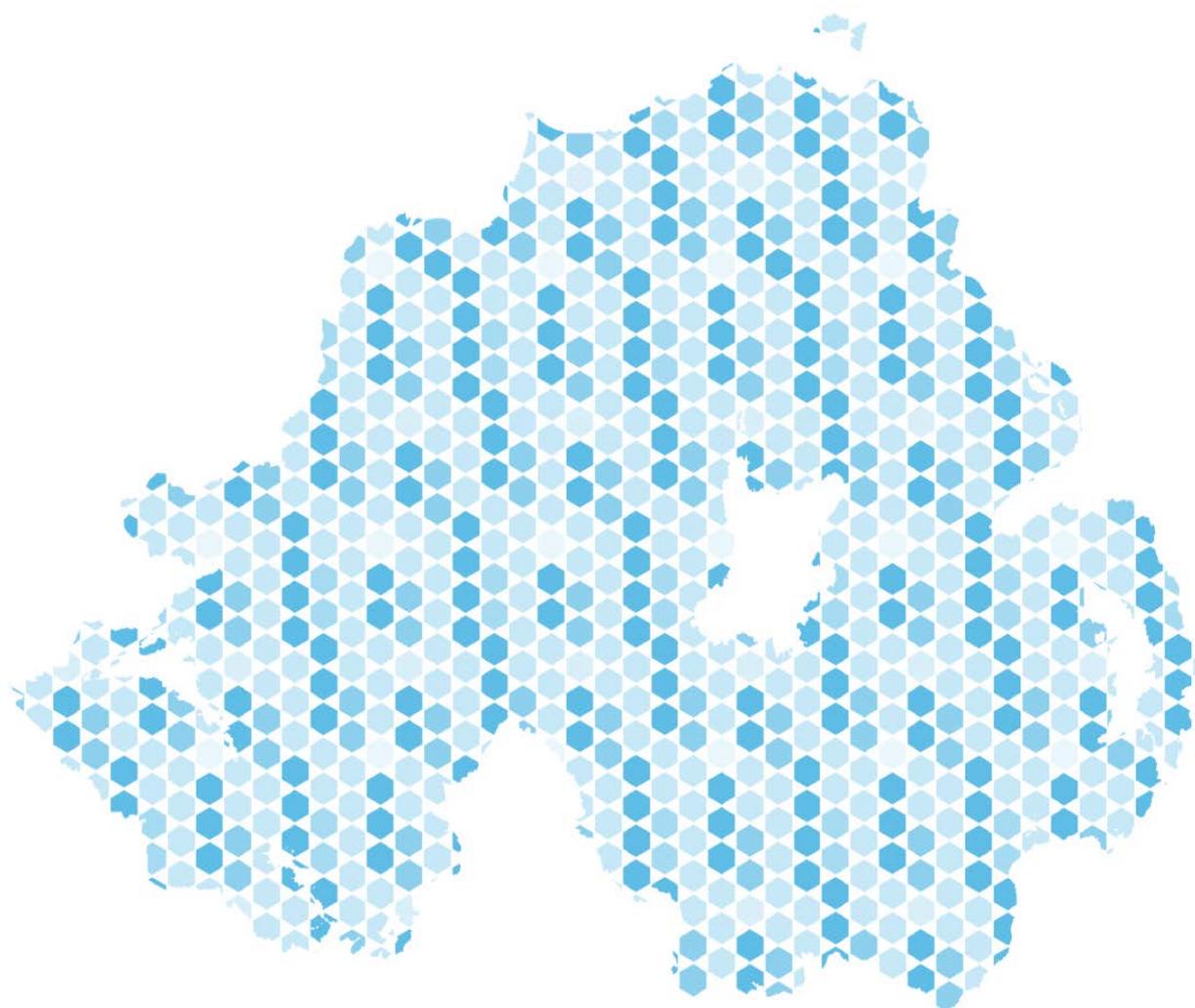


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Springfield Primary School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
November 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

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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, 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.

Nine percent of parents and 90% of the staff (teaching and non-teaching) responded to the questionnaires. The parental responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, they highlighted the very good working relationships at all levels within the school, the friendly and welcoming ethos and the highly dedicated principal and teachers. Almost all of the staff completed the questionnaire and their responses were very positive; they emphasised the strong team spirit among the staff and the very good staff development opportunities afforded to them by the highly respected principal. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the messages 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 for literacy in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Springfield Primary School is situated in Springfield Road, North-west Belfast. The enrolment of the school has increased by approximately 50% over the past four years and is currently 158 children. Most of the children travel to school by car from the surrounding area. Fifty percent of the children are entitled to free school meals and the school has identified 28% of children who require support with aspects of their learning. The school facilitates a local playgroup within its building. At the time of inspection, a substantial extension to the school's accommodation was about to begin.

