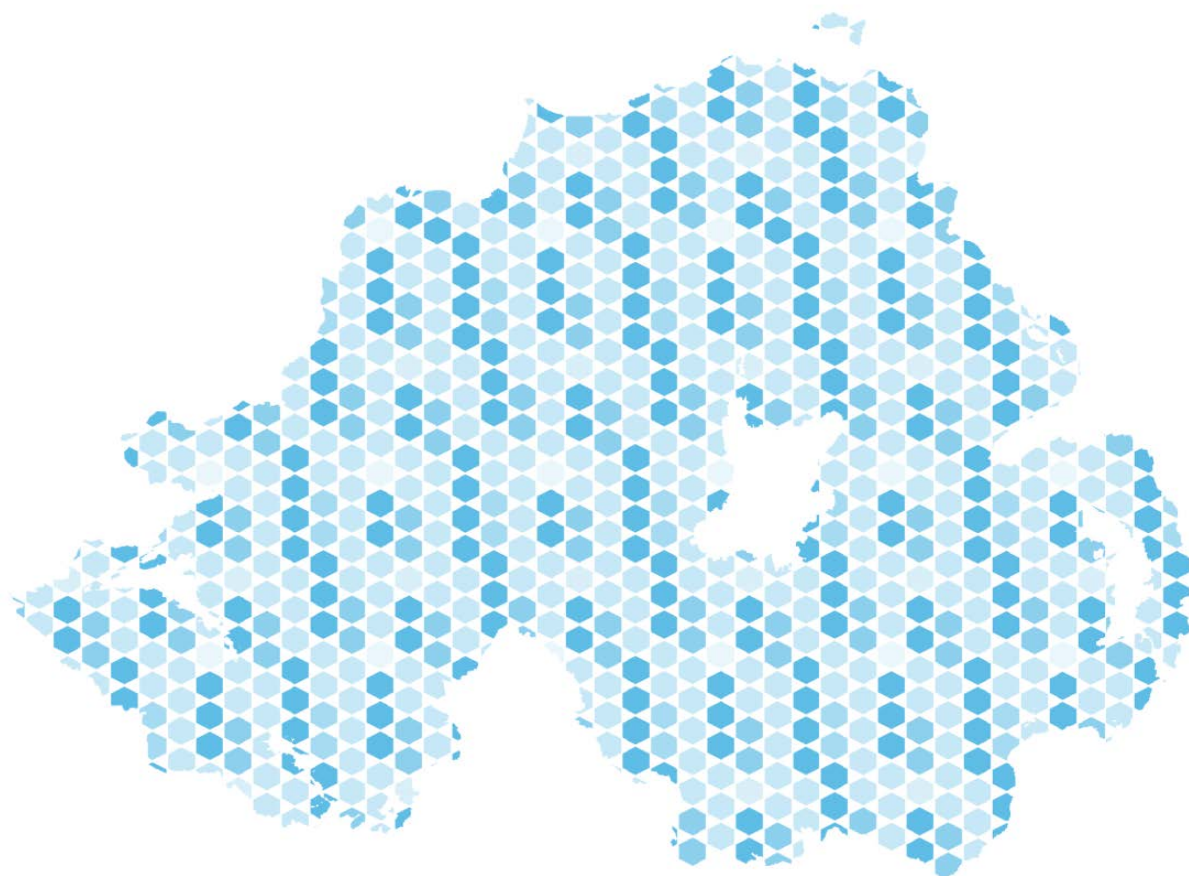


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Colman's Primary School,
Lambeg, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
October 2015

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

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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

Section	Page
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	3
7. Leadership and management	5
8. Overall effectiveness	6
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 representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Forty-two percent of parents and sixty-nine percent of staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the principal's, teachers' and support staff's work and commitment to providing high quality education, care and support for the children. A majority of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were also very positive; they emphasised the quality of the working relationships across the school and the value placed by school leadership on developing the skills of all staff to continuously improve the provision for the children. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the feedback 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 the classes of children with moderate learning difficulties; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St Colman's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in Lambeg, on the outskirts of Lisburn. Most of the children attending the school come from the parish of Derriaghly. The school has two classes attended by children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) from Lisburn and South and West Belfast. In recent years, applications to the school have exceeded the number of places available and this trend continues. The school is currently engaged in a shared education programme with two local controlled primary schools.

