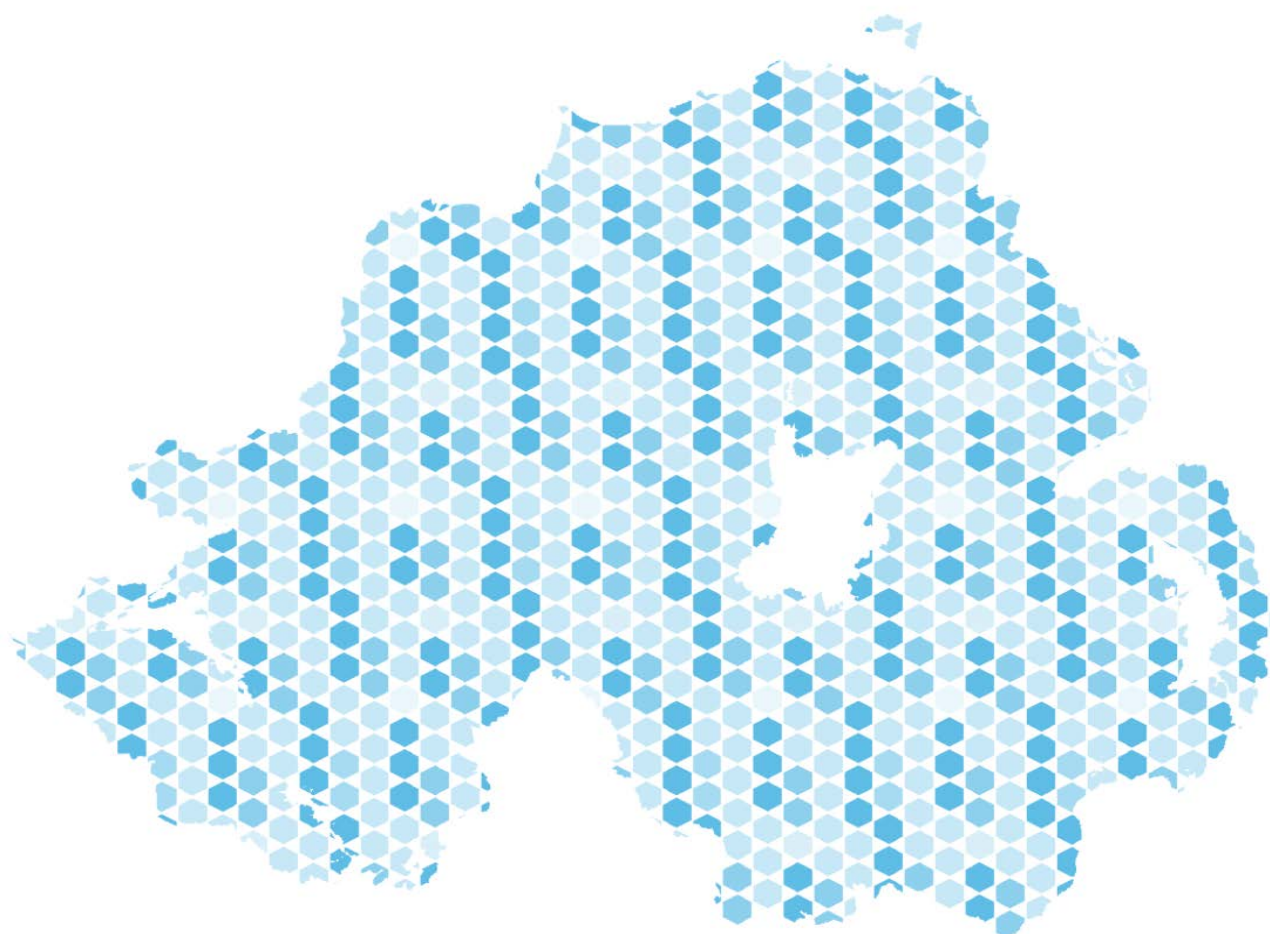


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Ballytober Primary School,  
Bushmills, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in  
March 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

**Providing Inspection Services for:**

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
Department for Communities



## Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

## Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

## Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The 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.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The 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. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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## **1. Inspection method and evidence base**

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed learning and teaching, scrutinised documentation and the children's written work and held formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Forty-five percent of parents and 60% of staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire highlighted the parents' appreciation of the family atmosphere in the school and the approachability and responsiveness of the staff and principal. The responses to the staff questionnaires were unanimously positive; they emphasised the very good quality of working relationships across the school and the opportunities provided for them to develop professionally. The ETI has communicated to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the small number of issues emerging from the questionnaires.

## **2. Focus of inspection**

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards with a particular focus on numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on numeracy; and
- quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

Ballytober Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in the rural village of Ballytober, which is approximately six miles from Coleraine and two miles from Bushmills, County Antrim. The children who attend the school come predominantly from within a six-mile radius of the village. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has increased steadily over the past four years. The proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has remained broadly constant over the past three years. The average attendance rate of the children has been above the Northern Ireland average for the past three years.

