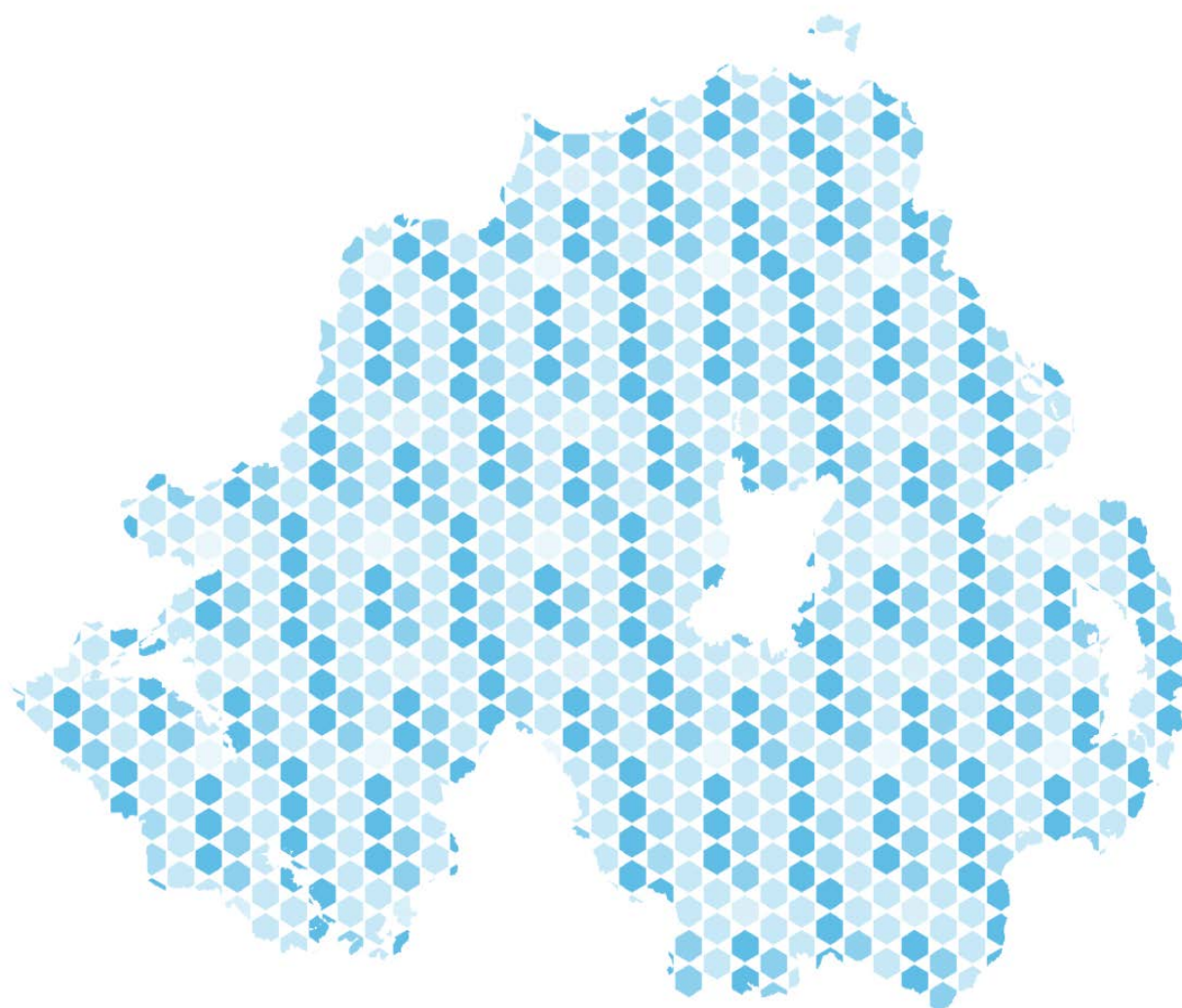


# PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Brigid's Primary School,  
Tirkane/Bunscoil Naomh Bríd,  
Maghera, Co Derry

Report of an Inspection in  
February 2015

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*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  
EXCELLENCE



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

Twelve percent of the parents responded to the parental questionnaires with almost all of their responses indicating high satisfaction with most aspects of the life and work of the school. The parents highlighted the caring staff and the progress their children were making in their learning and all-round development. Most of the staff (teaching and non-teaching) completed questionnaires and almost all of their responses were also positive. In discussions with the governors, they expressed their appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the principal and staff and the importance of the school's effective links with the local community. ETI reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main findings and any issues raised in the questionnaires and the discussions.

## **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 (including Irish) and numeracy in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

St Brigid's Primary School, Tirkane/ Bunscoil Naomh Bríd is situated in Tirkane, near Maghera. The enrolment of the school has risen gradually over the past four years to 183, including 110 children in the Irish Medium Unit; most of the children come from the local surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, 19% of the children were entitled to free school meals (FSM) and 18% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. During the inspection, a number of temporary teachers were working in the school.

