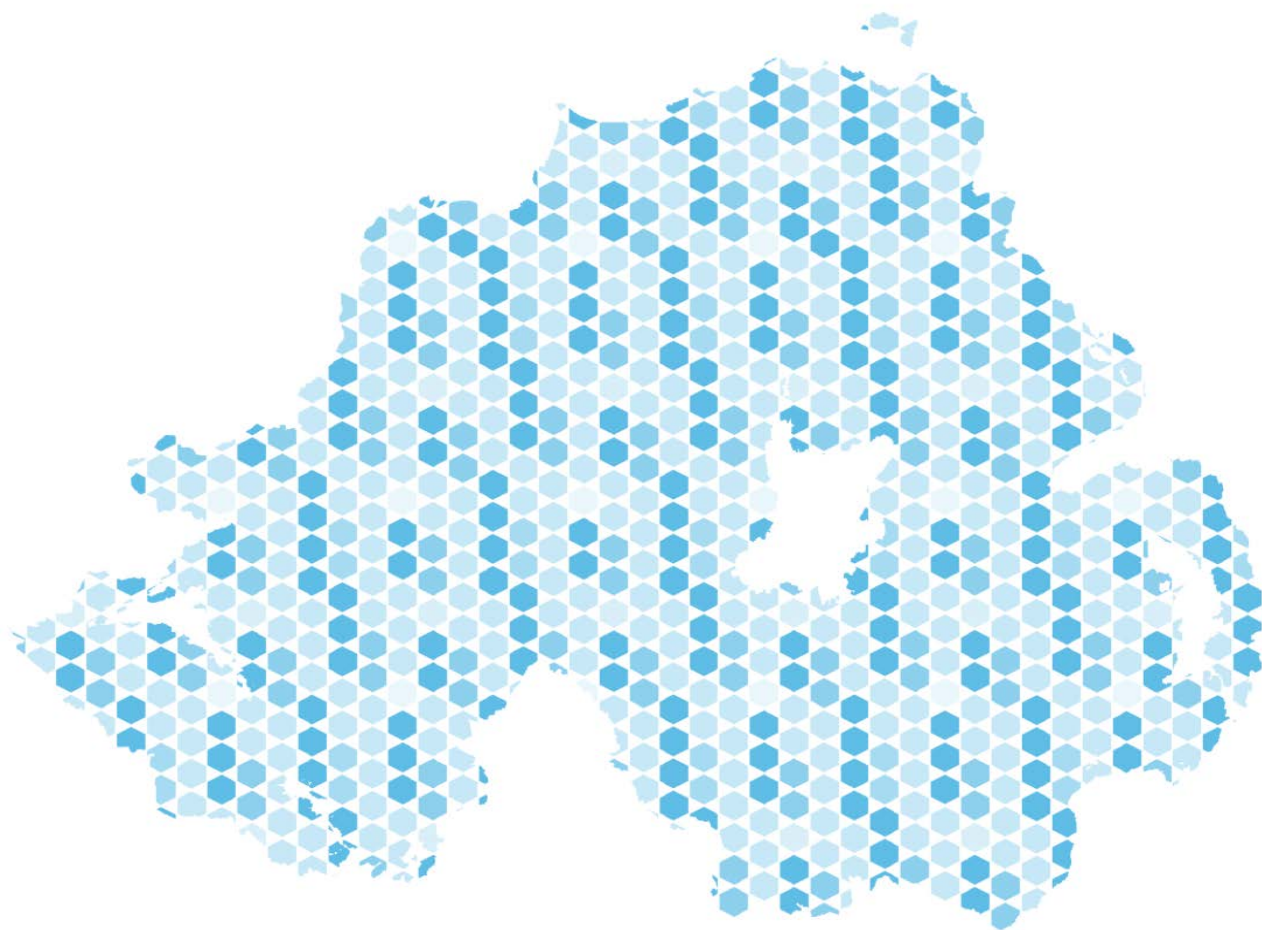


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School,  
Holland Drive, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in  
November 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

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 from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Ten percent of the parents responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated satisfaction with the majority of the areas of the life and work of the school. In written comments, the parents highlighted the arrangements for the pastoral care of the children and the approachability of the teaching staff and principal as strengths of the school. A small number of parents highlighted their concerns regarding the frequency and timeliness of school communications and the recent changes in the arrangements for teaching children with additional learning needs. Eighty-seven percent of the teaching and non-teaching staff completed questionnaires. They highlighted, as particular strengths, their commitment to the well-being and care of the children. The staff raised concerns regarding internal consultation and communications, and the management of change. The ETI has reported to the principal and chair of the board of governors the views of the parents and staff and 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 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
- quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

St Joseph's Primary School is a maintained primary school which is situated in East Belfast. The children attending the school come mainly from the surrounding area. The enrolment has risen by over one-fifth over the last four years and the school currently operates at its capacity. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has remained relatively consistent in the past four years while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has varied. There is restricted playground space which the school has managed in order to minimise the impact upon the children's learning. The school community has informal links with other schools in the area.