Ballytober Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	78	71	70	86
% School attendance	96.4	96.1	96.0	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	25.6	32.4	35.4	37.0
No. of children on SEN register	20	20	21	27
% of children on SEN register	25.6	28.2	30.4	29.0
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	5

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Requires significant improvement
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Requires significant improvement

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are happy, welcoming and friendly. They are motivated to learn and most work well individually and in co-operation with their peers to complete the work set for them by their teachers.
- The school's internal performance data indicates that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Overall, the standards in numeracy are an important area for improvement. The attainment of the children across the school as demonstrated by the work in their books, the evaluation of the children's progression in mathematical learning in class and the discussions with children in year 7, indicates that a minority of the children are not challenged sufficiently and do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The children use information and communication technology competently to word process and create presentations. They need to have experience of using digital methods to engage in researching, collaborating in and evaluating their learning in supervised online activities.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

## 6. Provision for learning

- The quality of learning, teaching and planning requires significant improvement. A majority of the lessons observed were ineffective in promoting learning. These lessons were characterised by limited planning for learning resulting in low expectations, over-direction by the teacher and a lack of differentiation, challenge, engagement and progression. In a significant minority of the lessons observed, there was pace and progression and the children were provided with purposeful opportunities to investigate and discuss their learning.
- In order to meet the wide range of ages and abilities within the composite classes, the teachers need to plan more effectively for challenge and progression in all aspects of the children's learning. In particular, the children require better opportunities throughout the classes to develop their language and oral communication and their investigative, problem-solving and self-management skills. The approaches to assessment for learning at the whole school level are limited. The teachers need to provide the children with regular feedback and the opportunity to reflect on and improve their work. It will be essential that the teachers avail of continuing professional development to support them in developing further the range and quality of learning and teaching approaches used throughout the school.
- The quality of the provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is good. The classroom assistants support effectively individuals and small groups of children during lessons. The children benefit from effective withdrawal support from a specialist teacher and from the reading partnership programme. Most of the individual education plans outline focused targets which address the children's literacy, numeracy and social and emotional needs. The teachers need to develop further the involvement of the children and their parents in the setting and reviewing of targets for learning.
- Overall, the provision for numeracy requires significant improvement. The teachers have reviewed recently the long-term planning for numeracy which outlines a clear progression from year 1 to year 7 across each of the areas within mathematics. However, the first-hand evidence from the work in the children's books shows clearly an over-emphasis on the area of number, with few opportunities for the children to develop their knowledge and skills in the areas of handling data, measures and shape and space. In particular, the teachers need to provide the children with more opportunities to engage in practical activities and to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and open-ended investigations within numeracy lessons and across the curriculum.
- There are strengths in the quality of the pastoral care in the school: these include the welcoming environment; the good quality of the health and safety aspects of the curriculum delivered through purposeful links with external agencies such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; the opportunities for the children to participate in competitions and the good working relationships enjoyed with the wider community. The provision for pastoral care remains, however, an important area for improvement within the school. In particular, the teachers need to support the children in progressing further their thinking skills and personal capabilities, including the development of the children's voice and their involvement in leadership roles within the school community.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The quality of leadership and management requires significant improvement. The senior leadership and learning co-ordinators do not plan for and monitor rigorously the educational provision in order to ensure the work undertaken impacts positively on raising standards in the learning and teaching.
- The school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement are at an early stage of development. The school leadership has begun to use the internal assessment data and responses from parental and children's questionnaires to identify areas for improvement. There is a need, however, for all staff to ensure that these and other appropriate sources of first-hand evidence are reviewed rigorously in order to establish clearly the baseline position of the school and to plan strategically for improvement. There is also a requirement for a systematic and robust approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the action planning on the quality of the children's learning and progression.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are committed to the school but need to be better informed about the school's provision in order to exercise further their support and challenge function and to carry out effectively their statutory responsibilities. In particular, there is a need to ensure that the school development plan<sup>2</sup> is fully compliant and that the associated action plans effect improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. There is a need to provide the governors with an annual written report on child protection and safeguarding. In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 reported that they are happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Ballytober 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 areas for improvement are:

- for leadership at all levels to implement a rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation in order to measure the impact of the school improvement work on the children's learning experiences and raising standards;

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<sup>2</sup> The school development plan is partially compliant with the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- to develop further the planning for, and assessment of, learning to meet more effectively the needs of all the children;
- to provide the children with a broad and balanced curriculum which supports the development of the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities; and
- for the principal to provide the board of governors with an annual written report on child protection and safeguarding.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.



**Health and safety**

1. There is a need for the employing authority, board of governors and senior leadership team to review urgently the access to the temporary classrooms.

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