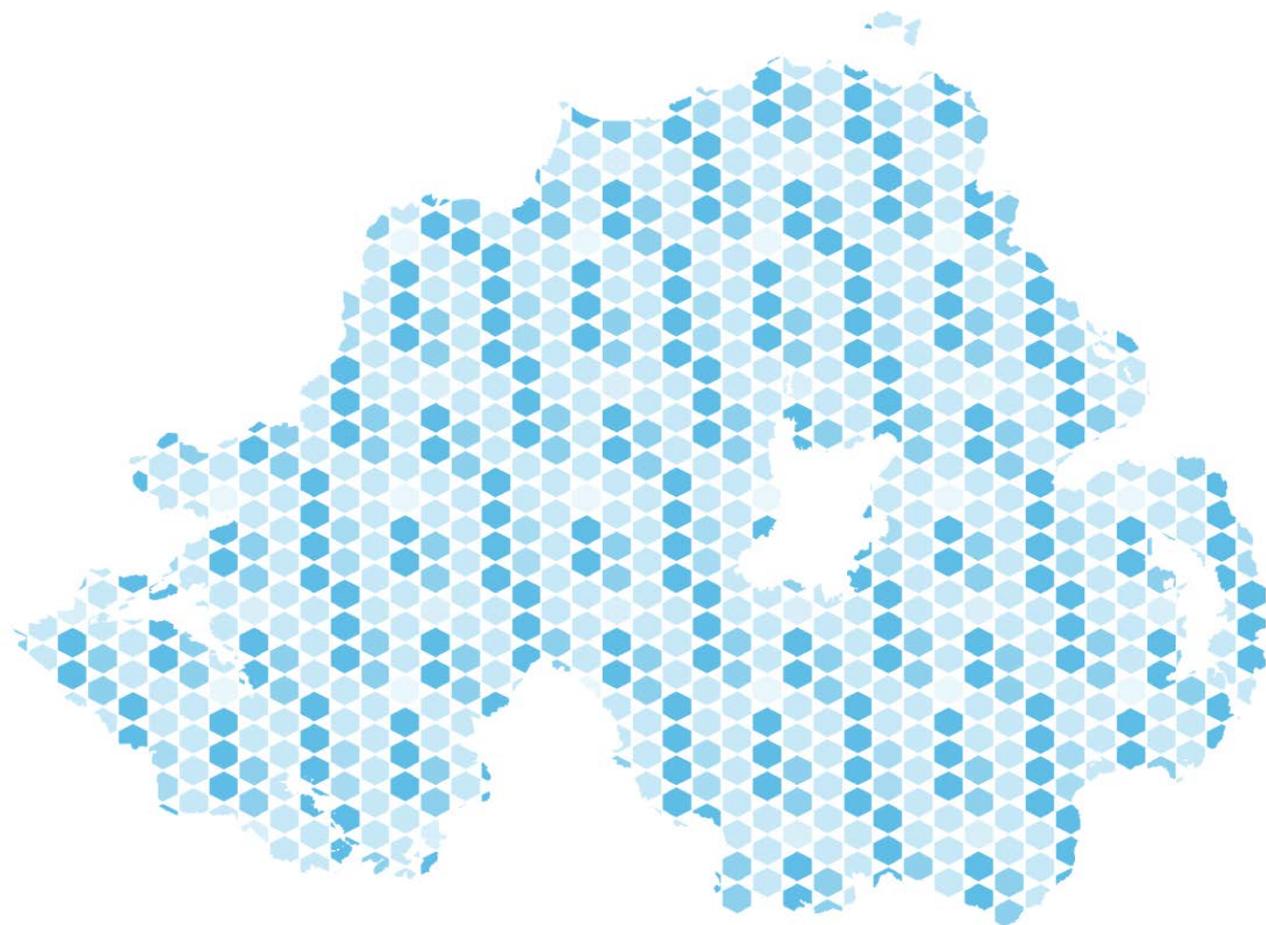


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School,
Pennyburn, Londonderry

Report of an Inspection in
February 2016

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

Sixteen percent of parents and 41% of staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses to the confidential parental questionnaire indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, parents highlighted that the children were happy and content to come to school each day. They also commented very positively upon the commitment of the staff to the well-being of the children, the quality of the learning experiences and the good communications between the school and home. The responses by the staff to the confidential questionnaire were also very positive; they emphasised the child-centred provision and the dedication of the teachers for the educational and pastoral development of the children. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives from the board of governors the responses 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 Patrick's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in the parish of The Three Patrons in the Pennyburn area of Derry City. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The school has been oversubscribed over the past four years and applies admissions criteria for entry with the enrolment remaining steady. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals and the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning have both risen slightly. While the school does not have formal shared education links with other schools across the community, it is involved in educational collaboration with a nearby special school.

St Patrick's Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	842	840	855	859
% School attendance	94.9	95.4	95.0	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	33.0	36.0	37.0	38.0
No. of children on SEN register	93	92	111	129
% of children on SEN register	11.0	11.0	13.0	15.0
No. of children with statements of educational need	8	11	11	13
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

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	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- In all year groups the children are friendly and open; they listen attentively and talk articulately to one another and to adults. The children interact well during the numerous opportunities for high quality group work, paired work and independent learning. They carry out a variety of roles and responsibilities purposefully during their learning, which develops well their communication and self-management skills. They are respectful towards one another and respond well to the positive atmosphere for learning and the good working relationships between their peers and the teachers. They are able to apply their learning in literacy and numeracy across other areas of the curriculum and talk knowledgeably about their learning and their achievements.
- The school's internal performance data shows that almost all of the children and most of those who require additional support with aspects of their learning make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. Moreover, in English two fifths of the children and in mathematics one third, make progress well above their expected level.

