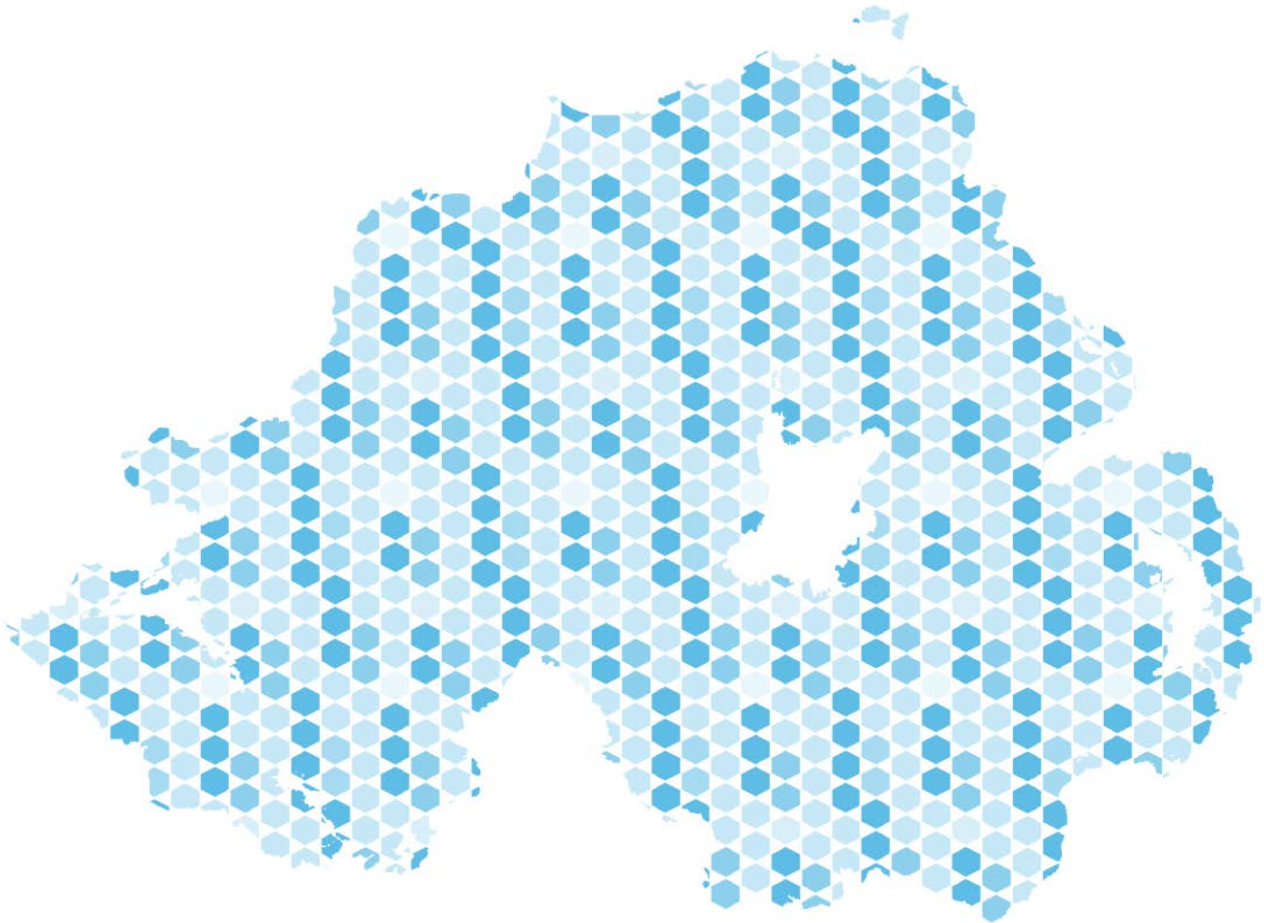


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School and  
Nursery Unit, Bessbrook,  
County Down

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection  
in October 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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CUSTOMER  
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## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT, BESSBROOK, COUNTY DOWN, BT35 7AW (503-6110)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St Joseph's Primary School, Bessbrook in November 2015<sup>1</sup> which concluded that the school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. The areas for improvement were:

- the poor quality of learning and teaching, with a particular emphasis on the urgent need to improve the quality of planning;
- the low standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy, with a particular focus on improving the quality of reading, writing and mathematical thinking; and
- the leadership's slow progress in implementing improvements, including the need to quality assure the work in the nursery unit and learning support centre.

As a consequence, the Department of Education entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process under the Every School a Good School<sup>2</sup> policy in February 2016.

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 adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in January 2017, and a follow-up inspection in October 2017.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- a significant change in staffing, including the appointment of seven new teachers and the restructuring of roles and responsibilities throughout the school;
- the review and development of key policies and practices by the leadership and management, in consultation with the children, staff, parents and governors; and
- the provision of high quality support for the governors, leadership and staff by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Education Authority (EA).

### **Key findings**

- The overall outcomes for the children including those in the nursery unit and the learning support centres are now good. Underachievement in literacy and numeracy has been reduced through well-targeted intervention programmes and most of the children are achieving as expected. The children have improved flexibility in their mathematical thinking, better comprehension skills and can write in a variety of forms for different purposes. The quality of the children's handwriting and the presentation of their work has improved. The children in the learning support centres, autism support centre and nursery unit have greater levels of independence and are more engaged in their learning.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/primary-inspection-st-josephs-primary-school-and-nursery-unit-bessbrook-county-armagh.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [Every school a good school - a policy for school improvement | Department of Education](#)

- The quality of provision is now good. Significant work has been undertaken to improve planning, learning and teaching and the teachers now have a much better understanding of effective classroom practice. Almost all of the lessons observed during the follow-up process were effective in promoting learning and over half were very good. These lessons were characterised by active, investigative approaches set within real-life contexts.
- The quality of the individual education plans has improved greatly; they now have clear, appropriate and measurable targets and inform more effectively the learning and teaching. The provision for the children in the learning support centres has improved. There is a sharper focus on the quality of the children's transitions between the learning support and autism centres and the mainstream classes. As a result, the children are having better social and learning experiences.
- The school has developed systems for tracking better the children's progress and have identified the need to embed these processes across the school and particularly in the learning support centres.
- The quality of the provision for the children in the nursery unit is now very good. The pre-school programme reflects fully the breadth and balance of the six key areas of learning. Significant strengths are the quality of outdoor play and the provision for personal, social and emotional development.
- The quality and effectiveness of strategic leadership, management and action to promote improvement are now very good. The whole school community are working collaboratively and at a fast pace, to bring about improvements and meet more effectively the children's learning and pastoral needs. This work is supported very well by the professional development of staff and the systematic and highly effective processes for monitoring and evaluation. The governors are now carrying out their roles and responsibilities more effectively.
- On the basis of the evidence available, the arrangements for safeguarding reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The children reported that they feel safe and happy in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

### **Overall effectiveness**

St Joseph'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, across the school, systems for tracking the children's progress.

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