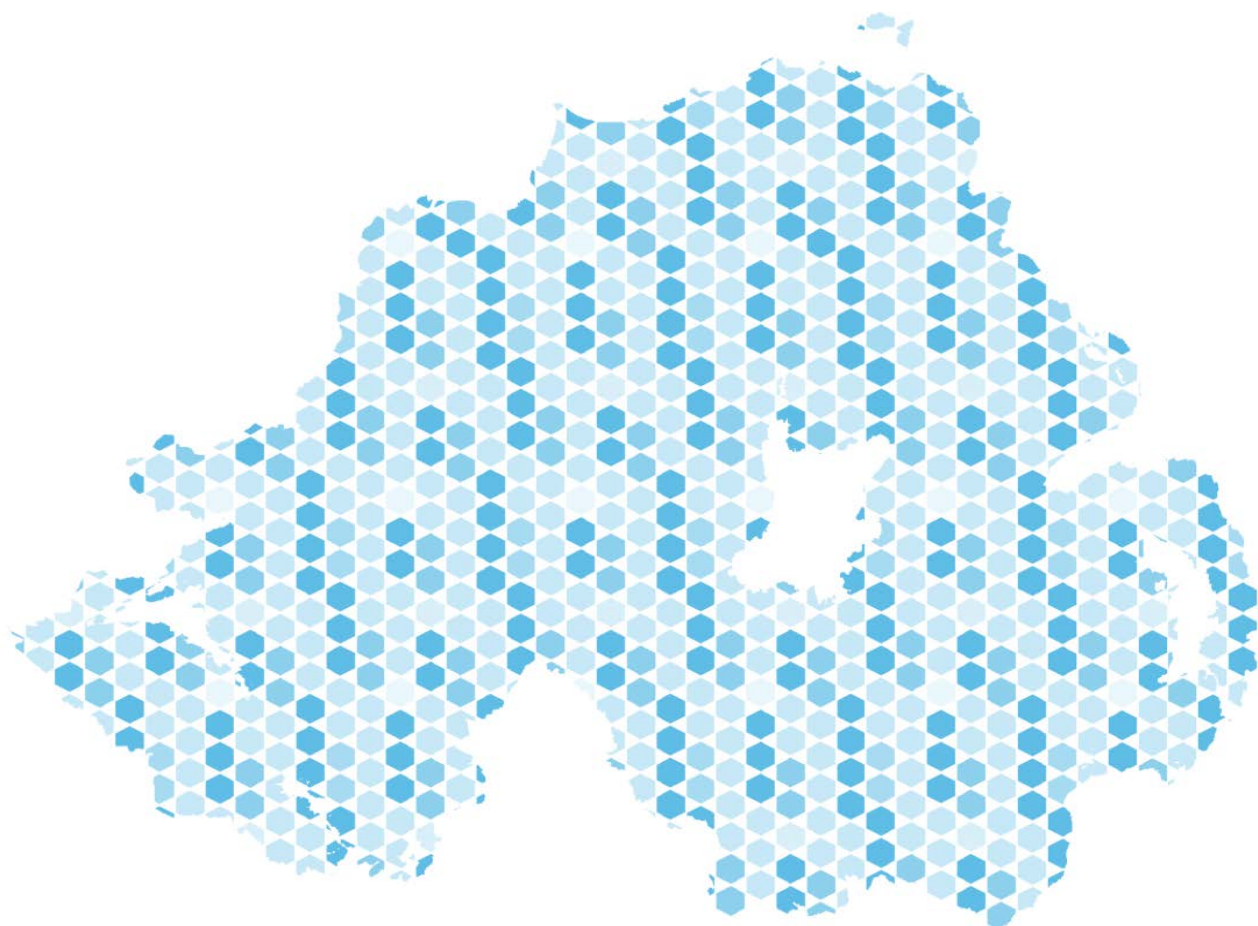


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Forge Integrated Primary
School, Belfast

Controlled, Integrated

Report of an Inspection in
October 2016

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 Achievements 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.

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 for learning	3
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Overall effectiveness	4

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.

Ten percent of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire; almost all of their responses were positive. They indicated that the children were happy and content to come to school each day, the teachers were supportive and the regular updates of the children's progress were particular strengths. Just over half of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire; they indicated high levels of satisfaction with the work and life of the school. The ETI has reported, to the principal and a representative of the chairperson of the board of governors, the main issues emerging from the 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

Forge Integrated Primary School is a controlled integrated primary school situated in South Belfast. Most of the children come from the immediate locality with a small number from the greater Belfast area. In each of the past four years, the enrolment figure has increased, consequently, the school has been granted permission to increase its capacity to two classes per year group. The percentage of children who are entitled to free school meals has remained at approximately one-third of the total enrolment over the past four years while the proportion requiring support with aspects of their learning has risen slightly. The number of children presenting with English as their second language has almost doubled over the same four-year period.

