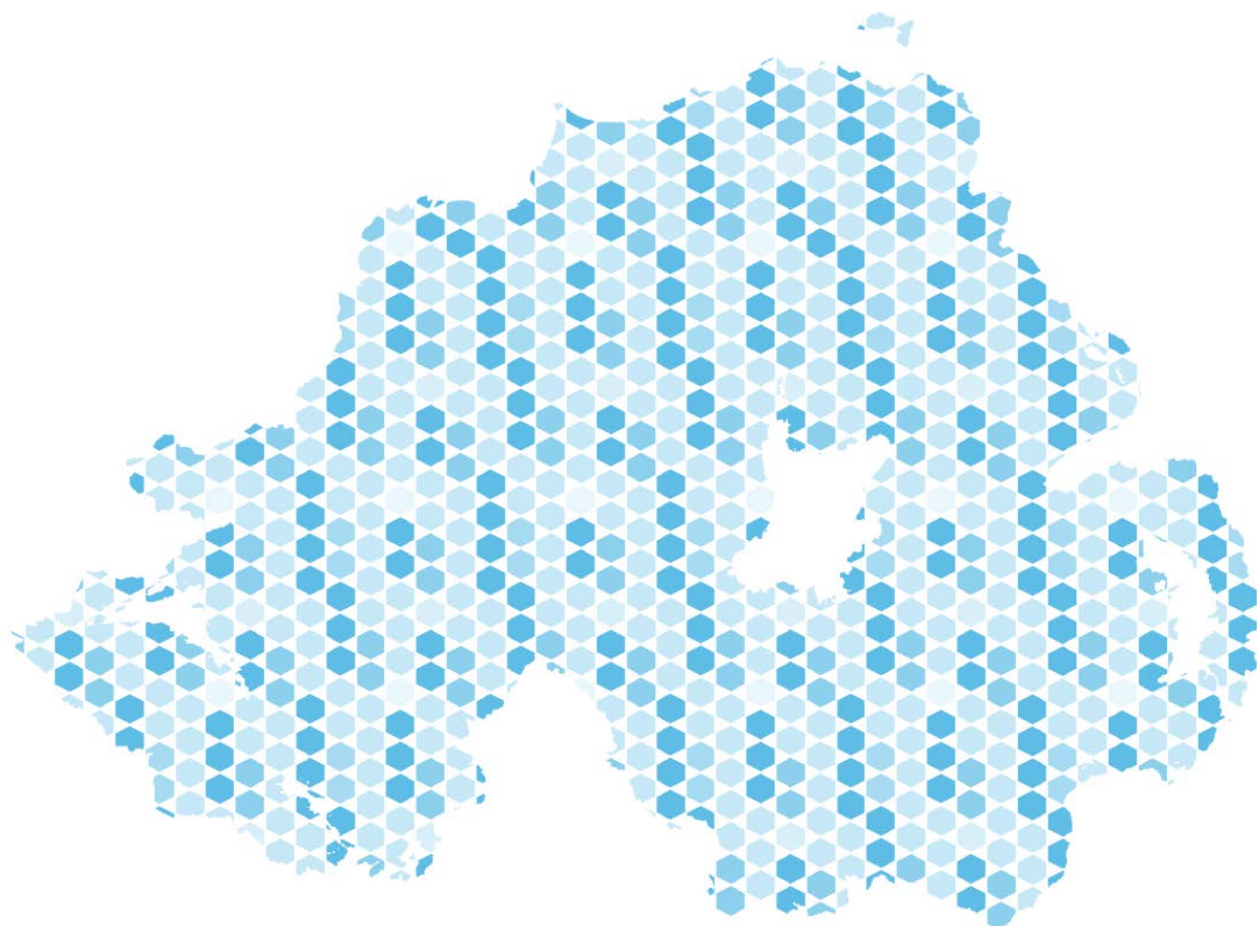


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Ballyholme Primary School,  
Bangor, County Down

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in  
September 2016



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## 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.eti.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 confidential questionnaires.

Twenty-eight percent of parents, all of the teaching staff and seventy-three percent of the support staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental confidential questionnaire indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the caring supportive atmosphere in the school and the dedicated, approachable staff. All of the teaching staff and the majority of the support staff completed the confidential questionnaire and their responses were also very positive; they emphasised the vibrant learning environment created for the children and the strong supportive culture in the school influenced and led by the excellent principal. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main findings emerging from the parental and staff confidential questionnaires.

## **2. Focus of inspection**

In order to promote improvement in the interest 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 (including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable);
- quality of provision for learning in the school, and
- quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

Ballyholme Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in Bangor, County Down. Almost all of the children attending the school come from Bangor and the surrounding area. The percentage of those who require additional support with aspects of their learning has increased over the last four years. The children's learning and holistic needs are given a high priority by the school and are met well in a very caring, inclusive environment. The fostering of the children's musical and sporting talents is a key feature of the school's provision and contributes positively to their social development. The school is a Rights Respecting School and Eco school. It proudly holds the green flag award. The school is also a leading member of the Bangor Learning Community.