St Colman's Primary School	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Enrolment	368	365	393	392
% School attendance	94.3	95.8	95.1	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	12.2	14.8	17.1	15
No. of children on SEN register	62	60	82	83
% of children on SEN register	16.8	16.4	21.1	20.1
No. of children with statements of educational need	32	32	38	31
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school N/A = not available

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
MLD classes	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children's behaviour and disposition to learn are both excellent: they embody the school's vision of educating '*confident, secure, caring individuals, who will develop the skills to continue their learning journey*'. The children respond very positively to the high expectations of their teachers and to the stimulating learning environment provided for them. From the foundation stage onwards the children develop very good self-management skills and work well independently and in collaboration with their peers and, when given the opportunity, demonstrate very good ability to think creatively and to solve problems.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all children make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The standards achieved by the children in literacy are very good. They are able to discuss their learning confidently with one another and are encouraged, from the earliest stage, to share their views and opinions and listen respectfully to their peers. As they progress through the school, the children write across a wide range of genre with increasing competence and accuracy. The most able children in year 7 are enthusiastic, fluent readers, have a clear understanding of context and enjoy reading.

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

- The children achieve very good standards overall in numeracy. By year 7 they are: secure in their knowledge of key mathematical concepts; confident and flexible in their thinking across all the areas of mathematics; and are able to justify their answers using accurate mathematical language. The children engaged enthusiastically in mental mathematics activities during all of the numeracy lessons observed and participated fully in the more practical and investigative mathematical lessons.
- The school's internal performance data shows that the majority of children who require additional support with their learning make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. The children engage enthusiastically in lessons and are developing well their talking and listening skills and their resilience and confidence in learning.
- All of the children who attend the MLD classes achieve standards in line with their ability and are motivated and engaged in their learning. They are involved in a range of meaningful shared learning experiences with the children in the mainstream school, which strengthens inclusivity and helps to prepare those in Year 7 for the next stage in their learning. It is important that the school continues to identify further opportunities for the inclusion of the children in mainstream classes, where and when appropriate.
- Throughout the school, the children achieve very good standards in information and communication technology (ICT) characterised by their competent use of a range of devices and programmes, in particular in mathematics and, on occasion, by their ability to take the initiative in using technology effectively to undertake research and to extend their learning.

6. Provision for learning

- There is a coherent, effective approach to planning for learning throughout the school: it is informed by the teachers' understanding of the children's individual needs and by their evaluation of the children's learning, in particular in the foundation stage by the teachers' detailed and insightful observations. The teachers' planning supports the development of the children's literacy and numeracy within the context of well-conceived, relevant learning activities across the curriculum.
- In the effective practice, in most of the lessons observed, pace, challenge and progression in learning were evident. The teachers made skilful use of questioning to develop the children's thinking and oral responses and ICT was integrated effectively into learning to support, enrich and extend the children's skills and knowledge. They received constructive verbal and written feedback on how to develop their learning. In a minority of lessons seen, learning was constrained within a limiting framework such as a worksheet, resulting in activities which were insufficiently differentiated and challenging and which missed opportunities to extend the children's thinking.
- The quality of the provision for children who require additional support with their learning is very good. There is a range of well-monitored and effective support programmes to progress their learning, including professional development for staff to help them offer well-targeted interventions in literacy and numeracy. The teachers and classroom assistants know the children and their needs in detail,

so that the interventions are sensitive, promote positive learning experiences and develop their independence well. A significant strength of the provision is the highly effective integration of children with medical and physical needs. There are examples of well-conceived individual education plans throughout the school, including in the MLD classes. The newly-established, whole-school special educational needs forum has identified the need to share the effective practice to ensure more consistency across all classes.

