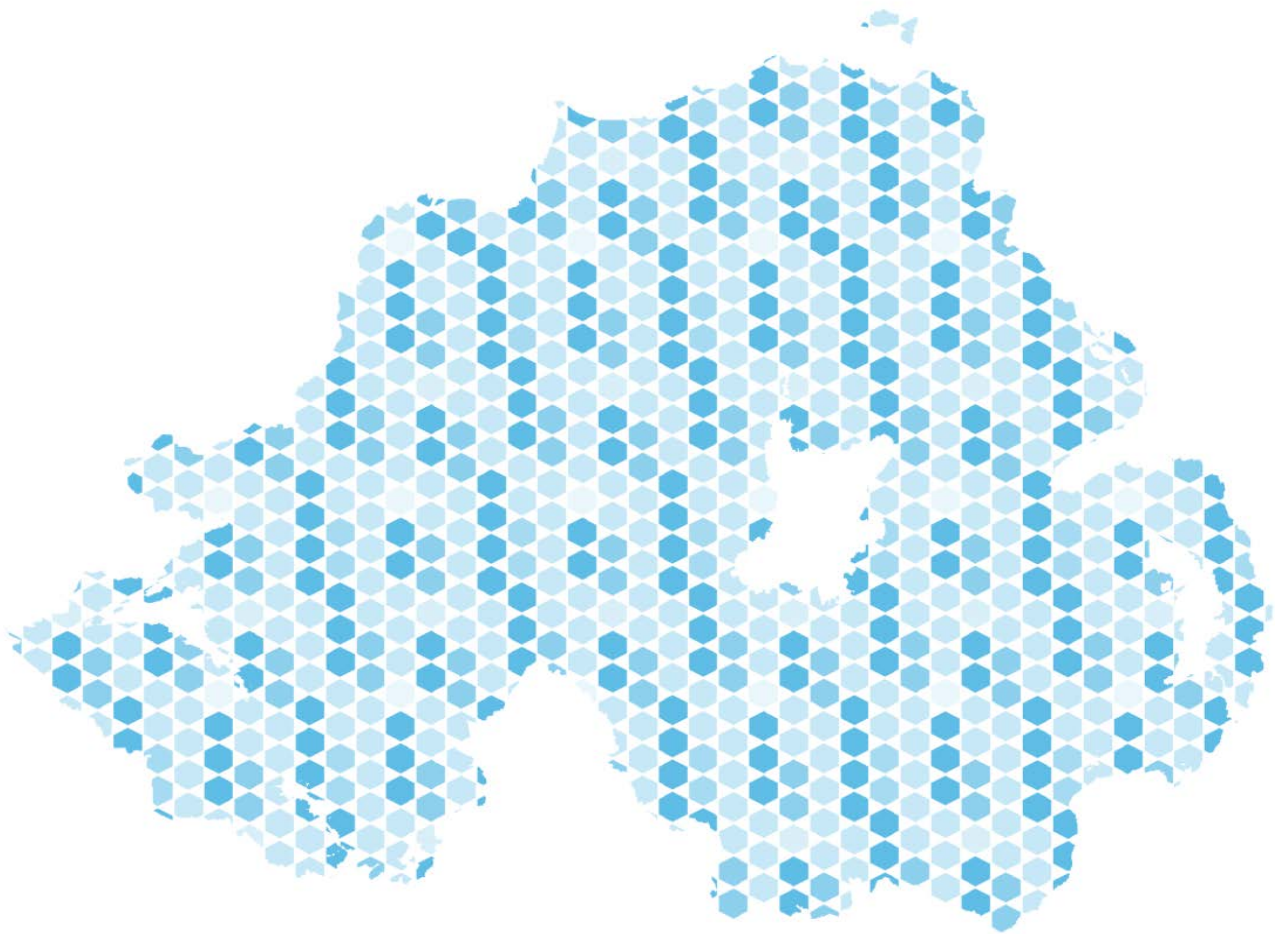


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St John's Primary School,
Coleraine, County Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
April 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.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(s) from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Eighteen percent of parents (21) responded to the questionnaire. Nearly all of the parental responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents praised the commitment and hard work of the staff and the after-school programme. Almost all of the staff, including all the teachers, completed the questionnaire; their responses were positive. They commended the effective leadership of the principal and the high quality working relationships across the school. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the small number of issues emerging from the parental questionnaire.

