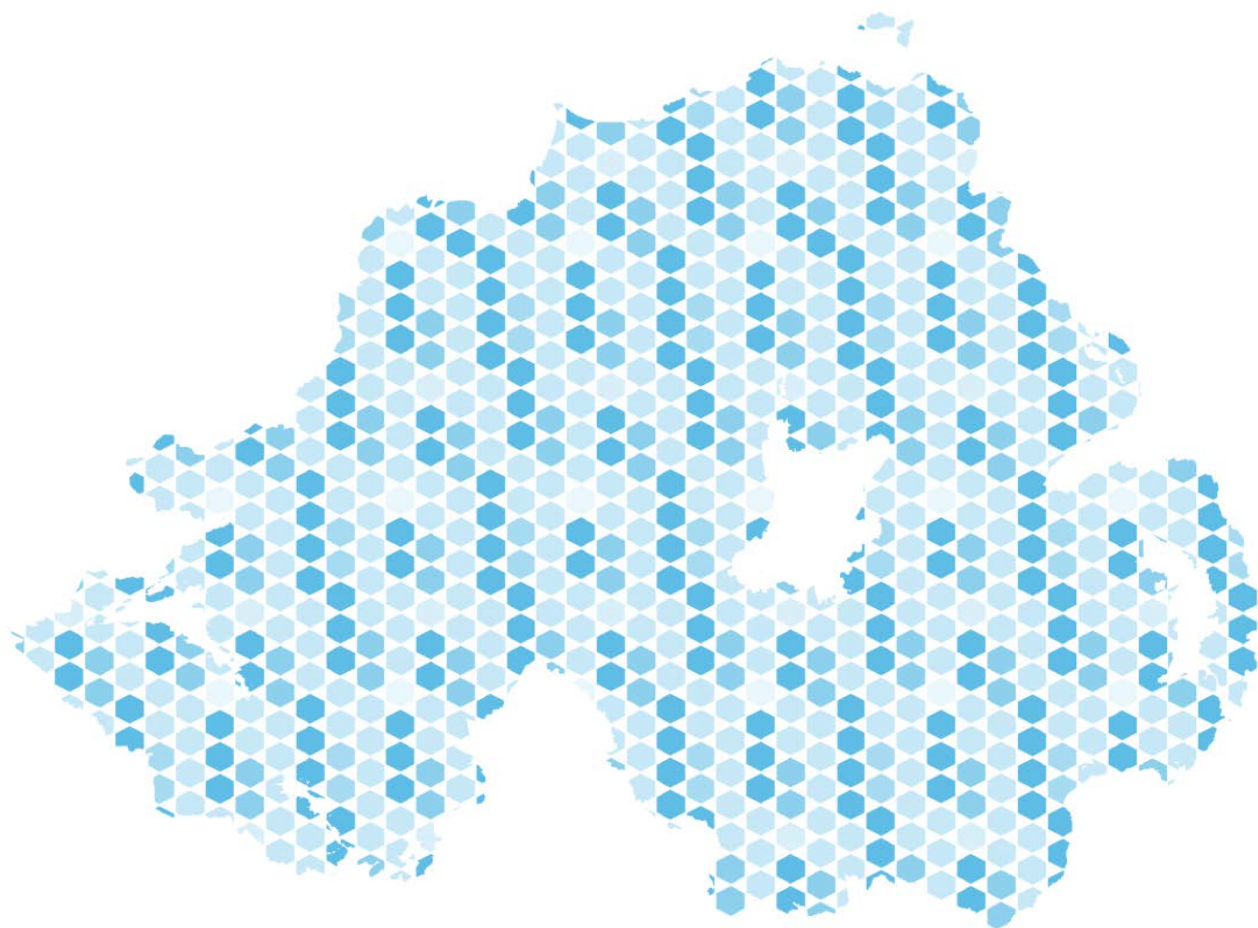


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St John the Baptist Primary
School, Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in September 2016

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT11 9EH (103-6688)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St John the Baptist Primary School in March 2015¹, which concluded that the overall performance level for the school was inadequate². The areas for improvement were the need:

- for the governors, the employing authority and the Education Authority (Belfast Region) to address urgently the leadership arrangements and other issues in the school, in the best interests of the staff, children, parents and wider community to provide stable effective leadership;
- to develop the confidence and capacity of the senior leadership team and the learning co-ordinators to plan, monitor and evaluate more systematically the quality of the provision and action planning for improvement;
- to address aspects of the school accommodation that require significant improvement and updating to provide a suitable learning environment to meet the needs of the children; and
- to address the health and safety issues identified in an appendix to the report.

As a consequence, the school entered the Formal Intervention Process under the Department of Education's Every School a Good School policy in May 2015³.

The school's action plans were of a good quality and were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The school's development plan was also adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out two interim follow-up visits in October 2015 and April 2016 and a follow-up inspection in September 2016.

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

- the acting-principal and acting vice-principal have remained in post⁴;
- the board of governors was reconstituted and four new members appointed;
- a numeracy co-ordinator and information and communication technology (ICT) co-ordinator were appointed;
- the acting-principal, the staff team, the governors, the children and the parents completed work in creating and updating a range of key policies and procedures; and
- the school received very good support from the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Education Authority (EA).

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/%5Bcurrent-domain%3Amachine-name%5D/primary-inspection-st-john-the-baptist-primary-school-andersonstown-co-antrim-amended.pdf>

² From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as inadequate has been reported as needing to address urgently significant areas for improvement.

³ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/ESAGS%20Policy%20for%20School%20Improvement%20-%20Final%20Version%2005-05-2009.pdf>

⁴ Owing to the long-term absence of the principal.

Key Findings

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. The senior leadership team and the governors provide a clear and strategic direction for school improvement. There is a unified approach to identifying and actioning areas for improvement through effective teamwork between the senior leadership team, middle leadership team, staff and governors. The highly effective channels of communication, coupled with appropriate staff training and development, has led to effective decision making and school improvement at all levels. There is a systematic and rigorous evaluation of the action planning process which has led to improvements in standards in literacy and numeracy for most of the children.

The governors exercise effectively their challenge function and are focused fully on school improvement and, in particular, on: the well-being of the staff; the work of the learning co-ordinators; and, the achievements of all the children. All accommodation and health and safety issues identified within the original inspection report have been addressed by the school in partnership with CCMS, EA and governors. The physical learning environment has improved significantly.

The quality of learning and teaching remains good. An agreed numeracy scheme has resulted in a consistent and progressive approach to the teaching of numeracy, investigative work and problem solving throughout the school. The children's work indicates clearly an improvement in the quality of the children's writing through planned and regular opportunities to engage in the redrafting process. There has been a significant investment in non-fiction reading books, with a particular emphasis on texts that appeal to boys. In addition, the implementation of 'Time to Read Partners' and a reading mentor project with a post-primary school has resulted in almost all boys in key stages 1 and 2 achieving in line with and above expectation.

The standards and achievements in English and mathematics remain good. Most of the children are achieving in line with or above expectation in English and mathematics. The whole-school focus on underachievement has had a positive impact on the outcomes for most of the targeted children.

Conclusion

St John the Baptist Primary School demonstrates the capacity to bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement in the role of the co-ordinators in evaluating the learning experiences in the classrooms.

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