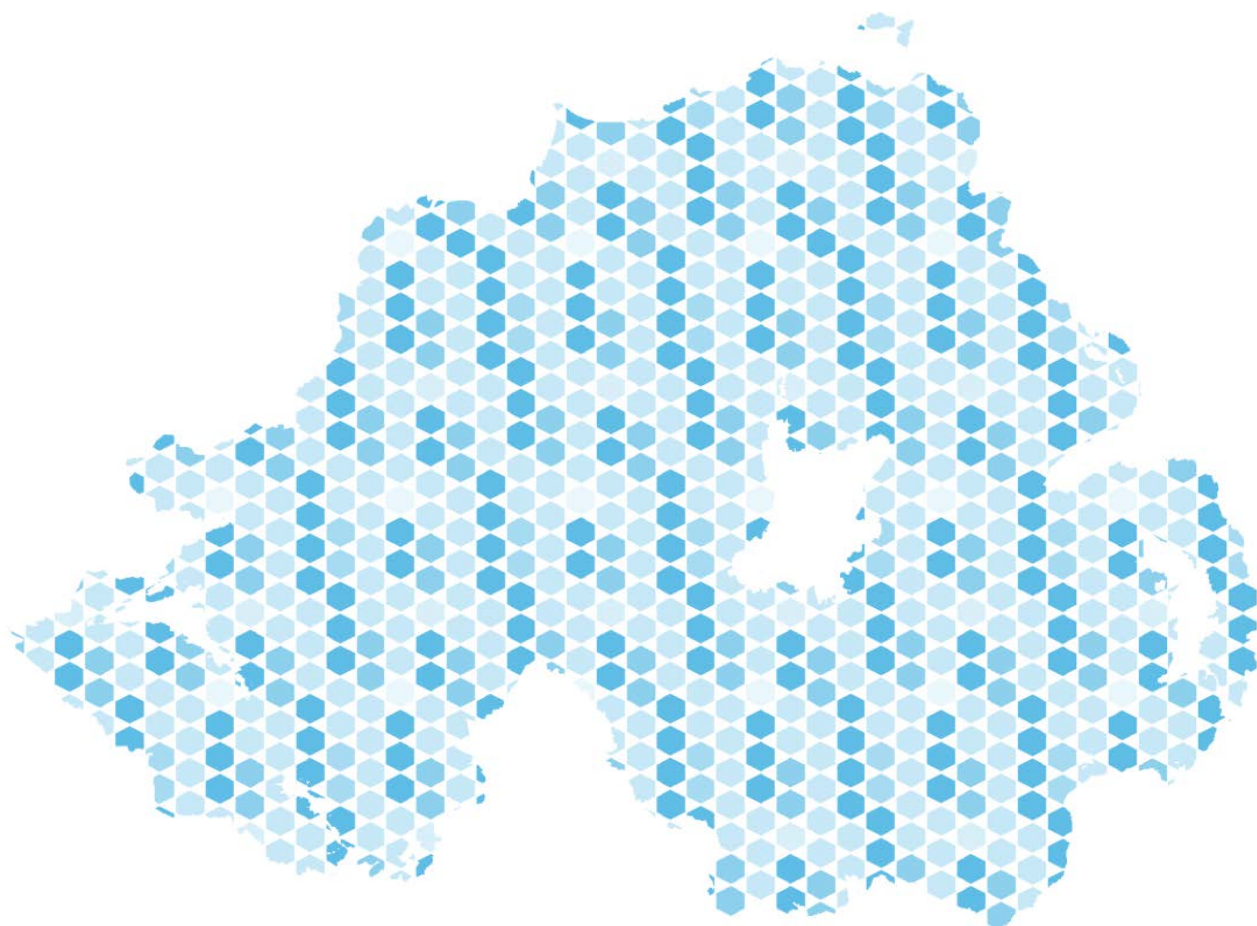


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Mullabuoy Primary School,  
Lettershandoney, County  
Londonderry

Maintained, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in  
September 2016



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## 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.

# Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	4
Appendix	

## **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 a confidential questionnaire.

Twenty-four per cent of the parents and most of the teaching and support staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. Most of the parents responded positively to the questions and in the written comments highlighted the helpful, friendly staff and the sense of community in the school. Most of the staff responded positively to most of the questions and in written responses they highlighted the very good working relationships and the focus on the development of every child. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the main 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 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**

Mullabuoy Primary School is a Catholic maintained primary school situated in the rural area of Lettershandoney; approximately five miles from Londonderry. All of the children attending the school come from the local area. Fifty-one percent of the children are entitled to free school meals. The enrolment has decreased over the last four years and the school is due to amalgamate with another local primary school at the end of the current academic year. There have been significant changes in staff over the last six years and, at the time of the inspection, three of the five teachers were employed in a temporary capacity. The principal was co-ordinating several key roles due to both the staffing changes and the imminent amalgamation.

