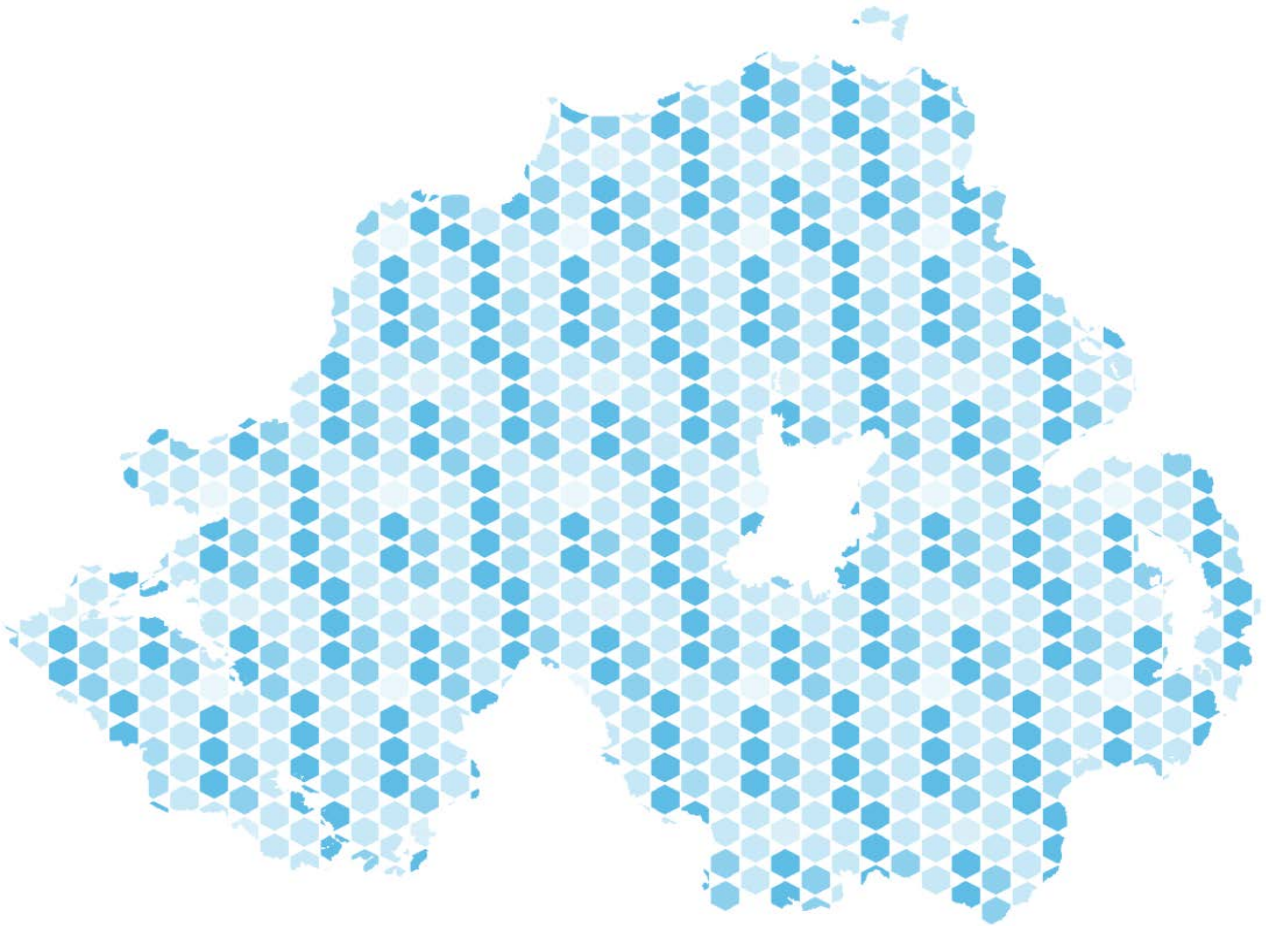


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School,
Holland Drive, Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in October 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, HOLLAND DRIVE, BELFAST, BT5 6EH (103-6246)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St Joseph's Primary School in November 2015¹, 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 need to develop:

- the strategic leadership of the senior leaders and the co-ordinators and ensure more robust monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the provision and the standards achieved by the children;
- further the planning, teaching and assessment for learning in order to meet the needs of all the children, in particular those who are most able; and
- more effective communication between the staff and the senior leadership and to ensure the management of change is well paced and impacts more effectively on the provision and standards in the school.

As a consequence, the Department of Education entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process under the Every School a Good School policy² on 16 February 2016.

The school's post-inspection action plans were of a good quality. The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2016, 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:

- the appointment of a new principal and a new chairperson of the board of governors in September 2017;
- the appointment of a new co-ordinator for special educational needs;
- the temporary appointments of co-ordinators for numeracy, literacy, assessment, and the foundation stage;
- a range of support has been provided by the Education Authority (EA) and the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS) for co-ordinators, staff and governors;
- an external facilitator has provided support for all staff to develop more effective communication; and
- the remaining outstanding safeguarding issues from the original inspection have been addressed.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/primary-inspection-st-joseph%E2%80%99s-primary-school-holland-drive-belfast>

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

Key findings

- The outcomes for learners are now very good. The children engage enthusiastically with their learning and are very motivated to explain their thinking during paired and group activities. They use appropriate mathematical language and are confident in applying a range of problem-solving strategies. The school's internal data now indicates that most of the children achieve standards in literacy and numeracy as expected with over two-fifths of the children achieving higher or much higher than expected levels. The standards that the children achieve by the end of key stage (KS) 2 have improved and are more reflective of their ability.
- The quality of provision is now good. The quality of the teachers' planning has improved significantly and there are good opportunities for connected learning across the curriculum with more creative contexts for problem-solving and using mathematics. Just over two-thirds of the learning and teaching observed was good or better with one-third very good or better. In the most effective practice, the lessons were differentiated appropriately by both activity and resource to meet well the needs of all of the children and in particular to provide high levels of challenge for the more able. Skilful-questioning is used to extend the children's answers, deepen their understanding and build effectively on prior learning. The teachers provide the children with written and verbal feedback on how to improve their work through the use of 'next steps' along with individual targets; however, the children do not have sufficient opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers as part of this process.
- The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement are now good. There have been significant changes to the management structure of the school at both senior leadership and middle leadership levels. Leadership and management at all levels share a clear strategic vision for ongoing school development. The management of change has been well paced and the actions to promote improvement have impacted positively on the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable and lead well their curriculum teams. There can be a high level of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors have developed significantly their roles, with link-governors for core curricular areas engaging proactively with co-ordinators to monitor the progress and impact of the action plans. The views of the staff, children, governors, parents and carers are both sought and acted upon. Communication across the school has greatly improved; furthermore, the staff work well collegiately, with enthusiasm and growing confidence.

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 particular, developing further consistent high-quality learning and teaching to include a broader range of assessment for learning strategies.

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