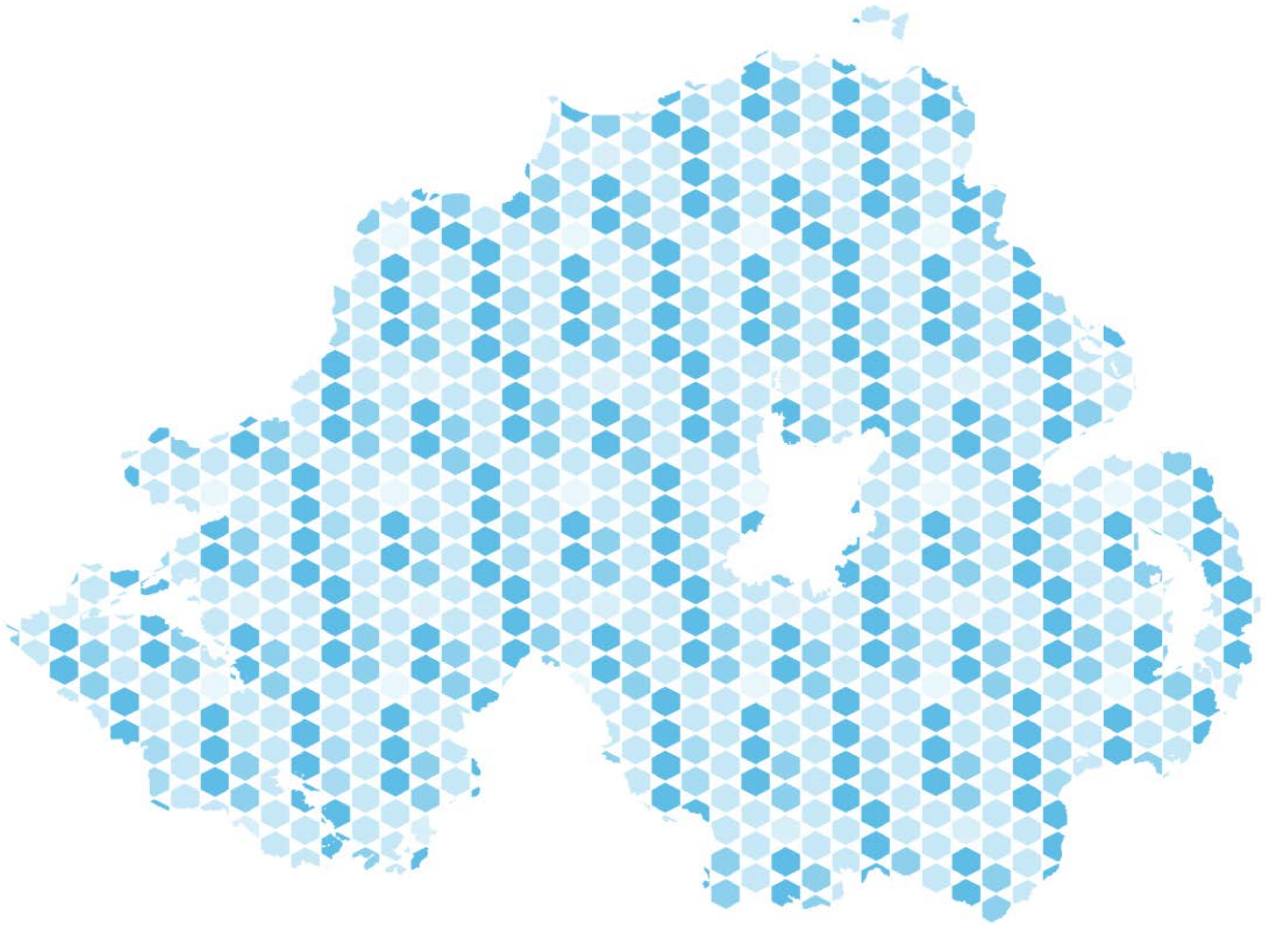


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Newtownhamilton Primary  
School, Newry, County Down

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in  
November 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

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 Achievements 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: <https://www.eti.gov.uk/publications/together-towards-improvement-primary>.

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.

Sixteen percent of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire and a small number included additional written comments. Most of the responses to the questionnaire were highly positive and the written comments indicated significant levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. All of the responses to the teaching and support staff questionnaires were positive and reflected the commitment of the staff to the children and the whole-school team approach. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the very few issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

## **2. Focus of inspection**

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, including the children in the reception group, 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 including the Reception group; and
- quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

Newtownhamilton Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in the grounds of Newtownhamilton High School in the village of Newtownhamilton, Newry, County Down. Almost all of the children come from the surrounding rural area. The children are taught in composite classes consisting of two- or three-year groups. The enrolment has increased over recent years and stands currently at 68 children. A small number of children are enrolled in reception and are included in the composite year 1 and 2 class. The percentage

of children entitled to free school meals and the proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning have fluctuated over the past four years. The principal was appointed to the permanent post in September 2015 and two new permanent teachers were appointed in September 2016. An acting chairperson of the board of governors was in post at the time of the inspection.