Mullabuoy Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	96	88	88	82
% School attendance	96.8	96.2	96.6	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	52	49	44	51.2
No. of children on SEN register	17	15	12	18
% of children on SEN register	18	17	16	21
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*

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

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- Across all of the key stages, the children achieve good standards in literacy. In the foundation stage, the children are confident in their talking and listening; contribute well to class discussions and collaborate well with their peers during play-based learning. By the end of year 2, the children employ well their knowledge of phonics and write independently to a good standard. Across key stage (KS) 1 and 2, the children have good talking and listening skills and read to a good standard. They are confident in their use of dictionaries and thesauri and in using non-fiction texts to research topics and write to a good standard across a range of writing types. The children's use of information and communication technology (ICT) in support of their digital literacy skills is underdeveloped.
- The children are motivated and engage well with their learning. They work well with others during paired-work activities and are capable of managing information appropriately. The children's thinking skills and personal capabilities and, in particular, their creativity, problem-solving, decision-making and self-management are underdeveloped.

#### 6. Provision for learning

- The quality of the lessons observed ranged from very good to having important areas for improvement; almost all of the lessons observed were good. In these lessons, skilful questioning, and the appropriate planning and organisation of resources promoted good learning. The teachers provide meaningful contexts for the learning and, in almost all of the classes, they use their evaluations of the children's progress to inform their future planning. The teachers' expectations

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

for the most able children are not high enough; there are insufficient opportunities to develop further their thinking and problem-solving skills through appropriately challenging activities and group work. The use of ICT as a tool for learning and teaching is underdeveloped.

- The teaching of literacy is linked appropriately across the curriculum. The recently updated scheme for writing provides a good structure and support for the development of a range of writing types. The multi-sensory approach to the teaching of phonics has led to a good standard in spelling across the school. In KS 1 and 2, novels are not used fully to develop the children's understanding of authorial techniques and language conventions that would enable them to employ these in developing their own writing style. The teachers provide appropriate guidance for the children in order to improve their work in literacy; however, the children are not given sufficient and timely opportunities to reflect on these comments and make the improvements to their work. Across the school, the children identified with additional learning needs are well supported through differentiated activities and the effective deployment of classroom assistants. The on-going development of play-based learning in the foundation stage provides good opportunities for the children to use their skills in literacy and numeracy.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is very good. The children's views are taken into account through the class councils, where they express their ideas and influence the life and work of the school.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The quality of the leadership and management of the school is good. The leadership team have a clear focus on both the strategic development within the school and the management of the proposed amalgamation. The school leadership team is working collaboratively with their amalgamation partner in planning and prioritising common curricular developments. The well-planned and effective development of literacy has resulted in a joint scheme for writing across the two schools. The school development plan is supported by appropriate staff development opportunities. A number of professional development opportunities are planned strategically, in conjunction with a cluster of local schools, in order to manage and share the costs. The positive impact of this approach is evident in the improvements to the quality of play-based learning and in the confidence of the teachers. Self-evaluation is used effectively to identify key priorities in literacy and an appropriate range of monitoring and evaluation strategies is used to measure the impact of the actions to promote improvement. A range of data is used very effectively, at an individual and class level, to identify and target those children who require additional support and to monitor their progress.
- The school has purposeful links with the parents and the proactive parent association has raised valuable funds to purchase additional resources. There are very effective links with the pre-school provider, accommodated within the school building, to support the children and provide a smooth transition to year 1.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. There are aspects of governance to review, namely:

- for governors to avail of additional training in order to be better informed about aspects of the school and exercise more fully their challenge function.
- 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.
- 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 reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following areas need to be addressed:
  - to update the training of the designated teacher; and
  - risk assessments should be reviewed to reflect more accurately the procedures and arrangements for planned school events.

In discussions with the inspectors, the children in KS 2 reported that they are happy and safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Mullabuoy Primary School demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

There are areas for improvement that the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement are:

- to develop the children's skills in, and application of ICT to extend their learning; and
- to develop more effectively the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities and provide appropriate challenge for the more able children.

The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

**Health and Safety / Accommodation**

1. There is open access to the school site including the children's play areas.
2. The arrangements for admittance to the school building should be reviewed urgently.



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