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 literacy in the school; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St John's Primary is a catholic maintained, co-educational school situated west of the River Bann in Coleraine. The school serves the Churchland ward, which is an area of neighbourhood renewal and high social deprivation. The enrolment has dipped in recently and almost all of the children live locally. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has increased and the number of newcomer children has also risen significantly. The school works closely with the local community and is involved in a well-established shared education link with Killowen Primary School.

| St John's Primary School | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Enrolment | 168 | 172 | 165 | 159 |
| % School attendance | 93.9 | 95.0 | 94.9 | 94.0 |
| % NI Primary school average | 94.9 | 95.6 | 95.4 | N/A |
| FSME Percentage ¹ | 29.2 | 33.7 | 38.2 | 40.0 |
| % of children on SEN register | 28.0 | 26.2 | 29.7 | 25.8 |
| No. of children with statements of educational need | * | * | * | * |
| No. of newcomer children | 28 | 35 | 36 | 42 |

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

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 | Very good |

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are keen, motivated and display positive attitudes to learning. They work well independently and collaboratively and interact respectfully and appropriately with their peers and adults.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability, or above expectation.
- The children achieve very good standards in literacy. They read and write to more demanding standards as they progress and talk with clarity and confidence. The work observed in the children's books and on displays is presented neatly, is structured clearly, reflects sound year-on-year progress and follows well the conventions of written language and genre. By year 7, the more able children read with fluent expression and talk and write enthusiastically about what they have read. They plan, draft and edit their ideas effectively in writing.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make very good progress, meeting the targets outlined in their individual education plans. Most attain the standards of which they are capable.
- Throughout the school the children demonstrate high levels of competence in information and communication technology (ICT) and use it adeptly in class to improve their learning.

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

6. Provision for learning

- Most of the lessons observed were good or better; improving effectively the children's knowledge, deepening their understanding and allowing them to practice and develop important skills. The characteristics of the effective lessons include detailed planning and highly engaging learning activities, set in contexts connected well across the curriculum that challenge the children's thinking. The children benefit from supportive feedback which, in the best instances, offers clear advice on how to improve their work.
- The children benefit from very good literacy provision, which promotes progression in their skills and develops coherency by integrating talking, listening, reading and writing. The children communicate their ideas competently through very well conceived play-based learning and, in the foundation stage, early reading and writing. As they progress, the children benefit from more challenging and increasingly independent writing tasks that vary in form and are written for different audiences and purposes. There is a coherent reading programme that prepares the children well for independent work based on a selection of novels in key stage 2. ICT is well integrated with literacy development, and appropriate opportunities are taken to promote literacy through the curricular area of 'the world around us'.
- The provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is very good. Early identification of need is prioritised and appropriate targets are agreed with parents, staff, and with children where appropriate. The children's holistic needs are very well met in a caring, inclusive environment by highly-motivated teachers and classroom assistants.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is outstanding. There are very positive working relationships at all levels, a highly caring ethos, and the children's achievements are acknowledged meaningfully through positive rewards and celebrated through the spirit of 'Saint John's Award'. Significant focus is placed on developing the children's confidence, decision-making and leadership skills. The excellent links with post-primary schools enable well-planned transition from Year 7. The children benefit from the effective use of external agencies, which promotes further the social, emotional and cognitive development of all of the children.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through healthy breaks and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- Leadership and management at senior level is a strength. There is a clear strategic vision for school improvement, underpinned by a sharp focus on meeting the pastoral and academic needs of all the children. A rigorous, well-conceived approach to both staff recruitment and professional development enables effective building of the capacity of staff to deliver high quality educational provision for the children.

- The school development planning² and action planning processes are informed well by detailed consultation, analysis of performance data and external initiatives supported by the Department of Education, such as the very effective Shared Education link. There is clear evidence that careful planning, implementation and evaluation has led to significant benefits for the children.
- The school has excellent links and partnerships with local schools and the local and wider community. Particular strengths include the partnerships with post-primary schools, and the 'Supporting Parents Through Learning' project, both of which support very effectively the children's learning and development.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors play an active role in the life and work of the school, challenge the leaders effectively and are highly committed to supporting the school's focus on the development of each child.
- 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 very 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.

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

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