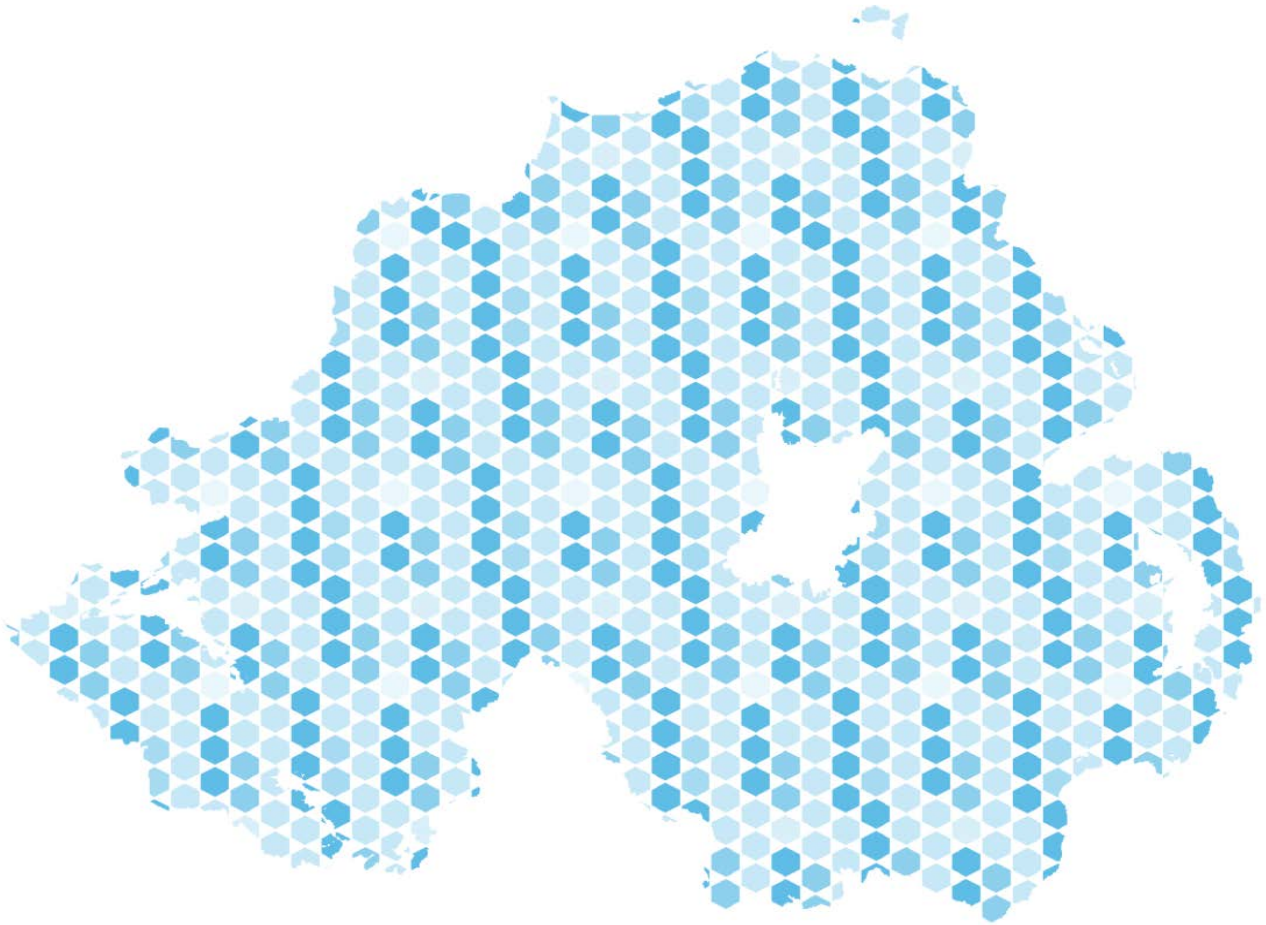


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Kirkistown Primary School,
Cloughey, County Down

Controlled , co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in November 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF KIRKISTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL, CLOUGHEY, NEWTOWNARDS (401-1373)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection¹ in March 2015 when the overall quality of education was evaluated as satisfactory². The areas for improvement identified at the inspection included the need for:

- all the staff with roles of responsibility to work with the principal and the governors to bring about the necessary improvements in their areas of responsibility;
- the staff to use the information gained through the analysis of the school's internal data to inform more fully the learning and teaching within the classroom;
- the governors to exercise their challenge function in order to monitor the progress being made in the areas for development; and
- the school to continue to receive external support.

The school's action plans were of a very good quality. The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings. The ETI carried out two interim follow-up visits and a second follow-up inspection in November 2016.

In the interval since the first follow-up inspection, actions and changes which affect the work of the school include:

- a new teacher was appointed;
- the board of governors was reconstituted;
- the senior leadership re-engaged with external support for leadership and management;
- a new literacy co-ordinator was appointed;
- the staff and board of governors continued to be supported by the Education Authority (EA) advisory officers in literacy and numeracy and aspects of leadership and management;
- the teachers were deployed in different year groups;
- the enrolment of the school has declined from 130³ to 81 children; and
- a caretaker principal took up post in November 2016.

¹ [Follow-up Inspection - Kirkistown Primary School, Cloughey | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

² From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as satisfactory has been reported as having important areas for improvement.

³ [Short Inspection - Kirkistown Primary School, Cloughey | Education Training Inspectorate](#), February 2013

The board of governors requested the re-issue of questionnaires for the parents and the staff. Approximately one-quarter of the parents and a minority of the staff responded to the questionnaires. All of the respondents provided written comments, expressing support for the school and acknowledging the quality of the teachers' day-to-day work with the children. The concerns expressed related to the quality of the senior leadership of the school, the falling enrolment and the current standing and future of the school in the local community. The ETI reported to the caretaker principal and the chairperson of the board of governors the range of views emerging from the questionnaires.

Key Findings

The quality and effectiveness of the senior leadership now requires urgent improvement. The quality of the working relationships and communication is ineffective at the senior leadership level. Since the last follow-up inspection in 2015, the middle leadership team have continued to develop their areas of responsibility supported by the EA.

The quality of the learning and teaching observed during the second FUI ranged from good to very good. The staff team are working diligently to sustain the standards achieved by the children. All of the children work collaboratively and take increased levels of responsibility; the children's learning experiences are improving because of the staff's improvement work in literacy and numeracy.

It continues to be important that the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

Overall Effectiveness

Kirkistown Primary 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.

The follow-up inspection has identified the following areas for improvement:

- to improve the leadership and management at a senior leadership level, in particular, the need to secure and sustain more effective working relationships and communication strategies, in the best interests of the staff and the children⁴.

Further action will be considered by the Department of Education.

⁴ Owing to the long-term absences of the principal, and for this contextual reason, it has not been possible for the school to address fully the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection.

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