Newtownhamilton Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	63	61	61	68
Reception	*	*	0	*
Year 1	6	9	10	7
% School attendance	97.6	96.3	96.2	98
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4		N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	30.16	37.7	39.34	41.18
No. of children on SEN register	15	15	27	20
% of children on SEN register	*	*	44.26	*
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	5	*
No. of newcomer children	0	0	*	12

**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
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Reception	Good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children demonstrate very positive attitudes towards mathematics; they have a good understanding of the relevance of numeracy to everyday life and are motivated by the good range of learning activities provided for them. In the foundation stage, the children develop well their mathematical language, which is reinforced during play-based learning sessions. As they progress through the school, the children become confident in their understanding and application of number and across the school, the children, including those identified with additional needs, achieve good standards in numeracy. The children integrate information and communication technology (ICT) well into their learning and employ applications and programmes to conduct research within their topic work and support their learning about shape and time. The children's understanding and application of investigative approaches in mathematics is underdeveloped because there are too few opportunities for problem-solving.

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

- The children demonstrate good levels of thinking skills and personal capabilities; they interact well with one another and with adults and display very good levels of courtesy, politeness and consideration for others. They are involved in planning, making decisions about their work and setting personal targets. The children make good use of ICT to express their ideas and exhibit their work.
- The achievements and standards of the small number of children in the reception group are good. The children are well-settled and engage productively in learning through play. They share ideas and collaborate when taking on roles in imaginative play and are developing effectively their communication and investigative skills.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- Overall, the quality of the planning, learning, teaching and assessment is good. All of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective in promoting learning and two-thirds were very good. The children have positive experiences of connected learning and the staff plan effectively for the range of individual needs. The teachers mark the children's work affirmatively and a good start has been made for marking for improvement. The classroom assistants support the children's learning very well. While the individual education plans have appropriate targets and intervention strategies, the children's views are not included sufficiently.
- The planning for numeracy enables the children to access learning experiences across most of the main aspects of mathematics. The teachers place a good focus on developing the children's mental mathematics skills, their use of mathematical language and their appreciation of the relevance of mathematics to everyday life. The numeracy lessons observed during the inspection were well-structured and resources including ICT were used to good effect. In the most effective practice, introductory sessions consolidated the children's previous learning, challenging activities were provided which met the range of individual learning needs within the classroom and the children were encouraged to think and make decisions. The programme for open-ended, investigative work in mathematics is underdeveloped.
- The reception children engage in an appropriate play-based programme. The staff sustain good language development and sensitively promote the children's confidence and learning through play. The children's fine motor skills are developed effectively. The programme for the energetic physical play is limited.
- The quality of the pastoral care provision is very good; this is characterised by the very welcoming, caring and inclusive school ethos. The children benefit from opportunities to be involved in decision-making through the effective School- and Eco- councils.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership team is established recently and a culture of openness, effective communication and collaboration is evident. The team has identified appropriate areas for improvement, and a clear focus has been placed on broadening further the children's learning experiences and raising their standards and outcomes. This work is underpinned by support from officers from the School Development Service of the Education Authority and effective partnerships with other schools in the local area. The new leadership team has made a good start to evaluating the quality of provision in the areas for which individuals have responsibility.
- The school improvement process is informed appropriately through the effective consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors, an in-depth analysis of the school's performance data and appropriate targets within the associated action plans.
- The staff maintain meaningful links with parents, and provide relevant curricular information meetings and individual reports about the children's learning and progress. The active Parent-Teacher Association contributes significantly to many aspects of the life and work of the school. There are purposeful links with the local post-primary school which promotes the smooth transfer arrangements for the children. Currently, the staff are developing further links with feeder pre-schools and the school is well-informed about the children who may require additional support on entry to the school, to meet their individual needs.
- 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. The governors, in partnership with the principal, have effected a range of improvements, including those made to school accommodation and the safer traffic arrangements. The governors carry out their roles supportively and understand well the challenges and opportunities faced by the school. They have a broad range of skills and have identified appropriately the need to have a more systematic monitoring role in evaluating the impact of the school improvement plans.
- 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 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 years 5, 6 and 7 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**

Newtownhamilton 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 review the progression of the mathematics programme to include more opportunities for open-ended investigative work; and
- to develop further aspects of the pre-school programme to enable the children's energetic physical development to be met more fully.

The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.



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