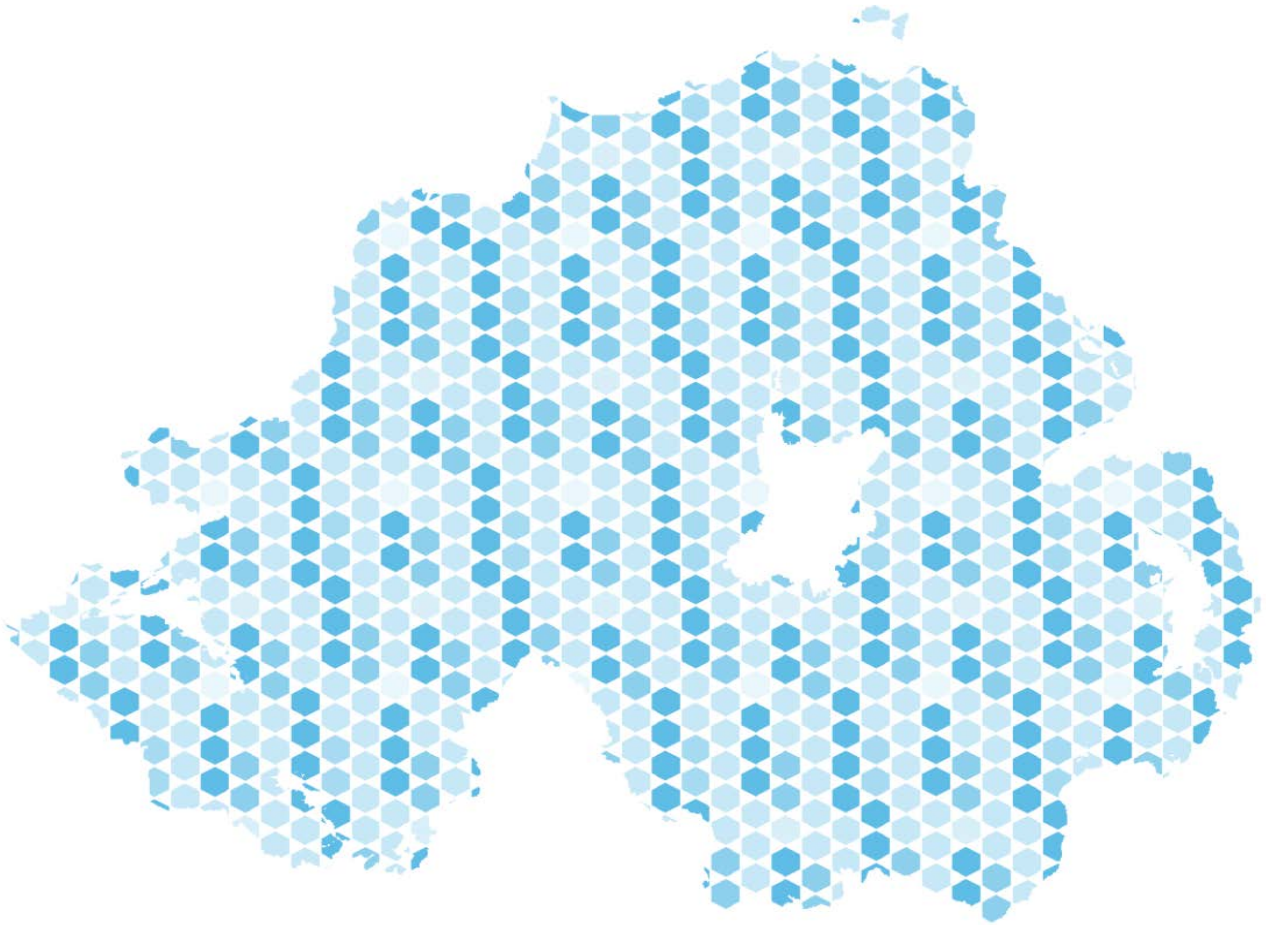


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Colum's Primary School,
Portstewart, County Londonderry

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in May 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST COLUM'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, PORTSTEWART, BT55 7EF (303-2231)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St Colum's Primary School in December 2015¹, which concluded that the school needed to address an important area for improvement in the interest of all the learners².

The area for improvement was to bring about:

- the development of a middle-management structure to support senior leadership in both strategic and operational school foci, embedding evaluative leadership of key curricular areas.

The action plans to address the area for improvement are of a good quality and the school development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings. The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit to the school in December 2016.

In the interval since the initial inspection, actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- appointing co-ordinators with responsibility for making improvements in literacy, numeracy and creating teams to support and develop literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT);
- developing clear and explicit roles and responsibilities for co-ordinators;
- initiating tailored professional development in order to create an improved school improvement culture which aims to support and empower staff;
- availing of training and coaching for co-ordinators from external organisations including the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, C2k and the Education Authority;
- forming a board of governors sub-committee with responsibility for regular oversight of the middle management's work;
- establishing formalised systems to embed working practices, which promote a collegial and distributive approach to school improvement; and
- using data, lesson observations and scrutiny of children's work more incisively to monitor and evaluate the quality of the literacy, numeracy and ICT provision, along with the children's learning outcomes.

Key findings

- The quality of the school's strategic leadership, middle management and action to bring about improvement is now good.

¹ Prior to September 2015 the term 'satisfactory' was used in inspection reports for overall conclusions where there were important areas for improvement.

² <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/primary-inspection-st-colums-primary-school-portstewart-county-londonderry.pdf>

- The principal, in conjunction with the curriculum sub-committee of the board of governors, has demonstrated the very good leadership that is necessary to build an empowering and supportive culture for staff to develop their capacity to bring about improvement. The principal and the governors provide close and highly effective oversight in supporting and challenging the work of the staff.
- Leadership at all levels, through effective analysis of internal performance data and the evaluation of learning and teaching, identifies the individual needs of the children and tracks their progress with accuracy.
- The highly committed co-ordinators of literacy, numeracy and ICT understand the impact that their leadership role has on the children and are growing in confidence; they are embedding effective monitoring and tracking systems, sharing better classroom practice and are raising well the profile of their areas of responsibility across the wider school community.
- The team approach to supporting key curricular areas reflects a distributive approach to leadership and provides assurances for capacity building, sustainability and succession planning.
- The quality of the written work in the children's books has shown improvement, particularly in literacy, where there is evidence of good quality extended writing across a breadth of genres, with a number of notably good ICT infused elements.
- The quality of the lessons observed during the inspection was consistently very good and reflected the impact of the improvement work undertaken since the original inspection by the staff who are working collegially and are led well.

Overall effectiveness

St Colum's Primary 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 in:

- embedding further the self-evaluation processes leading to improvement in the prioritised areas the school identifies for future development.

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