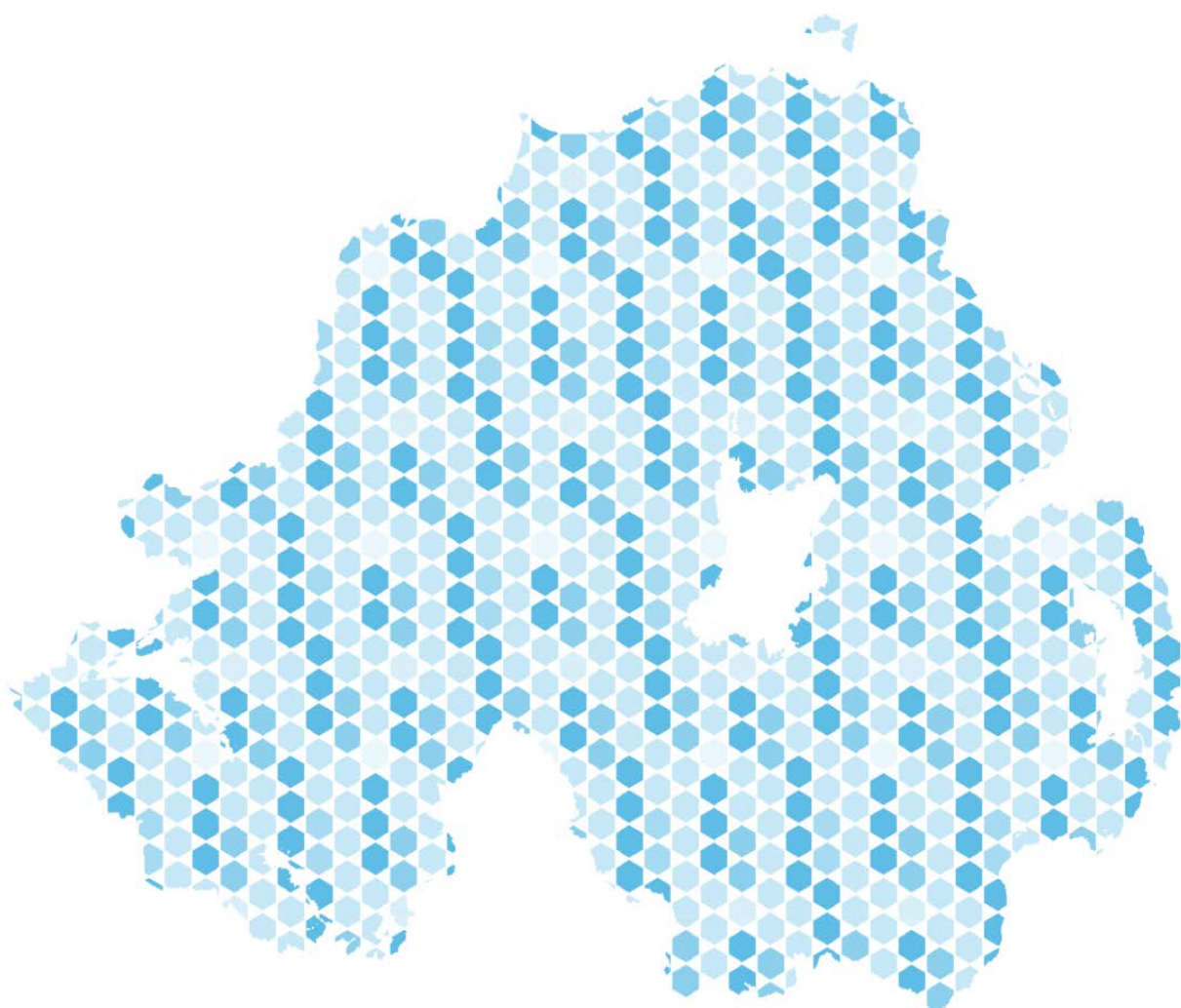


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Recarson Primary School,
Omagh, Co Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
October 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
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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

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision	3
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Conclusion	4
Appendix	

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

Twenty-eight percent of parents responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the approachable and friendly staff and the high regard held for the school in the local community. A significant minority of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were wholly positive. ETI has reported to the Principal and a representative of the board of governors and discussed with them the main issues emerging 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 in the school and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Recarson Primary School is situated in a rural area three miles east of the town of Omagh in the parish of Cappagh. The children come from the surrounding area within a radius of five miles. The school comprises of the original school building, built in 1963, and five mobile classrooms. Over the past four years, the enrolment has remained steady and currently stands at 117. Approximately 23% of the children are entitled to free schools meals and 23% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school leadership has undergone significant changes within the past academic year with appointment of a new principal and changes in the management structure.