Springfield Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	106	128	142	158
% Attendance (NI Average)	92.9	93.1	94.0	-
FSME Percentage ¹	50	50	50	49.5
% (No) of children on SEN register	26 (28)	26 (33)	32 (45)	28 (43)
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	9	9
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are highly motivated learners and engage enthusiastically in the interesting and creative learning opportunities provided by their teachers. A sense of fun and enjoyment of learning is evident, and the children work very well in pairs and small groups demonstrating respect for both their peers and the adults in the classroom. The children develop increased self-confidence, independence and maturity as they progress through the school. They show a clear sense of pride in their school.
- The school's performance data indicates that most of the 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.
- The children achieve very good standards in literacy. They are very confident in engaging with adults and are very competent in talking about their learning. Throughout the school, the children's standards of talking and listening are of a very high standard. By year 7, the most able children read with fluency and expression and have very good levels of understanding of their reading material. They discuss knowledgeably a range of authors and their reading preferences. The children write in a range of writing types and across the areas of learning. They write to a good standard and, as they progress through the school, they develop their levels of sophistication in their styles of writing.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make very good progress, particularly those who present with difficulties in literacy.

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

6. Provision

- The teachers' planning is comprehensive with very good links across all of the areas of learning. The teachers evaluate the planning with a clear focus on the children's learning and use this well to inform future planning. In the most effective practice, the teachers provide innovative contexts for the learning and make very good use of visual stimulation, including technology, to maximise the children's motivation and engagement. They facilitate well the children's learning and have high expectations for all children; encouraging them to 'have a go' and take risks. The teachers' skilful questioning challenges the children to extend and develop further their understanding. A key strength across the school is the quality of the teachers' on-going assessment of the children's progress, in particular, the marking of their work that gives clear guidance to the children on how to improve further.
- The special educational needs provision is of a high quality. Individual education plans provide useful information to teachers on the specific needs of each child and on how they can best meet individual needs. Learning targets identified in the individual education plans are shared appropriately with the children who play a key role in assessing their own progress. The classroom assistants are deployed well to develop the children's learning. They have engaged in a wide range of training opportunities and their effective involvement in a range of support programmes in reading, phonics and behaviour management contributes significantly to the promotion of the children's learning.
- Across the key stages, the development of the children's literacy skills is a clear priority with detailed planning for progression in talking and listening, reading and writing. A key feature of the literacy provision is the appropriate focus on the development of the children's talking and listening skills, alongside their thinking skills and personal capabilities. The teachers make very effective and creative use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a stimulus and a tool for learning. The development of a 'Children's Literacy Leadership Team' provides the children with a very good opportunity to engage with and support the younger children with their reading. The children, particularly the more able, would benefit from more opportunities to develop further their writing skills.
- The pastoral care provision is of an exceptionally high quality. There is a very open and inclusive ethos wherein the teachers give paramount importance to the personal, social, emotional and educational development of each child. There is a strong sense of community within the school and the teachers foster actively the children's empathy and care for each other. The promotion of positive behaviour is very effective; the children's personal and academic achievements are recognised and rewarded regularly. The very active school council, Eco-council and children's leadership teams for literacy, numeracy and ICT ensure that the voice of the child is heard and acted upon.
- The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. The principal's weekly health message and the arrangements for healthy break ensure that healthy living is a key focus of the school.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership provide a clear and shared vision for continued improvement in the school and inspire a sense of team and trust among the staff. The teachers set high expectations while developing a sense of fun and enjoyment in the children's learning. There is a collegiate approach to leadership; staff are empowered to lead on key areas of responsibility and are provided with appropriate opportunities for continuous professional development to support the school's strategic aims. The senior leadership work well with the parents and the local community to raise aspirations for the children and to provide information to the parents on how to support their child's learning. The co-ordinators provide outstanding leadership and support in developing their areas of responsibility. They use innovative methods to monitor, evaluate and review the quality of learning including the engagement of the children in the process.
- The school development planning process is well established and the governors, parents, children and staff contribute effectively to the identification of priorities; in the questionnaires, all of the staff expressed a sense of ownership of the school development plan. The action plans for the key areas of learning identify appropriate priorities and the progress is monitored regularly.
- 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 very well informed about all aspects of school life with regular updates provided by the co-ordinators and presentations by the children as members of the school council. They provide appropriate challenge to the leadership and are highly committed to ensuring that the school continues to develop and keep the interests of every child as the central focus.
- 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

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.

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