St Joseph's Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	310	337	358	380
% School attendance	95.0	96.1	95.7	95.5
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	8.0	6.0	6.0	10.0
No. of children on SEN register	37	20	54	61
% of children on SEN register	12.0	14.0	15.0	16.0
No. of children with statements of educational need	6	6	6	6
No. of newcomer children	34	35	36	23

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

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Requires significant improvement

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children work well in pairs and small groups; they co-operate readily with their peers and settle well to their learning. They respond positively, with enthusiasm, when presented with interesting learning activities by their teachers. The children engage well in their learning and are keen to talk and share their point of view, to listen and to contribute to the lessons.
- The school's performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The children achieve good standards in literacy. They are highly articulate and can express their ideas and opinions with confidence. The most able children in year 7 read with fluency and expression; speak knowledgeably about a wide range of authors; and, have a very good understanding of the books that they are reading. The children generally present their written work well and can write confidently in a range of forms; however, the standard of writing for the more able children does not always reflect their ability.
- The children are very enthusiastic about their learning in mathematics and numeracy and achieve good standards overall. Throughout the school, the children engage well with practical numeracy activities and can transfer and apply their skills in numeracy across the areas of learning. By year 7, the most able children demonstrate flexibility in their thinking and are secure in their knowledge of key mathematical concepts.

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

- The children achieve good standards in using information and communication technology (ICT) as they advance through the school. They use ICT effectively to present and display their work, in researching topics and to develop their learning.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- In the most effective practice, the lessons are well structured with an appropriate pace for the learning. The teachers use effective questioning to extend and challenge the children's learning. All of the teachers make good use of topics and themes to provide interesting learning opportunities and enable the children to employ their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. In the less effective practice, the teachers' expectations for the children's learning are too low and there is insufficient challenge in the activities, especially for the more able children. There is a need for all of the teachers to: develop further their use of planning to ensure greater differentiation within the learning; evaluate more effectively the children's learning; and, use the evaluations to inform future planning.
- The provision for those children requiring additional support with aspects of their learning is primarily through in-class assistance or withdrawal sessions. The current provision for learning and teaching does not ensure targeted differentiation and intervention to meet the needs of each child. There are inconsistencies in how the individual education plans involve the children and their parents in setting and reviewing the targets, prioritising targets for each child and measuring progress. It will be important that the current model of support is planned for, co-ordinated and evaluated robustly to demonstrate the impact on progression in the children's learning and raising attainments.
- The staff revised recently the whole-school planning for literacy to include the development of cross-curricular skills and assessment. The current literacy plans do not provide adequate guidance for teachers to ensure breadth and progression in the children's learning. The teachers' expectations of the quality of the children's writing, both in relation to accuracy and expression, need to be more consistent if the children are to have clear guidance on how they can improve. The current marking of writing includes supportive comments that build up children's confidence; however, it does not include detailed feedback to help children of all abilities increase their level of knowledge and develop their own writing styles.
- The children are provided with a good breadth of learning experiences across the main aspects of mathematics. There are good opportunities for them to work in pairs and groups and develop their thinking skills. The staff have identified appropriately the need to develop further the teaching strategies and provision for mental mathematics across the school. They need to reinforce mathematical language and provide more effective opportunities for the children to explain their mental mathematics strategies and thinking. Across the key stages, the children would benefit from more opportunities to apply their learning to open-ended problem-solving and investigative activities. In the foundation stage and key stage (KS) 1, there is a need to review the play-based and activity-based programmes respectively to provide appropriate opportunities to consolidate the children's numeracy and literacy skills.

- There is a nurturing and inclusive ethos within the school and the quality of the arrangements for the children's pastoral care is good. The staff are highly committed to the children's welfare and set appropriate expectations for their behaviour. In discussions with the children in year 6, they speak enthusiastically about their school, particularly the positive influence of the staff and of the various reward systems. They value the opportunities to present their opinions through the school council and to participate in after-school activities.
- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The quality of the senior leadership and management requires significant improvement. There is a need to develop the strategic leadership of senior leaders and co-ordinators and ensure more robust monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the provision and the standards achieved by the children.
- The school development plan has been informed by consultation with the parents, teachers and governors and outlines broadly the areas for improvement. The plan has significant areas for improvement; there are too many priorities contained within it and there is a need to make the actions and the targets more concise, measurable and attainable. There is an urgent need to develop more effective communication between the staff and the senior leadership and to ensure the management of change is well paced and impacts more effectively on the provision and standards in the school.
- The staff make good use of assessment data to identify potential underachievement and to ascertain areas for whole-school improvements in literacy and numeracy. There is a need for the co-ordinators to: make more effective use of the assessment data and other qualitative measures; establish a baseline position in their area of responsibility; and, evaluate more effectively the impact of the actions to bring about improvement.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are very supportive of the school and committed to the continued improvement of the standards and the provision for learning. In order to carry out more effectively their statutory responsibilities they need to be better informed about:
  - (i) the quality of strategic leadership and management at senior management and co-ordinator level; and
  - (ii) the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards they attain in English and mathematics.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. The arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The following areas need to be addressed:

- (i) to distribute formally to all parents / guardians the documents detailing the school's procedures for child protection and safeguarding, raising parental concerns and the complaints procedure; and
- (ii) to review and update the existing E-safety policy to include the safe use of all digital media.

In discussions with the inspectors, the year 6 children reported that they feel happy and secure in school, and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

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 in 18 to 24 months.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop the strategic leadership of the senior leaders and the co-ordinators and ensure more robust monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the provision and the standards achieved by the children;
- develop further the planning, teaching and assessment for learning in order to meet the needs of all the children, in particular those who are most able; and
- develop more effective communication between the staff and the senior leadership and to ensure the management of change is well paced and impacts more effectively on the provision and standards in the school.



**Health and Safety / Accommodation**

1. The employing authority, principal and governors need to carry out urgently a risk assessment of:
  - (i) the storage of lunch tables and chairs in the corridors and stairwells which pose a risk to safety; and
  - (ii) the arrangements for securing the perimeter gates onto the school premises and the access points into the school building.
  
2. There is black mould on the ceiling of the year 7 classroom.

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