St Brigid's Primary School, Tirkane/ Bunscoil Naomh Bríd	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	161	165	180	183
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.6%	95.0%	96.0%	-
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	18.0%	19.0%	24.0%	19.0%
% (No) of children on SEN register	24.0%	22.0%	16.0%	18.0%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*

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

\* fewer than 5

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Irish Medium Unit</b>	<b>Good</b>

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- From the earliest stage, the children are friendly, enthusiastic and involved learners who express pride in their school community; they engage positively with their peers, the staff and visitors. They settle readily to the activities provided by their teachers and are mutually supportive of one another as they work, displaying very good teamwork skills in paired and group tasks. Almost all of the children talk about their learning eagerly and maturely and explain their thinking well. The children's behaviour is exemplary.
- The school's internal assessment information and data shows that, in literacy (Irish and English) and mathematics, almost all of the children in Key Stage 2, are achieving in line with their ability or above expectation and are making good progress in their learning. Most of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are also progressing in line with their ability and by the end of KS2 most are making good progress.
- Throughout St Brigid's Primary School, Tirkane/ Bunscoil Naomh Bríd, the children display high levels of competency in talking and listening and engage confidently with their peers and adults in discussing their learning. By year 7, the most able children are fluent readers who are able to empathise with characters and discuss the material they are reading. The majority of the children write in a clear and organised manner, present their work to a good standard and plan, draft and edit their work for a wide range of audiences. In addition to this, the children in the Irish-medium unit also achieve high levels of bi-literacy. Their skills in Irish and English are well developed and they are flexible in using both languages in a wide range of contexts.

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

- In mathematics, the children apply their thinking skills maturely to enable them to make choices and decisions in their mathematical learning and to explain the calculation strategies they are using. The children have well-developed mental mathematics strategies which they draw upon to support well their learning and thinking in mathematics. By year 7 the most able children have a very good working knowledge of key concepts across the areas of the mathematics curriculum. They can handle simple and more complex computation competently and are skilled, confident and flexible in their mathematical thinking.

## **6. Provision**

- In the most effective practice, in most of the lessons observed, the teachers had high expectations of what the children could achieve, the learning activities were well-matched to the children's needs and contained appropriate pace, challenge and progression. In these lessons, the teachers used effective open-ended questioning to extend the children's thinking and deepen their understanding. Where the practice was less effective, the planned activities focused largely on reinforcing previous learning and did not extend the children's thinking sufficiently.
- The learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy is guided by whole-school overviews that ensure all areas of the curriculum are covered; the coordinators have identified appropriately the need to adapt and refine these overviews to suit the unique context of this school and to ensure progression for all of the children. The teachers work together in key stages to develop short-term planners for literacy and numeracy; in the best practice, these planners guide well the learning and teaching. It will be important for the school to develop further the planning across all curriculum areas to bring about greater consistency in the quality of the provision for all of the children. In the best practice in the Irish-medium unit, the teachers use effective immersion strategies to develop further the children's linguistic competency, in both Irish and English, and to broaden their understanding of different topics across the curriculum. The children's acquisition and use of mathematical language in Irish is well-developed due to the learning opportunities and experiences offered in the classroom, including the reciprocal mathematics initiative.
- The provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is prioritised well throughout the school. Assessment information is used effectively to inform teachers of individual children's needs. The children are supported well within class and through the involvement of relevant outside agencies. In the best practice, the children's learning is monitored and evaluated in class as well as through standardised tests to ensure progression. Throughout the school, the classroom assistants make an important contribution to the children's learning and well-being.
- The teachers mark the children's work regularly and positively. In the best practice, the teachers make the children aware of how to improve their work further through well-focused written and oral guidance and provide the children with meaningful opportunities for self- and peer-evaluation. Overall, the staff need to implement the agreed assessment for learning strategies more consistently across the school.

- The quality of the provision for pastoral care in the primary school/ bunscoil is very good. This provision is characterised by, for example, the welcoming, inclusive and caring ethos and the wide range of extra-curricular learning opportunities which enhance the quality of the children's learning experiences and contribute significantly to their personal development.
- The school promotes well healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, the children are encouraged to enjoy nutritious snacks and to participate in a varied range of sports.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership and management have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of all of the children's needs and the school's context in the local community. The entire staff team works collaboratively in bringing about improvements in all aspects of the provision, focusing their efforts on meeting the needs of the children and on raising further their all-round attainments.
- Appropriately, the school is developing more robust processes for self-evaluation to identify areas for development, including consultation with the staff, parents and children and the analysis of internal assessment data. It will be important that the staff now consolidate the improvement processes, and in particular, develop more rigorous strategies for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the actions for improvement on the learning and teaching and on the standards which the children attain.
- The school has developed appropriate arrangements to communicate with parents and has effective working links with a range of other local schools, the local community and various external agencies to enhance further the children's learning opportunities.
- The recently appointed governors carry out their roles supportively and are keen to develop further their understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the school. Based on the evidence presented 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 and develop; specifically, for the governors to broaden their awareness of developments in the primary phase.
- 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. During the inspection, the inspectors met with groups of children from the year 6 and rang 6 classes. In discussions, the children spoke highly of the support they receive from their teachers and the various cultural, sporting and social aspects of school life which they enjoy. They reported that they feel safe and cared for in school and know what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the primary school/ bunscoil is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.



**Health and safety**

1. A review of the school's current access and security arrangements was completed recently by the North Eastern Education and Library Board. The recommendations of the review, including, for example, the installation of perimeter fencing and improved entry arrangements to the reception area, need to be put in place as a matter of urgency, to address the associated health and safety risks to the children.

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