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

- The standard of the work in the children's books reflects very good progression in mathematics across the key stages. The presentation of the children's work is of a high quality. The children develop and use a wide range of mental mathematical strategies and can apply their knowledge in numeracy to real-life situations and in meaningful contexts across other areas of the curriculum. As they progress through the school the children demonstrate growing confidence and flexibility in using a variety of strategies to solve problems. By year 7 the most able children demonstrate high levels of mathematical reasoning and can explain their thinking using appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
- In the foundation stage, the children develop well their skills in early independent writing, in sharing their personal news and in re-telling stories. As they progress through the school, the children's written work shows a growing appreciation of how to use more complex spelling and grammar with accuracy. The teachers facilitate the children's learning with skill, particularly during the paired and group work, which is effective in extending their responses and deepening their understanding. The children develop effectively their skills in various forms of writing, including poetry, persuasive letters and speeches, writing for purpose and taking account of their audience. By year 7 the most able children demonstrate an excellent understanding of how authors use language to influence readers and they can comment with insight on more demanding features of language.
- The children use information computer technology (ICT) very well in a number of ways, for example in researching topics, presenting their work and reinforcing their learning. They demonstrate creativity in using ICT to make animations related to their topic work and in coding. The school are developing expertise in the use of portable digital technology to enhance further the learning experience for the children.

6. Provision for learning

- There is comprehensive long and medium-term planning which provides coherent guidance in all areas of the curriculum to ensure progression in the children's learning. The short-term planning is well informed by skilful monitoring, assessment and evaluations of the children's prior learning by the teachers. In the most effective practice appropriately differentiated teaching strategies address very well the individual needs of each child. There is, however, variation in the teachers' planning for the use of differentiation in the children's learning. The school are focusing appropriately on the need to outline teaching strategies explicitly to take account of the full range of abilities.
- The majority of the lessons observed during the inspection were very good or outstanding; most of the lessons were effective in promoting learning. In the most effective practice teachers use an appropriately wide range of teaching strategies and skilfully pose open-ended questions, to guide very effectively the children in their learning. A particular strength of the provision for learning is the development of the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities; this is a priority in the foundation stage, and becomes well embedded as the children progress through the school.

- Across the key stages, the teachers regularly mark the children's work; annotating it with supportive, appreciative comments, indicating how and where they can improve on their efforts.
- The provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is outstanding. The collegial approach to planning for, and meeting, the children's needs is highly effective. The children's individual needs are identified early through the links with parents, information from pre-school providers, well-informed staff observations and data analysis. The arrangements for supporting children include both excellent withdrawal and highly effective support in class. The children's progress is monitored rigorously against the agreed targets for improvement contained in the individual education plans.
- The quality of the provision for literacy is very good. There is a systematic and coherent approach to the development of the children's literacy skills and knowledge about language. The teachers promote, skilfully, the children's disposition to talk, listen, read and write in conjunction with their thinking skills and personal capabilities. They integrate literacy well across the curriculum to provide meaningful and purposeful contexts for learning, consequently, the children's group work, self-management and resilience are key strengths within the provision. The children have meaningful and extensive opportunities to write creatively, including in poetic form, for a variety of purposes and audiences across the curriculum.
- The quality of the provision for numeracy is very good. From the foundation stage onwards, the children develop well their independence and self management in accessing resources, particularly in solving problems, and accepting various roles and responsibilities within their class. The children experience, and benefit from, a suitably broad and balanced programme for mathematics as they progress through the school. The key features include very effective strategies to develop the children's mental mathematics and the focus on using their numeracy work in real-life contexts. During investigation work they are able to take risks, experiment and explore to find different ways to solve problems.
- The quality of pastoral care is outstanding and forms an integral part of the provision for learning and teaching. There is a strong sense of community in the school, which is underpinned by a distinctive caring and supportive ethos. A whole-school approach to promoting and rewarding positive behaviour develops well the children's resilience and encourages them to achieve their best. The children's views are sought through a number of forums and are used well to inform developments in the school's provision. The arrangements for nurturing the children's musical and sporting talents is a significant strength of the school's provision and enhances significantly their educational and social experiences.
- The school promotes very well healthy eating and physical activity through the healthy breaks and the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leaders work very effectively as a team and share a common vision for the school which incorporates high quality pastoral care and learning experiences. The senior and middle leaders set high, yet realistic, expectations for the school which draw on their professional expertise and the analysis of data. The co-ordinators lead their areas of responsibility very well, setting out actions for improvement in conjunction with the senior leaders. The systems to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning are exemplary, and the actions to promote improvement are suitably robust and highly effective. These arrangements include regular planned opportunities to review and adjust the targets for improvement in response to the progress made by the children.
- The school development plan² has been formed through comprehensive consultation with the teachers, children, parents and governors and is of very high quality. Various sources of data are used appropriately to inform the priorities for development across all of the key areas relating to the quality of learning and attainment for the children. The actions plans are equally well informed and are highly effective in guiding school improvement.
- There is a range of purposeful links with the parents and carers who are well informed about their children's progress; there are regular opportunities for them, and the wider community, to experience and enhance further the children's learning. The school provides appropriate opportunities for the children to participate in a range of enriching and extended school activities.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors support the life and work of the school through their engagement with the whole school community and in carrying out their support and challenge functions appropriately. They are highly strategic in improving and developing the school further in the interests of the children.
- 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

St Patrick's Primary 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.

Accommodation

1. The school has insufficient library provision due to lack of accommodation.

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