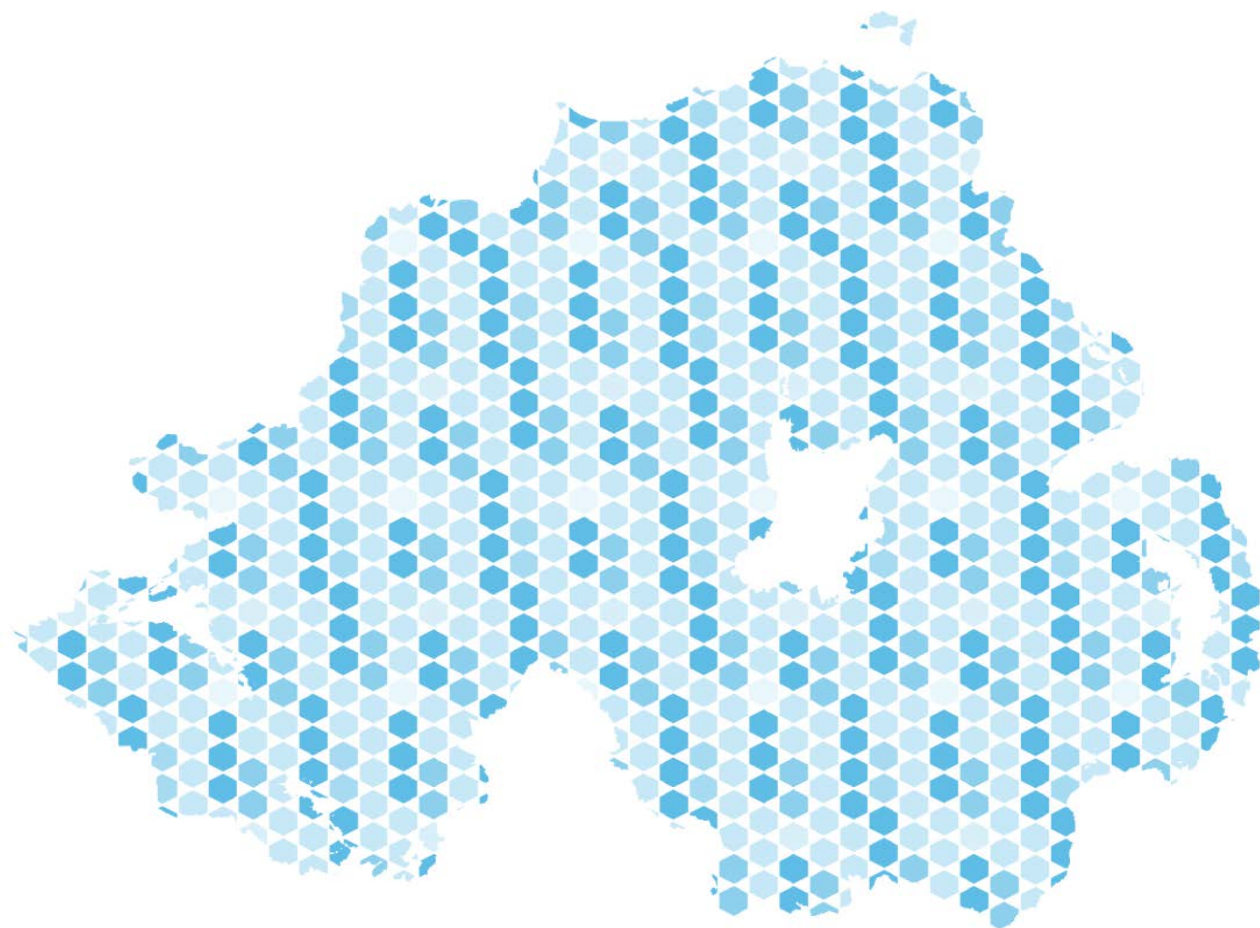


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Thérèse's Primary School,  
Lenamore, Derry City

Report of an Inspection in  
January 2016

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*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.

# Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
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	4
8. Overall effectiveness	5

## **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.

Approximately five percent of parents and almost all of the staff (teaching and non-teaching) responded to the questionnaires. Almost all the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents praised the nurturing, approachable, supportive staff; the excellent leadership of the principal and the very good range of learning experiences provided for the children. The staff responses were wholly positive and highlighted the outstanding pastoral ethos of the school and the culture of continuous self-evaluation led by the senior leadership team. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the outcomes 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 Thérèse's Primary School is a maintained school situated in the Galliagh area of Derry City. Almost all of the children attending the school come from Galliagh and the surrounding area. The principal and vice-principal have been appointed since the last inspection in 2008.

St Thérèse's Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment (Years 1 - 7)	360	358	368	359
% School attendance	92.2	92.8	92.8	94.2
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	69	75	76	77
No. of children on SEN register	97	106	93	121
% of children on SEN register	33	37	32	43
No. of children with statements of educational need	6	5	5	6
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	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Very good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are courteous, respectful and demonstrate empathy for others; their behaviour is exemplary. They are highly motivated to learn, listen well and settle quickly to their learning tasks in class and in the afterschool clubs. The children take great pride in their work and by key stage 2 they take on roles and responsibilities with great maturity and develop effective leadership skills.
- The school's performance data indicates that a majority of the children make progress in mathematics and most children make progress in English, in line with or above expectation; including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning.
- The children engage well with practical activities and, when given the opportunity, enjoy working in pairs and groups to discuss and complete investigative, problem-solving and problem-posing tasks. By year 7, the highest achieving children demonstrate a secure understanding of key concepts across the mathematics curriculum, and are flexible in their thinking and use of strategies.
- The children can communicate clearly with their peers and adults in group work and class discussions. Throughout the school, the children develop a very good range of reading strategies and by the end of key stage 2 they read with fluency, understanding and expression. They write to a good standard across a range of forms.

