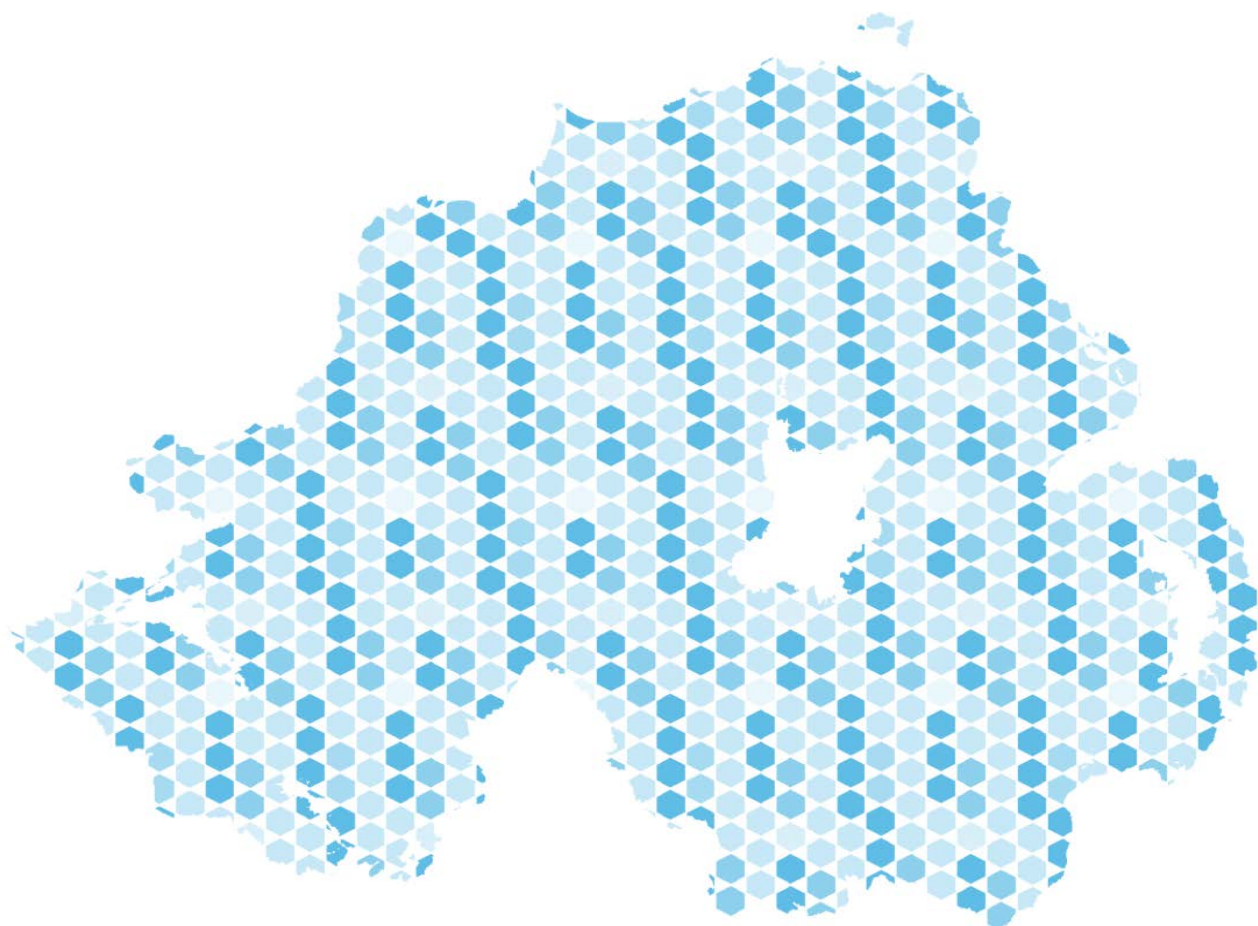


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Orritor Primary School,
Cookstown, County Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
May 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities

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.eti.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.

