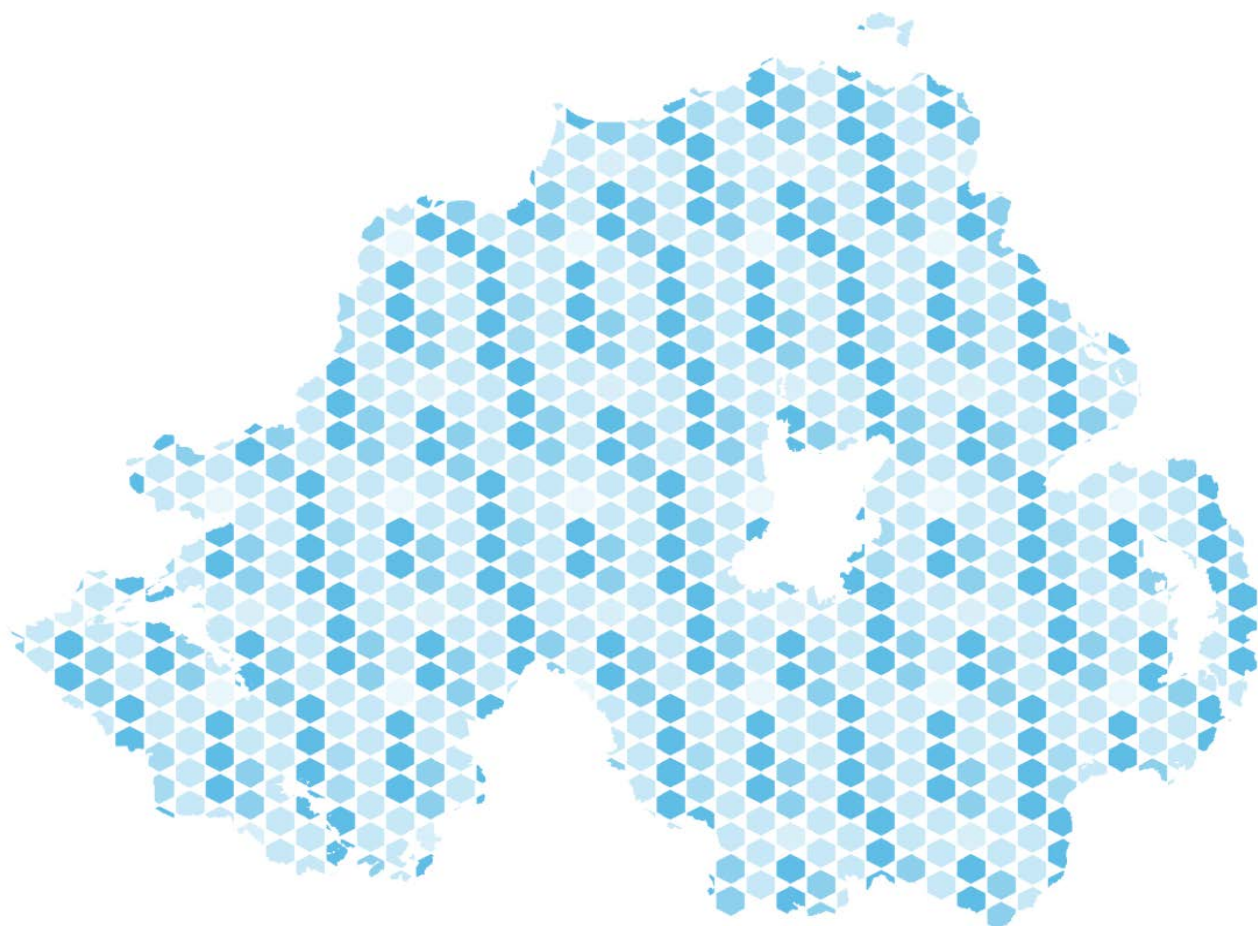


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bocombra Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Portadown,
County Armagh

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in
September 2016

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

Eighteen percent of parents and 79% of teaching staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school; they have a high regard for the school within the community. In particular, the parents highlighted how much their children enjoy learning at the school; their appreciation of the child-centred leadership; the commitment of all staff to the care and support of their children and the helpful and regular information they receive about the learning activities planned. Most of the staff completed the questionnaire and their responses were also very positive; they recognised the contribution of the board of governors to the work and life of the school; they emphasised the high quality of the working relationships across the school; and, the shared commitment to continuous school improvement. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives 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 in literacy and numeracy (including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable);
- quality of provision for learning in the school, including the nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Bocombra Primary School and Nursery Unit is a co-educational, controlled primary school situated in the suburbs of Portadown. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The nursery unit opened in 2013 and operates a part-time session. The school and nursery unit are at full capacity, with high levels of over-subscription and a waiting list is currently in operation. A five-year renovation and extension

programme has recently been completed, including new accommodation for the nursery unit. The proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has nearly doubled in the past four years. The school has a Shared Education partnership with a local school with which it has had established, highly-valued educational links since 2009.

Bocombra Primary School and Nursery Unit	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment in the Primary	313	319	323	326
Enrolment in the Nursery	0	26	27	29
% School attendance	96.3	96.5	96.1	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	7.3	7.8	8.7	6.2
No. of children on SEN register	11	19	22	31
% of children on SEN register	5.4	6.9	7.1	9.6
No. of children with statements of educational need	5	6	7	6
No. of newcomer children	28	29	21	27

Source: data as held by the school.