- Planning for literacy is comprehensive and guides well the progression of the children's skills in reading, writing, talking and listening. The development of writing is embedded within learning topics and is evident across the curriculum, providing a good range of experiences for the children. The teachers develop the children's talking and listening skills through group and paired work and, where appropriate, opportunities for role play. The school's reading programme is systematic and is used well to extend the children's skills and enjoyment of reading. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop further the children's reading experiences, particularly in key stage 1.
- Planning for numeracy is thorough, ensuring continuity and progression across the school, including in mental mathematics. The children benefit from a wide range of well-planned and well-resourced mathematical experiences in relevant contexts across the curriculum. A range of interventions is used effectively to support children who have been identified as requiring additional support with their learning in mathematics. As a result of recent professional development, a number of staff has been enabled to deliver elements of the mathematics recovery programme; the school plans to disseminate this expertise further to allow more children to benefit.
- Within the MLD classes, there is a well-planned programme to support the development of literacy skills for individual children. Appropriately, there is evidence that the literacy and numeracy skills of the children, along with their personal and social development, are being monitored through assessments, observation sheets and samples of pupils work. This data needs to be used to inform better the planning for differentiation. The children would also benefit from increased opportunities for peer and self-assessment. They are well supported with visual aids and, importantly, strategies which promote their working memory and listening skills, are incorporated within the lessons. There is effective and regular communication with parents through information evenings and parental questionnaires regarding their child's progress.
- Pastoral care in the school is outstanding. It is characterised by an ethos of inclusion, respect and trust. Among the many strengths of the provision is the priority given to promoting the voice of the child in the life and work of the school: the children undertake leadership roles and make regular positive contributions to school improvement through initiatives, such as the playground buddies, Eco-council and the children's forum. Year 6 children speak enthusiastically about their experiences in school and the range of after-school activities which they enjoy, such as, netball, soccer and guitar. The children demonstrate an understanding of the needs of others and are actively involved in fundraising for a wide range of charities.

- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through a range of initiatives and extra-curricular sporting activities, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership team works closely with a highly committed, knowledgeable board of governors to articulate a clear vision and to provide outstanding strategic leadership and guidance for the school. As a result, leaders and governors collectively inspire high levels of confidence and respect from the school community.
- The school development plan is informed by a range of robust self-evaluative approaches including thorough genuine consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors. Through the planning process, the capacity for school improvement has been systematically and strategically developed: the members of the school community have an increased understanding of their role in promoting the growth and success of the school, which has empowered them to further improve the effectiveness of their working practices and relationships.
- The continuing professional development of all staff is central to providing high quality education for the children. The teachers work collaboratively with a number of other schools through clusters to share and further develop effective practice in learning and teaching. Many staff have undertaken award-bearing courses in aspects of education and all teachers engage in peer-learning within the school. The outworking of their professional development is evident in the quality of the provision.
- The school has strong working relationships with parents and the wider community within and beyond the parish of Derriaghy. The quality of these relationships is evidenced notably in the inspirational outdoor learning area and classroom opened earlier in 2015, which was built with the support of the children, staff, parents and local people working together. The facility is a source of pride to the school community and, aside from enhancing the educational provision and the children's health and well-being, is a resource used effectively to welcome guests into the school and to share learning.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are fully involved in the life and work of the school and have formed purposeful partnerships with individual co-ordinators in order to gain a deeper insight into key curricular areas and pastoral elements of school life and to provide a support and challenge function to the work of the co-ordinators.
- 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 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.

8. Overall effectiveness

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.

Health and Safety / Accommodation

1. The new school building is of a very high quality. The current accommodation of 12 classrooms does not meet the needs arising from the increased enrolment numbers since 2012. One room in particular is half the size of the other classrooms and is not a suitable teaching space for a class of children.

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