communication technology and use it to enhance and develop their skills and capabilities.

6. Provision

- The teachers are enthusiastic and fully committed to meeting the academic and pastoral needs of all of the children. There is a coherent, highly effective whole-school approach to planning, learning and assessment throughout the school. The planning is very comprehensive and rigorous; it is well informed by thorough, insightful-evaluation of the children's previous learning and the teachers' knowledge of their individual needs. The work of the teaching assistants is of a high calibre and they play a valuable role in supporting the children's learning.
- The outstanding quality of planning is reflected in the very high standard of the lessons observed during the inspection. In the best practice, the teachers make outstanding use of incidental opportunities to optimise learning, build very well on the children's experiences and make meaningful connections in the children's learning. They use skilful questioning to develop the children's understanding, extend their learning and challenge their thinking. Effective use is made of plenary sessions to consolidate the children's knowledge and understanding.
- The teachers mark the children's work regularly and provide excellent guidance to the children on how to improve their work further. As the children progress through the school, they are able to evaluate and assess their own work and that of their peers.
- A significant strength of the foundation stage is the high quality of the learning experiences provided by the teachers. The younger children are developing very well their confidence, independence and self-management skills. The outstanding opportunities for promoting the children's literacy, numeracy, physical and creative development are woven holistically in an age appropriate way through the curriculum. The processes for monitoring and evaluating the children's progress in the foundation stage are exemplary.
- The holistic integration of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is a key strength of the provision. In literacy, an appropriate blend of strategies is used by all staff to support the children in the development of reading. The children's writing is enriched by the highly effective and meaningful talking and listening and reading experiences provided across the curriculum. In numeracy, the children participate fully, in language-rich mental mathematics activities and engage confidently in investigative, problem-solving challenges within and beyond the classroom. Appropriate targets have been set within the literacy and numeracy action plans to further enhance the outstanding provision throughout the school and to inform ongoing staff development.
- The provision for children who require additional support with their learning is outstanding. The children are well-integrated and demonstrate highly positive dispositions for learning. The school's strategic approach to early identification and intervention ensures that the children benefit from excellent tailored support both in class and during withdrawal sessions, to meet their individual needs. The highly effective individual education plans are innovative, well-conceived, and integral to each class teacher's planning. The outstanding communication between class teachers, the learning support staff and external agencies, ensures that the targets set in the education plans are met and that interventions impact positively on learning and the outcomes achieved by the children.

- The quality of pastoral care in the school is outstanding and is an integral part of the learning and teaching. The outworking of the school motto “caring for all” permeates the life and work of the school. A strong sense of community exists in the school underpinned by a supportive, inclusive ethos. The children enjoy taking on roles of responsibility such as playground buddies; their views on how to improve further the life of the school are sought through the well-established school-and Eco-council. The needs of the children are accorded paramount importance in the school and the holistic approach by the staff to the children’s development meets their personal, social and emotional needs very effectively.
- The school gives outstanding attention to healthy eating and physical activity through the promotion of healthy breaks and provides excellent opportunities for the children to engage in regular, energetic physical activity, which encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership team (SLT) has a clear vision for the school and provides outstanding strategic leadership. It is led by the principal who sets very high standards and inspires confidence and respect amongst the staff, children, parents and governors. The SLT possess complementary leadership skills and provide outstanding support and guidance for all the staff. A significant strength of the SLT is their commitment to empowering, supporting and enabling all members of the school community to carry out their roles effectively and achieve success; this has resulted in an engaged, dynamic school community with a clear sense of purpose and identity. The co-ordinators are highly effective and lead their areas of responsibility very well.
- 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 SDP focus appropriately on improving further the quality of the children’s learning experiences and the standards that they attain. The associated action plans guide effectively the development work across the school and there are robust processes in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the improvement work. In addition, a well conceived staff development programme ensures that the priorities for improvement, agreed in the SDP, are being met.
- There are very 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 parents’ contribution to school life, through the parent teacher association and numerous volunteering programmes is highly valued and an integral part of the school. The school fosters and maintains excellent links with other schools in the Lisburn area and the wider community; there are very effective links with the main feeder nursery school, post primary schools and a wide range of local organisations and charities, placing the school at the heart of the local community.
- 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 well-developed strategic overview of the school and knowledge of the school’s place within the community; they provide high levels of challenge and support to the work of the senior leadership team and are actively involved in the life and work 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 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 this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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