A minority of parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire were very positive. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the staff's care and support for the children and the varied learning experiences available to them. The responses to the staff questionnaire were also very positive. The ETI has reported to the principal and 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 in literacy and numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning in the school and nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Orritor Primary School is a controlled primary school situated on the outskirts of Cookstown. Most of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area and Cookstown. The enrolment has remained relatively steady in recent years. The numbers of children entitled to free school meals and the numbers of children on the special educational needs register have increased over the past four years. The school has a full-time nursery unit. The school has informal links with other local primary and feeder post primary schools.

Orritor Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment : Primary	176	174	174	166
Nursery	26	26	26	26
% School attendance	97.2	97.2	96.8	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	19.3	24.7	25.3	25.3
No. of children on SEN register				
% of children on SEN register	17	16.1	18.9	32.9
No. of children with statements of educational need	5	5	7	11
No. of newcomer children	0	0	0	0

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	Very good
Nursery Unit	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- Across the school, the children's behaviour is exemplary; they are respectful towards their peers and the staff and engage very well with visitors. They demonstrate positive dispositions for learning and, when given the opportunity, in most lessons, engage enthusiastically with their activities and can reflect on and discuss their learning with confidence.
- The school's internal assessment data shows that most of the children make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. The majority of the children who have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning make progress in line with their ability.
- The children achieve good standards in literacy. Throughout the school, most of the children demonstrate growing confidence in discussing their learning and listening attentively to the views of their peers. By year 7, the most able children express an enjoyment of reading and are developing a very good understanding of the author's writing styles. They are able to discuss a range of authors, fiction and non-fiction texts. At key stage (KS) 1, the children are able to write for a good range of purposes and audiences.

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

- The children's achievements and standards in numeracy are good. They are motivated and engage well in their learning during independent, paired and group work activities. By the end of (KS) 2, the most able children demonstrate a good knowledge of and a range of strategies to solve problems and they use appropriate mathematical vocabulary whilst explaining the strategies. The children need to engage in more open-ended problem solving and investigative work, in order to challenge the more able children, particularly in KS 2.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making good progress in meeting the targets outlined in their individual education plans.
- The children in the nursery unit are developing very well their skills and attitudes to become highly independent and active learners. They are able to make choices and decisions, solve problems and use materials very imaginatively through their play and in their art work. The children enjoy books and have a high level of interest in experimental writing and in talking about their own ideas. Appropriate interventions are in place to help ensure the small number of children identified as requiring support with aspects of their learning make very good progress.
- As the children progress through the school, they use information and communication technology (ICT) with increasing confidence and independence to demonstrate and reinforce their learning through, for example, video-conferencing with another primary school, desktop publishing, coding and when using websites to research and consolidate their learning. The children need to develop further their use of mobile digital technologies in researching, investigating and presenting their work.

6. Provision for learning

- There is comprehensive long and medium-term planning which provides coherent guidance for all areas of the curriculum and ensures sufficient progression in the children's learning. In the most effective practice, in a majority of lessons, the teachers differentiate appropriately their activities to meet the range of individual learning needs and abilities of all of the children; this good practice needs to be disseminated across the school. There are inconsistencies in the depth, quality and rigour of the teachers' evaluations of their planning and, subsequently, this leads to variability in the quality of the individual lessons. It will be important for the staff to refine this aspect of the planning in order to improve the quality of the teaching provision for all of the children.
- Most of the lessons observed were good or better; almost two-fifths of the lessons observed were very good. In the very good practice, the lessons were well planned and met the range of abilities of the children. The teachers use skilfully a range of questions, targeting individual children and provide sufficient time for them to think and develop their answers in response to further higher-order questioning. Across the school, the children develop well their skills through a combination of individual, paired and group work activities and their learning is consolidated and affirmed during the effective use of plenary sessions.