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

- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning respond very well to the range of intervention and support strategies deployed by the school. They are enthusiastic about their learning and are fully included in all aspects of the life and work of the school.
- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to enhance their learning across the curriculum. In particular, they make very good use of a range of programmes to improve their reading and numeracy skills.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The quality of the learning and teaching in almost all of the lessons observed was effective. In the most effective practice the learning was stimulating and well structured. The teachers used the planning and assessment processes well to ensure there was a clear focus on the learning and provided appropriate support to ensure effectively the progress of all the children. The children were provided with very good opportunities to work together in pairs and groups and meaningful plenary sessions were used well by the teachers to consolidate the children's learning. In the less effective practice, in a small number of the lessons observed, the learning was not clearly differentiated and over-direction by the teacher restricted the opportunities for the children to take responsibility for their learning.
- The teachers mark regularly the children's work and, in the best practice, provide advice on how the children can improve the quality of their work. The staff need to develop a more consistent approach to assessment for learning, including marking for improvement to enable the children to improve their work and to be more involved in their learning.
- Children who require support with aspects of their learning are included in all aspects of school life. Information about the children's needs is obtained through the very effective links with local pre-schools and the use of standardised assessment tools. This information is used very well to inform in-class support and early intervention by speech and language therapists. As they progress through the school, the children are supported effectively through well-focused withdrawal support and specific intervention programmes. The small group settings within year groups provide appropriate support and challenge for the children. The individual education plans are child-centred and the children are involved meaningfully in reviewing their learning and setting targets. The senior leadership team has identified appropriately the need to improve the quality of differentiated learning in a small number of classes.
- A key feature of the literacy provision is the appropriate focus on the development of the children's language and reading skills. The school's reading programme is systematic; the teachers use the well-planned guided reading sessions effectively to develop the children's fluency, understanding and enjoyment of reading. In the best practice, children have very good opportunities to develop their talking and listening skills through meaningful class discussion and appropriate group and paired work. In the less effective literacy lessons, there is an over reliance on text book tasks which limit the children's opportunities for creativity and communication. The programme for writing provides good opportunities for the children to write in a variety of forms. The senior leadership team has appropriately identified the need to improve further the standard of the children's writing through well-planned opportunities to write in a range of genres and purposeful contexts across the curriculum. The children use ICT effectively to present their ideas in digital form.

- The whole-school programme for numeracy is comprehensive and provides a clear line of development and progression in the children's learning. The teachers provide the children with a range of practical activities and resources, including ICT, to support and enhance the learning. Mental mathematical strategies are a regular feature of numeracy lessons to reinforce number facts and develop the children's mathematical thinking. The current focus on investigative, problem-solving activities is evident in the planning and practice throughout the school. In the best practice, the teachers model effectively key mathematical language and, through effective questioning, enable the children to articulate and reflect on their learning. This good practice needs to be disseminated, in order to bring more consistency to the quality of the children's learning experiences in numeracy. On occasion, the learning outcomes are unclear, resulting in missed opportunities to develop the children's thinking and responses, and to connect their learning in numeracy to other areas of the curriculum.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is outstanding. This is evident in the inclusive, child and community centred ethos which permeates all aspects of the school's provision. The school environment is nurturing with frequent and regular whole-school celebrations of the children's achievements and displays of the children's work throughout the school. A particular strength of the school is the success of the Family and School Together programme which brings parents, children, teachers and the wider community together, to ensure that children are supported to fulfil their potential in school and in life. Throughout the school the quality of the working relationships in support of the children's learning is very effective. All staff are highly committed to the care and well-being of the children. In discussions with the inspection team, the children talked with pride about their contribution to making positive changes to the school through their participation in the school council, and the school Eco council. They identified the benefits of the whole school Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies which is well embedded in the pastoral and curricular aspects of the school. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to participate with their peers within the community, enrich the children's learning experiences and develop their thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The senior leadership team is highly effective; there is a shared vision for school improvement and clear strategic direction for future developments in the school. The senior leaders lead by example, instil confidence in the staff and empower them to lead their respective areas of responsibility. They are highly committed to the well-being of the children and the staff, and to the involvement of families in the life and work of the school. There is an effective culture of self-evaluation in the school; the staff work very well as a team and have a clear focus on improving further the provision for the children and the standards they attain.

- The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed school development plan that has involved extensive consultation with the wider school community. The associated action plans guide effectively the development work across the school and the coordinators use robust processes to monitor and evaluate the impact of the improvement work.
- The school has very effective links with the parents, local pre-school providers and community organisations. The parents are informed about the life and work of the school through regular newsletters, reports and a range of parent information workshops. A particular strength of the school is the outreach to parents through planned programmes.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors have a well-developed strategic overview of the school and are very well informed about the life and work of the school. They have a very good range of complementary skills, monitor well the outworking of the school development plan and provide appropriate support and challenge to the senior leadership team.
- 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 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 how the staff embed further the application of mathematics and writing in meaningful contexts across the school to raise the standards of the children.



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