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children achieve outstanding standards in literacy and numeracy; all of the children are able to read functionally and use numeracy skills by the end of key stage (KS) 2.
- The children in the foundation stage listen attentively to stories and instruction and complete their literacy tasks with confidence; they experiment with early writing. During the inspection, children from year 7 read expressively and with fluency, displaying exceptional levels of understanding in talking about their individual choices of reading material. The children are able to produce high quality independent writing across the school. They extend and develop further their literacy skills through use of information and communication technology (ICT), for a wide range of audiences and purposes.
- The children in the foundation stage count fluently during whole class sessions and focus well to complete their numeracy tasks. All of the children are able to use a wide range of mental calculation strategies to solve problems and, by the end of KS2, they are highly competent. They can apply their learning to a variety

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

of real life contexts and benefit well from extensive opportunities to use ICT to solve problems. By year 7, the most able children demonstrate that they are able to apply flexibly their learning in mathematics across all areas of the curriculum.

- The children in the nursery unit are making excellent progress in developing their learning at the beginning of their pre-school year. They explore the areas of the playroom with confidence, access and experiment with materials and equipment independently and self-manage their daily routines with maturity, such as the snack routine. The children are developing very well their curiosity as they use their senses to investigate and talk about the natural items incorporated into play areas both indoors and outdoors and enjoy experimenting with the range of art materials provided. They communicate well with the staff and each other and participate enthusiastically during group story and rhyme sessions.
- All of the children present their work to a very high standard; they are ready and eager to learn, applying themselves to their work with enthusiasm and focus. The children set their own personal targets and have high levels of self-management. They willingly help and support one another. The children are articulate, confident and very respectful in their interactions with each other, staff and visitors to the school.

6. Provision for learning

- The quality of the planning, learning, teaching and assessment for learning is very good. All of the teachers' planning for, and subsequent evaluations of, learning are comprehensive, rigorous and used effectively to inform further planning for learning. The monitoring of the children's progression in the foundation stage needs to be extended further, to include assessment of their wider learning. Almost all of the teaching observed was good, with three-fifths being very good in developing the children's learning. This practice was characterised by: enjoyable, well-paced, active learning and problem solving; highly effective questioning strategies which developed the children's thinking and extended their understanding; and, purposeful and engaging opportunities to work collaboratively and independently. Marking for improvement is a key strength, enabling children to know what they are doing well and how they can improve further.
- The revised, comprehensive planning for World Around Us is providing enriched and connected learning experiences. The play-based provision in the foundation stage does not build sufficiently on the children's pre-school experiences.
- The children are identified at an early stage for literacy or numeracy support, both through withdrawal and in class, through skilful use of assessment information and teacher observation. The teachers and classroom assistants provide highly effective in-class support for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning; learning tasks are skilfully differentiated, enabling each child to gain confidence and self-esteem as they progress in their knowledge and skills. There is a daily practical session for children with motor co-ordination difficulties provided by a classroom assistant with experience and expertise and supported by occupational therapy. The children benefit from the effective range of exercises offered.

- The quality of the provision for literacy, including the use of ICT, is very good. The emphasis on inferential comprehension through well developed opportunities for talking and listening, reading and writing in all key stages, promotes very effectively the development of higher level thinking. By the end of KS2, the children have had opportunities to participate in on-line collaborations, web conferencing and use ICT to create texts and make presentations.
- The quality of the provision for numeracy, including the use of ICT, is very good. There are daily, well-focused mental mathematical activities used to: consolidate the children's previous learning; encourage flexible application of skills; and, develop their use of the associated mathematical language. The teachers set the children's learning in meaningful contexts which reflect the children's interests and experiences. Information and communication technology is used effectively to consolidate and to extend the children's mathematical understanding.
- The quality of the provision in the nursery unit is very good. The skill of the staff to support the children effectively in developing their independence, social skills, language, thinking and learning across the curriculum is a key strength of the nursery. The attractive learning environment both indoors and outdoors is well resourced, language rich and kept under constant review to optimise the use of all the available space. The children's progress is tracked regularly and the information used effectively to inform parents of their progress and to adapt the planned programme to support individual needs. Children with additional needs are identified early and appropriate strategies are planned and implemented in close liaison with the parents and other professionals.
- The quality of the pastoral care provision is outstanding. The voice of the child is a key strength, informing evaluations of the impact of actions within the classroom and beyond. The children's active school improvement council provides highly-valued opportunities to develop leadership skills and contribute to the life and work of the school; for example, the new adventure playground was suggested and designed by the council.

7. Leadership and management

- High standards and expectations are set by the committed and highly skilled leaders, staff and board of governors. There is significant investment in continuing professional development to build capacity at all levels and clear priority is given to the identification and dissemination of effective practice from within the school and beyond. Purposeful and meaningful interrogation of a wide range of data, both quantitative and qualitative, is informing the realisation of whole school priorities, class and individual targets and planning for learning and teaching, including as appropriate, interventions.
- The school development plan² (SDP) is highly effective; there is clear evidence of well-conceived, strategic action planning leading to improvement over a sustained period.

² The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- The school builds very effective links with the parents from the earliest stage within the nursery unit; this is extended very well within the primary school in order to facilitate communication and to involve parents in their children's learning. Parents support actively the school, through the Parents Teacher Association and in particular, have enabled a considerable investment in ICT and the outdoor play areas which have resulted in the further improvement of the children's educational experiences. Priority has been given to developing the children's empathy for those within the school community and beyond. The school has very well-established links with local primary and post-primary schools, as well as international links with schools in Nepal and Uganda. The school's Shared Education partnership has proven to be a very successful and mutually beneficial friendship that has yielded many positive reconciliation outcomes, including enabling teachers to plan and deliver lessons collaboratively and, to discuss and share effective practice.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are highly informed and actively engaged in the life and work of the school at all levels, including the pro-active monitoring and review of the SDP with staff.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the children in KS 2 reported that they are happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Bocombra Primary School and Nursery Unit 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.

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