- From an early stage, there is a well-structured and carefully monitored system for identifying children with additional educational needs. The recently revised individual education plans identify clearly the long and short-term targets and, in the best practice, inform effectively in-class and withdrawal support. The children enjoy withdrawal support, however, there is a need to ensure that the progress of the children is monitored robustly and a multi-sensory approach to phonological development is employed consistently by staff. The school is working with a range of external agencies to support the children and develop classroom practice.
- The revised programme for literacy provides a suitable framework for all of the children to develop their confidence and competence in each skill area. The school has identified the development of the children's talking and listening skills as an area for improvement and has appropriately implemented initiatives to address this school priority through programmes such as the talking partners, hot-seating and circle-time activities. In the foundation stage, the children are engaging well with reading. The provision for literacy at KS1 is a particular strength, the children are challenged sufficiently in their learning, their handwriting shows development and there is a coherent literacy focus across all areas of the curriculum. This best practice should be disseminated across the school. At KS2, the standard of the quality and quantity of the children's writing is variable across all of the forms. There is a need to contextualise the children's literacy experiences and to ensure that sufficient progression is achieved in the children's work within and across all of the key stages.
- The teachers use the medium-term planners well to guide the areas for learning in mathematics. In the most effective practice, the children use a variety of appropriate resources which links well all the aspects of mathematics in a range of activities. The children have very good opportunities to talk about their mathematics and discuss their work; consequently, they develop increasingly the use of appropriate mathematics vocabulary as they progress through the school. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and positively; however, there is variation in the quality of the written feedback to the children which needs to include specific and targeted guidance to help them improve further their work.
- At foundation stage, play based learning provides good opportunities to support and develop literacy and numeracy. However, more opportunities need to be provided to enable the children to engage in open-ended and child-initiated play that will promote their creativity and investigation skills. In KS1, the activity-based learning is well developed and provides very good opportunities to reinforce and consolidate the children's learning. The progression in the play between the nursery unit and the foundation stage needs to be developed further.
- The nursery unit has a very stimulating and language-rich learning environment and the working relationships at all levels are excellent. The interaction of the staff is consistently of a very high quality; the children's own ideas are very well supported and extended through skilful questioning and the provision of a wide range of interesting and varied resources. The very detailed planning and assessment guide an enriched pre-school programme which is well matched to the needs and interests of all of the children. There is clear evidence of ongoing review and continuous development over a sustained period within the nursery unit.

- The highly effective pastoral care arrangements for the children are a particular strength of the provision. There is a caring and supportive ethos in the school and the children respond very well to the classroom reward schemes. Regular school assemblies are used well to recognise and celebrate the children's achievements and to promote their confidence and self-esteem. The children speak positively about their school experiences and report that their views are sought on various aspects of the school's provision.
- Very good attention is given to promoting physical activity through timetabled sessions and a range of after-school activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. The school also promotes healthy eating; however, there is a need to raise further the profile of the healthy eating initiative to ensure consistent school-wide implementation of the healthy eating agenda.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management are very committed to the well-being of the children and the staff and to the on-going improvement of the provision within the school. The school development plan² is comprehensive and has been informed by relevant consultation with all key stakeholders to help identify appropriate priorities. Appropriate action plans have been drawn up to address the priorities and effect improvement. There is a need to develop further the capacity of the co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate robustly their specialist areas and ensure that the best practice across the school is disseminated and embedded.
- The school has very good links with other primary schools and good communication with the post-primary schools to which the children will transfer in order to ensure they are well prepared for moving to the next stage in their learning. The parents' support group have raised significant funds to enhance the educational provision and experiences for the children.
- The board of governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and engage actively in the life and work of the school. They are very well informed and support the senior leadership and staff in addressing the school improvement agenda. 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.
- 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 broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. 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.

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

8. Overall effectiveness

Orritor Primary School and Nursery Unit 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; in particular, there is a need to:

- develop further the capacity of the co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate robustly their specialist areas and ensure that the best practice across the school is disseminated and embedded.

Health and safety

1. The school, in conjunction with the Education Authority, should carry out a risk assessment to ensure all the outside spaces are made secure in the interest of the children's safety.

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