Recarson Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	113	120	117	117
% Attendance (NI Average)	97.6%	97.2%	97.7%	-
FSME Percentage ¹	23.8%	16.6%	17.9%	23%
% (No) of children on SEN register	14.1%	21.6%	17.9%	23%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are highly motivated and articulate, responding positively to the high expectations set by their teachers. The children engage actively and enthusiastically in all of their learning; they work collaboratively in pairs and small groups demonstrating high levels of self-management and creativity. Their behaviour is exemplary; they are friendly and courteous to each other, the staff and visitors to the school.
- The school's performance data indicates that almost all of the children make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. The children's talking and listening skills are well developed and they display high levels of confidence when expressing their ideas and opinions. Throughout the school, the children read fluently, with expression and display consistent levels of interest in reading for enjoyment. The quality and accuracy of the children's written work across the curriculum, is of a very high standard showing progress across the three key stages. In numeracy, the children use and apply a wide range of mental strategies to solve mathematical problems. They use mathematical language confidently to compare and explain their thinking and can apply their mathematical knowledge in meaningful contexts. Almost all of the children requiring additional support with aspects of their learning make very good progress.
- The children's use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their learning is very good. They use ICT to engage in meaningful research and to present their ideas for a variety of audiences.

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

6. Provision

- A key strength of the school is the systematic and holistic approach to planning, learning and teaching and assessment. The teachers' planning across the curriculum is rigorous; it takes account of the children's prior learning, is differentiated appropriately and connects creatively the children's learning across the curriculum. The teachers' evaluations are reflective, sharply focused on the children's learning and used to inform future planning.
- The quality of the teaching observed was consistently of a high standard. The staff use questioning skilfully to explore and extend the children's thinking and oral responses. The learning intentions are articulated clearly, shared with the children and are linked to well-planned plenary sessions which effectively review and evaluate the children's learning.
- The teachers employ a wide range of assessment approaches to evaluate the children's learning. The school's internal assessment data and teacher observations of the children's progress are used effectively to inform the teaching and plan suitable interventions to support the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The teachers provide regular supportive oral and written feedback to the children who are encouraged to review their work and set personal targets for improvement.
- The school has developed a rigorous and coherent approach to the development of literacy skills that ensures that all aspects of literacy are taught in a connected, integrated way, using an appropriate range of strategies. The teachers use very well a blend of interactive approaches, including role-play strategies, both to stimulate the children's interest and to broaden their thinking and vocabulary. The children benefit from a wide range of mathematical experiences throughout each key stage. A recent focus on developing a systematic approach to the teaching of mental mathematics has ensured that the children can use a wide range of strategies to solve problems. Children have regular opportunities to develop their investigative skills through well-planned activities linked to meaningful contexts across the curriculum. Play-based learning provides valuable opportunities to develop the children's early literacy and numeracy skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is integrated effectively into the learning activities to support, enrich and extend the children's learning.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. The staff are highly committed to the holistic development of the children; a caring, friendly and inclusive ethos is evident throughout the school. The children are proud of their school and they show care and respect for one another. The culture of the school ensures that all of the children are listened to by the staff which is evidenced by, for example, the recent purchase of playground equipment to enhance playtimes. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop extra-curricular provision to further enrich the learning experiences of the children.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the healthy eating policy and the promotion of 'Fruit Fridays' thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The recently appointed leadership team is highly effective and has a strategic collegial approach to school improvement which is child-centred and firmly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Appropriate areas for development have been identified through a rigorous process of self-evaluation and are aimed at raising further the standards achieved by all of the children. Staff meetings and staff development days are well-planned and used effectively to build capacity throughout the school.
- The co-ordinators are rigorous in their approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and provide appropriate guidance to their colleagues to ensure a high quality of learning and teaching in the school.
- The school has effective links with the parents who are well informed about their children's progress and the life and work of the school through, for example, school newsletters and the informative school website. There are regular opportunities for the children to participate in the local feiseanna, sporting tournaments and inter school science and technology projects. There are very effective links with the local and wider community, including the local pre-school settings and post-primary schools which enhance further the children's learning.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are actively involved in the school development planning process and provide a challenge function in relation to achievements and standards, finance and the curriculum. The governors have reviewed appropriately the school's accommodation and the current arrangements for car parking. They have identified significant areas for improvement and have submitted a number of minor works applications and a major works application to the education and library board and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.
- 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 very 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.

Health and safety

1. There is a need to review the arrangements for controlled access to the main building and mobile classrooms.

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