<b>Ballyholme Primary School</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
Enrolment	625	627	631	628
% School attendance	97	96.5	97	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	9	9	8	8
No. of children on SEN register	100	101	114	117
% of children on SEN register	16	16	18	19
No. of children with statements of educational need	9	12	14	15
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

**Source:** data as held by the school.

N/A not available

\* fewer than 5

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Very good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Very good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Very good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- Across all the key stages, most of the children achieve very good standards in literacy and numeracy. Most of the children, who require additional support with their aspects of their learning, achieve very good standards in literacy while the majority achieve very good standards in numeracy.
- In the foundation stage, the children write basic sentences, respond to story, song and rhyme with enthusiasm and talk confidently about their choices at play. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the children demonstrate clear enjoyment of reading and discuss their reading preferences with assurance. They read with fluency and expression and have a very good understanding of the writer's use of language. The children's written work is of a high standard; they plan, edit and review their work to improve accuracy. The children can transfer their competence in writing across the curriculum and produce very good quality texts for a variety of audience and purpose.
- In the foundation stage, the children are developing well the key mathematical concepts such as counting, weighing, measuring and problem solving. During play sessions, they use confidently a range of natural resources to support their investigations in numeracy. As they progress through the school, the children display a positive attitude to numeracy and contribute enthusiastically to well-planned practical tasks; explaining competently the mathematical reasoning associated with their work. The children can apply their mathematical skills, vocabulary and knowledge in investigative and problem solving activities. By the end of KS 2, the more able children have a good knowledge of key mathematical concepts and display adequate flexibility in their approach to mental calculations.

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

- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to enhance their learning. Electronic-portfolios of work show very good progression in their skills as they advance through the school.
- Children and teachers through mutually respectful working relationships share high expectations for their learning outcomes. The children are happy, enthusiastic learners. They are very willing to help others, interact confidently with their peers, take pride in their achievements and present their work to a high standard.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- There is a highly effective, consistent whole school approach to planning, learning, and assessment throughout the school. The teachers' planning is rigorous, well differentiated and informed by insightful evaluation of the children's previous learning and the teachers' knowledge of their individual needs. Children who have difficulty with their learning are identified at an early stage and benefit from effective intervention strategies. Additional provision, through in-class and withdrawal support, has a positive impact on the children's learning, self-esteem and the outcomes they achieve. The staff work collaboratively to determine effective teaching strategies for each child, the strategies are appropriately monitored and adapted. To improve further the provision for these children it will be important to disseminate the very good practice existing in the school and build on the capacity of all staff to support the growing range of identified needs.
- The consistent, high quality of learning and teaching is a key strength of the school's provision. During the inspection, almost all of the lessons observed were good or better; half of the lessons were very good or outstanding. In these lessons, as a result of clear exposition, higher order questioning, appropriate challenge, supportive intervention and effective use of teacher, peer and self-assessment, the children make very good progress.
- The teachers' planning for literacy is very effective in progressing the children's skills in talking, listening, reading and writing. The structured approach to reading develops well the children's reading proficiency and the teachers' very effective questioning allows the children to extend their oral responses. The play based learning sessions are used effectively to enhance the children's talking and listening. Writing is celebrated across the school in very attractive displays and the children are given meaningful contexts to write creative and factual pieces. The teachers' use of a wide variety of stimulating resources, including song and media, allows the children to engage fully in the writing process and they produce texts that are original and entertaining. The literacy support intervention is planned carefully, reviewed regularly and is developing well the children's literacy skills.

- Throughout the school, the children experience a well-balanced and progressive mathematics programme. Planning for numeracy is thorough, ensuring continuity and progression across the school; there is an appropriate focus on mental mathematics and problem solving to develop the children's mathematical language and understanding. Most of the children are provided with appropriately challenging learning activities and opportunities to extend further their mathematical thinking across the curriculum in a variety of meaningful real-life contexts.
- Pastoral care in the school is outstanding. The school has embedded effectively the rights of the child into the culture of learning and teaching, to ensure the academic, social and emotional development of every child.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The recently restructured senior leadership team is highly effective and provides clear strategic direction underpinned by a distinct child-centred ethos and a shared vision for future developments in the school. Through a culture of encouragement and appropriate challenge, the senior leaders are building the capacity of middle leaders and all staff in monitoring and evaluating the provision. Leaders at all levels are supported well and challenged appropriately to develop their own leadership skills in order to meet more effectively the needs, interests and aspirations of all the children within the school.
- There is culture of open communication and professional respect among staff, which provides a firm foundation for the rigorous self-evaluation of all aspects of the school's work. The self-evaluation process, which is underpinned by the effective analysis of relevant quantitative and qualitative information, informs reliably the development planning process and is instrumental in the continuous improvement of the school's provision. The school development plan<sup>2</sup>, which is central to the work of the school, has a very clear focus on improving the learning experiences of the children and the standards they achieve. The action plans and the associated targets are aligned well to the staff development programme.
- The school has extensive links with the local and wider community and involves all stakeholders in the life of the school. The school fosters and maintains excellent links with feeder nursery schools, primary and post primary schools in the Bangor area, including 'clusters' to share good practice; this impacts positively on the children's learning and supports their transition to and from the primary setting. The school has established good communication processes and links with parents through the 'Ballyholme School Application' and website. In addition, the school has developed very good links with external organisations and support agencies to enhance the children's learning opportunities and support further those children who require additional help with their learning.
- Based on the evidence available 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 are extremely well informed about the work of the school and play an integral and appropriately challenging role at all stages in the school's work.

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<sup>2</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- 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 in KS2 reported that they are happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Ballyholme Primary 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.



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