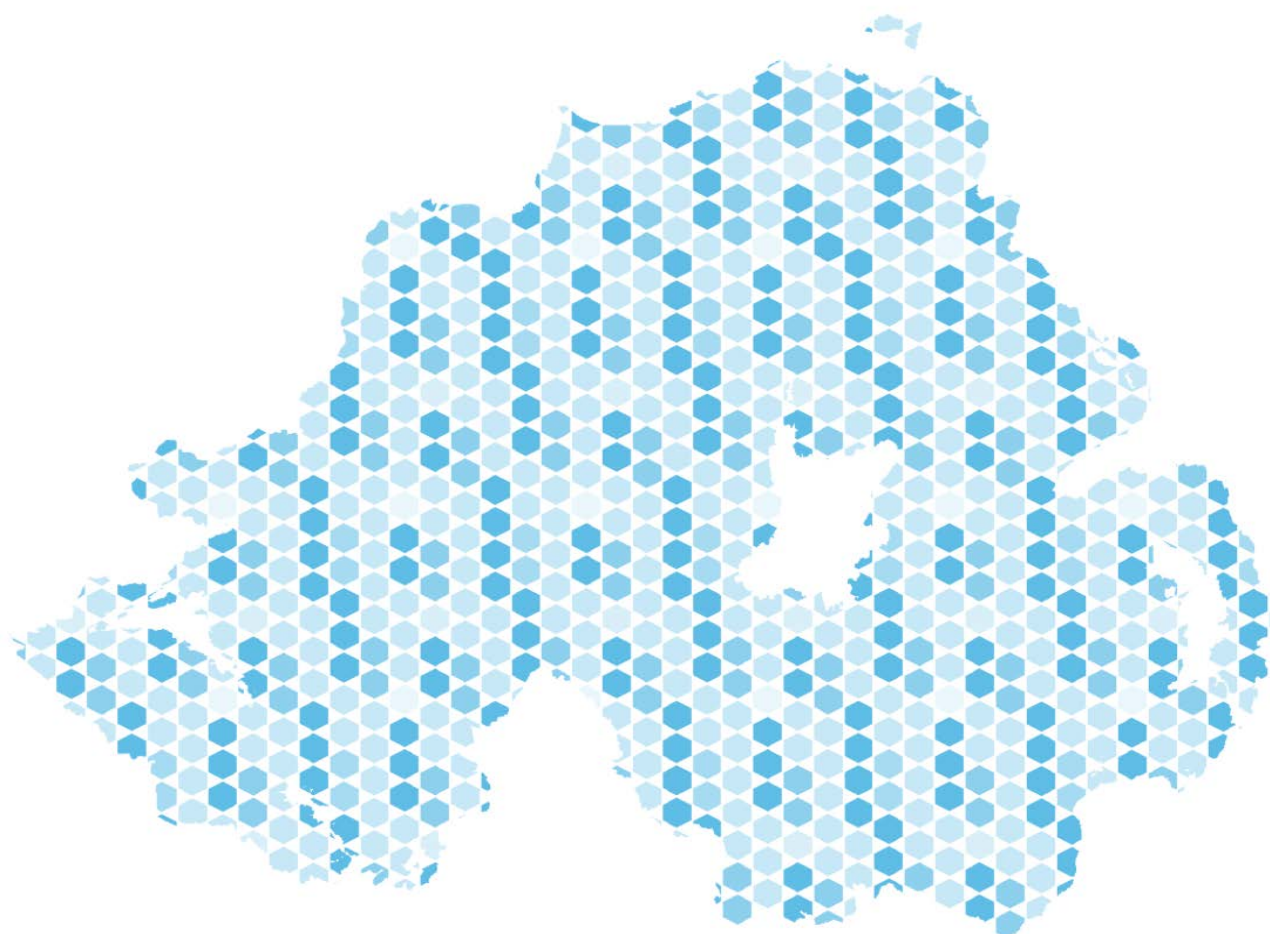


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Culmore Primary School,
Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
January 2016

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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

Nineteen percent of parents and 72% of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of: the school's place in the community; the supportive relationships between the children, staff and parents; and the range of after-school clubs which extend the children's learning experiences. Most of the staff completed the questionnaire and most of their responses were very positive; they emphasised the supportive ethos at all levels within the school. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the main issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

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 literacy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on literacy; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Culmore Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in Londonderry. The listed school building is owned by The Honourable The Irish Society and is maintained by the Education Authority. All of the children attending the school come from the local community. The enrolment has fallen by around 20% over the past four years. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has fluctuated over the past four years and is currently at its lowest point for that period. The proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has also fluctuated, but shows a rising trend. The principal took up post in December 2015.

The children come from both main traditions within the immediate community. As a result, there are well-established cross-community links with local primary and post-primary schools.

Culmore Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	91	85	75	69
% School attendance	94	96	93	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	12	8.5	12	5.8
No. of children on SEN register	19	18	20	16
% of children on SEN register	19.7	20	28	23.1
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Requires significant improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- The children have a positive disposition to learning, engage well in the classroom activities and respond readily in whole-class discussion. In paired and group work, the children stay on task, manage information well and work maturely with their peers. In order to extend further the children's thinking skills and independence, the teachers need to plan for and provide more opportunities for structured self and peer-assessment.
- The school's performance data shows that most children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English in line with their ability or above expectation. Almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with their learning, make progress in mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The children's written communication is good and they write competently for a range of purposes and audiences. While the children contribute to and benefit from the oral activities in all of the classes, their oral skills may be developed further through participation in, for example, drama-based activities and through playing specific roles within group discussions. The children in year 7 read fluently, but with limited expression. They demonstrate high levels of understanding of the appropriately challenging material they are reading.