Forge Integrated Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	292	304	332	351
% School attendance	95.6%	95.6%	95.7%	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	30%	28%	31%	28%
No. of children on SEN register	59	64	67	81
% of children on SEN register	20%	21%	20%	23%
No. of children with statements of educational need	5	7	10	9
No. of newcomer children	23	28	27	37

Source: data as held by the school.
N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children achieve very good standards in literacy and numeracy. They are articulate and motivated when engaging in discussions about their learning. In the foundation stage, the children have very good listening skills and converse confidently with both the adults and their peers. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning and teaching is well developed within foundation stage classes. In key stages (KS) 1 and 2, the children are developing a widening vocabulary and understanding of authorial techniques. Consequently, they write to a very good standard for a range of audiences and purposes across the areas of learning. The children read to a very good standard and, from KS 1, they are confident in their use of dictionaries and thesauri. The standard of the children's handwriting needs to improve.
- From the foundation stage, the children engage enthusiastically in mathematical activities, particularly the more open-ended, challenging tasks. In all key stages, most of the children have a clear understanding of key mathematical concepts and use relevant vocabulary well to explain their reasoning. They can demonstrate a good flexibility in their thinking when attempting unfamiliar problems and investigations. In KS 1 and KS 2, ICT is of a good quality and is predominantly used to research and present information; opportunities for the children to experience all of the strands of ICT are less well developed. The further development of ICT is a key priority on the current school development plan; the inspection endorses this as appropriate.

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

- The children are motivated and enthusiastic learners and their behaviour is exemplary. They respond well to the high expectations of their teachers and to the positive learning environment within the school. The children work well during paired and group work where clearly defined roles and responsibilities guide effectively, their learning. As they progress through the school, the children develop a high capacity to transfer their knowledge and skills to other areas of the curriculum.

6. Provision for learning

- Most of the teaching observed was effective in promoting learning, with a majority of the lessons being very good and a small number outstanding. The teachers build well on the children's prior knowledge and understanding and create meaningful connections to the children's own experiences. The very good lessons are well-paced and contain active and practical learning opportunities within carefully designed group tasks; all of the children are given regular opportunities to discuss, review and explain their thinking. The teachers' planning is detailed and effective; they differentiate the learning tasks well to support the children with additional learning needs. The classroom assistants provide effective guidance for the children's learning. In addition, the quality of the special educational needs withdrawal sessions is very good. In the foundation stage, the teachers provide high-quality play-based learning opportunities for the children to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills, engaging in real-life and imaginative contexts.
- A key strength in the literacy provision is the impact of the recent focus on improving the children's writing. The teachers' introduction of a commercial writing programme has resulted in structured and consistent approaches to the teaching of writing. The children discuss their ideas and plan for writing in a positive and supportive atmosphere which they clearly value and enjoy. The literacy planning is well-linked across the curriculum. The teachers focus appropriately on extending the children's understanding of vocabulary and the creative use of language through skilful questioning and use of well-chosen texts. The children are provided with very good guidance on how to improve their writing and have opportunities to do so. There is a structured approach to the teaching of handwriting; however, the teachers need to have higher expectations for the quality of presentation.
- During the mathematics lessons, most teachers provide well-planned activities to meet the children's needs and ask probing questions to help the children clarify and extend their mathematical thinking. The children experience a well-balanced coverage of processes in mathematics, number, shape and space, measures and handling data across all key stages; overall, challenge and progression are maintained from year to year. The children's mental mathematics skills could be improved further with a more detailed programme for the systematic acquisition of the mental mathematics strategies and by extending the cross-curricular application of mathematics, inside and beyond the classroom.
- The provision for pastoral care is very effective in promoting the well-being of the children and supporting their learning needs. The regular, planned opportunities for reward and praise, within lessons and particularly through the pastoral care programme, are highly effective in raising the children's confidence and self-esteem.

7. Leadership and management

- The school development plan (SDP) has been informed through appropriate consultation with a range of stakeholders and guides well the development process. The SDP and associated action plans have been highly effective in bringing about significant improvements within both the provision and the standards in literacy and numeracy. The leadership team sets appropriate standards for attainment based on effective use of data and regular co-ordinator and team consultations. The positive working relationships within the school support a collegial and collaborative approach to the improvement process.
- The well developed links with local pre-schools are used to good effect, informing the year one teachers in planning effective programmes in meeting the needs of the children. Links with local post-primary schools are also used to good effect during the children's transition to post primary education and in accessing additional facilities at key times during the academic year.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. There are aspects of governance to review, namely:
 - the governors should be more fully informed about the impact of the school development planning processes in order to exercise fully their challenge function.
- 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 years 5, 6 and 7 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

Forge Integrated 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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