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

6. Provision for learning

- The long-term planning lacks continuity and progression in the children's learning, particularly with regard to literacy and the withdrawal sessions for special educational needs. The teachers need to evaluate the children's learning more rigorously in order to inform better the short-term and medium-term planning and meet more effectively the needs of all of the children.
- Almost all of the teaching observed during the inspection was effective in promoting learning. The teachers know the children well and establish very good working relationships in all of the classes. In the best practice, the teachers promote positive behaviour skilfully, build on the previous learning and use effective questioning to elicit extended responses from the children. In the less effective practice, the activities are not suitably differentiated to meet the needs of all of the children. There is variation in the quality of the marking to promote improvement. It will be important for all of the teachers to indicate more clearly to the children how to improve their work, and ensure that the children are given opportunities to make improvements and corrections in order to raise further the standards they attain.
- The provision for children with additional educational needs is good. The individual education plans guide effectively the work of the teachers and classroom assistants. The targets within the individual education plans are appropriate and are regularly reviewed. The children benefit from a range of strategies and approaches to support them in their learning. In the best practice, the children and their parents have appropriate opportunities to make meaningful contributions to their individual education plans. However, the planning for the children in the withdrawal support classes is insufficiently detailed. It will be important that withdrawal sessions are better planned and monitored regularly, to ensure continuity and consistency in the quality of support the children receive.
- In literacy, the good practice, in the majority of lessons observed, is characterised by the teachers' skilful use of prompts that enable the children to develop their thinking skills and give extended oral responses. This practice should be disseminated and developed consistently across the year groups in order to enhance the children's oral and thinking skills. The introduction of online reading programmes has effectively extended the children's experience and enjoyment of reading. The evidence in the children's books indicates that the children have meaningful opportunities to write independently for different purposes and audiences. In the review of the planning, it will be important to extend these opportunities and ensure that the skills developed in grammatical exercises are practised in the children's extended writing.
- The quality of the pastoral care in the school is good and is characterised by mutual respect and supportive working relationships at all levels. The development of their wider skills is supported well by the well-conceived extra-curricular programme. The children have few opportunities to make meaningful contributions to decision-making within the school.
- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through the healthy breaks initiative and the opportunities for the children to participate in sport and active play, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The very recent appointment of a new principal follows a sustained period of discontinuity in the school's leadership. As a consequence, there are significant areas for improvement in leadership and management. The school development plan does not comply with the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The school has not established processes for consulting with the children, parents, staff and governors to inform the development plan. The processes of monitoring and evaluation leading to improvement are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The staff have begun to collate and analyse a range of performance data. They now need to use this data to target underachievement and measure the impact of their planned actions. The literacy and special educational needs co-ordinators have worked effectively to sustain good standards. They have identified appropriate targets in their current action plans; however, these targets need to be focused more sharply on improving the quality of learning and teaching and be more closely linked to measurable outcomes.
- The school has built extensive links with the local community, including charitable organisations, a special school and the elderly. The 'Friends of Culmore' parent-teacher association is active in organising social events and raising significant funds to extend the children's learning experiences through, for example, the provision of additional classroom resources.
- 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 board of governors has recently been re-constituted, with the chair taking up post in September 2015. In order to develop further their role in monitoring and evaluating the school's progress, the governors need to be more fully informed about and presented with the first-hand evidence of quality learning and teaching and the standards achieved by the children. This information will enable the governors to fulfil a more strategic role in the school development planning process.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory and do not adequately reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In particular, the school needs to:
 - review and update all child protection/safeguarding policies;
 - ensure there is a robust and confidential system in place for recording information of a safeguarding nature;
 - establish appropriate risk assessment procedures; and
 - update child protection training for all staff.

The ETI will return to the school within six working weeks to monitor progress in addressing the safeguarding and child protection issues.

In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 reported that they feel safe in school although they were not fully aware of 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

Culmore 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 the need to:

- review urgently the arrangements for safeguarding children and update them in line with the guidance issued by the Department of Education; and
- implement more systematic and rigorous processes for monitoring and evaluating the provision, in order to inform the school development planning process and raise further the standards attained by the children.

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.

The ETI will return to the school within six working weeks to monitor progress in addressing the safeguarding and child protection issues.

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Mrs McGuinness
Principal
Culmore Primary School
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BT48 8JH

22 February 2016

Dear Mrs McGuinness

UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN CULMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL

In line with the child protection/safeguarding procedures of the Education and Training Inspectorate, the district inspector returned to Culmore Primary School on 12 February 2016 as a follow-up to the inspection which took place on 5 and 6 of January 2016; the purpose of the visit was to ensure that safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory in the inspection, had been addressed.

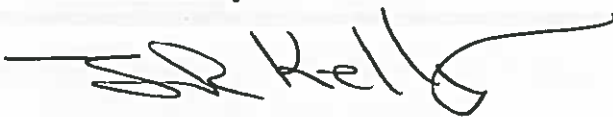
On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements were evaluated as satisfactory.

The school needs to continue to embed the safeguarding procedures and key messages for the children, implement the revised policies through the curriculum, use the recording systems consistently and implement risk assessment procedures for all educational visits.

During the interim period, the school received support from the Child Protection School Support Service of the Education Authority.

Inspection of safeguarding will form part of the follow-up inspection process.

Yours sincerely



JACQUELINE KELLY (MRS)
Inspection Services Branch

cc Mr Neil Doherty, Chair of the Board of Governors
Department of Education: Access, Inclusion
and Wellbeing Directorate and School
Improvement Team