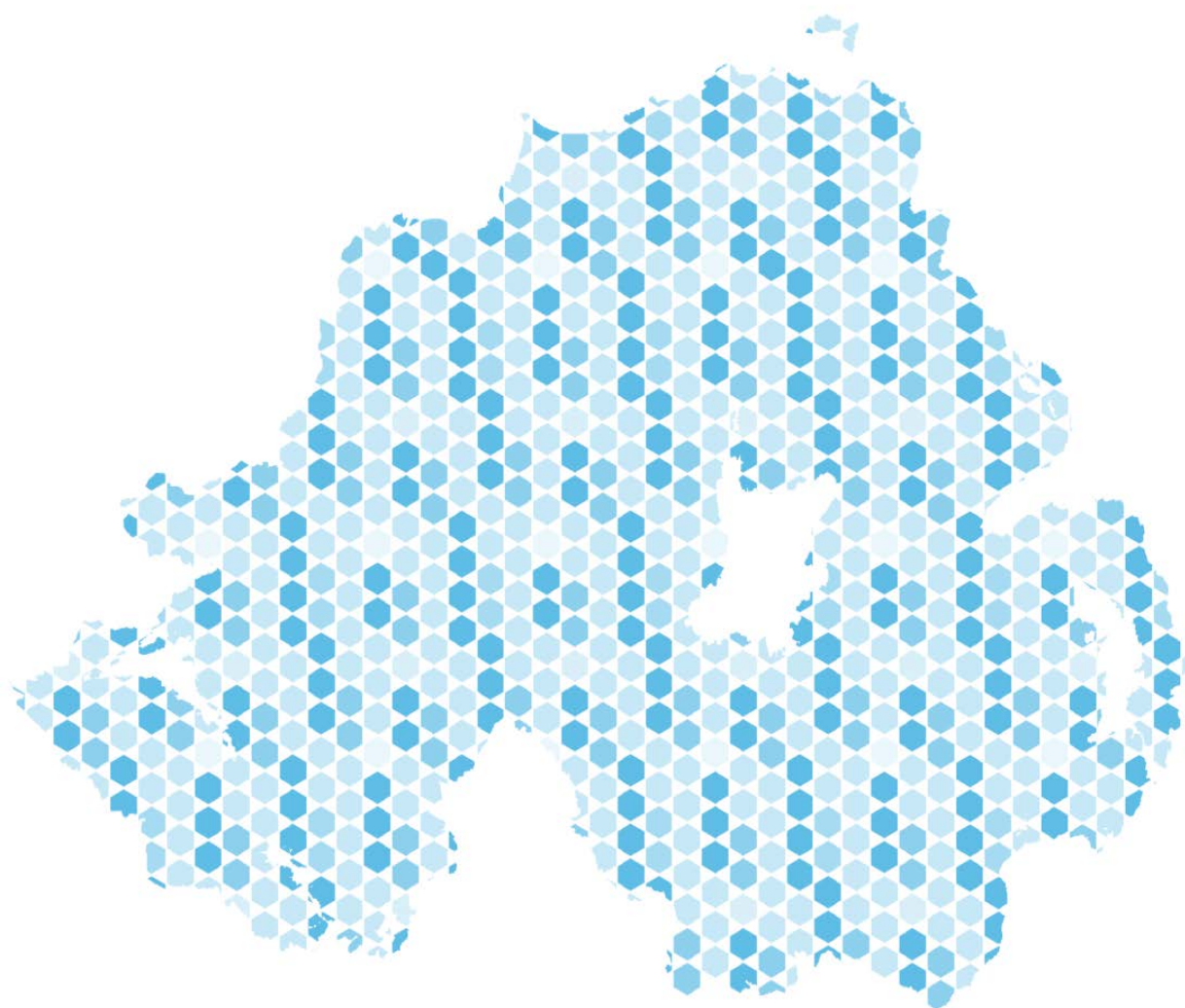


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach,
Crumlin, Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
February 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
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Quantitative terms

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 in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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 Education and Training Inspectorate's (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 teaching and learning, 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 nine percent of parents and 61% of staff (teaching and non-teaching) replied to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires were positive about all aspects of the life and work of the school. ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the messages which emerged from the questionnaires. Almost all of the very small number of issues raised from the staff questionnaires derived from the difficulties with the current accommodation.

2. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

1. the children's achievements and standards in numeracy and literacy (in Irish and English), in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
2. the quality of provision in the school; and
3. the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach is situated on the Glenavy Road on the outskirts of the town of Crumlin, Co Antrim. The school currently operates on a split site; two composite classes, are accommodated in temporary classrooms within the grounds of Crumlin Integrated College. The school plans to move to a new building on a site adjacent to the gaelscoil in autumn 2015.

The enrolment of the school is currently 79 children; most of the children come from the Crumlin and Glenavy areas.

At the time of the inspection, approximately 22% of the children were entitled to free school meals (FSM) and 30% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	66	75	84	79
% Attendance	95.1	94.65	95.75	97.8
% Attendance for those children on the SEN Register	90.95	88.7	92.87	96.12
Percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	*	9	7	22
% of children on SEN register	20	22	27	30
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

5. Achievements and standards

- Throughout the school the children are generally well-behaved and almost all are keen to learn. They are respectful of their teachers, listen well in class and most complete the learning tasks that the teachers set for them. When provided with stimulating and appropriately differentiated learning activities, the children become more actively engaged in their learning and demonstrate independence and flexibility in their learning and thinking. Most of the children speak fluently in Irish throughout the school and interact confidently, in both Irish and English, with each other and with staff and visitors.
- The school's performance data shows that all of the children make progress in English, Irish and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. Almost all of the children who require support with aspects of their learning make good progress.
- By year 7, the standards achieved by the children in literacy are good. The highest achieving children read with fluency, expression and enjoyment and discuss confidently their favourite novels and authors in both Irish and English. Throughout the school, the children have good talking and listening skills. As the children progress through the school, they display good standards in writing; they write in different forms and in the most effective practice they plan, edit and redraft their work.
- The standards achieved by the children in mathematics are good; most of them engage well in their mental mathematics activities and are beginning to use mathematical terminology in Irish with increasing confidence and accuracy. The school has appropriately identified the need to develop further the children's mathematical language. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the most able children are able to apply a good range of strategies, explain their thinking and demonstrate flexibility in problem-solving tasks. They present their work in mathematics with clarity and confidence.

- The children in the gaelscoil campus use effectively information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance and display their learning across the curriculum. Currently, the children based in Crumlin Integrated College (years 4-7) do not have access to the C2K network.

6. Provision

- There is a whole-school approach to planning which provides satisfactory guidance for the teachers. The school has appropriately identified the need to review the planning processes to ensure they reflect the context of the school. It will be important that the review ensures that all the teachers plan more effectively for the needs and abilities of the individual children and to ensure there is sufficient progression and challenge in the learning. There is a variation in the marking of the children's work throughout the school. In the best practice, the teachers take account of the children's own evaluations of their learning and provide helpful guidance to the children on how to improve their work.
- In the most effective practice, the lessons observed were stimulating, well-structured and challenging with an appropriate pace for learning. There was a clear focus on the learning and the teachers used effective immersion strategies and questioning to stimulate the children's thinking and their sense of enquiry. In the less effective practice, in one third of the lessons observed, the teachers held low expectations for the children's learning and there was insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all of the children, particularly the more able. In these lessons, a minority of children became disengaged from their learning.
- By the end of KS 2 there is an appropriate focus on the development of the children's biliteracy skills. In the best practice, the children are provided with opportunities to use their language skills in meaningful contexts and there are effective immersion strategies used to develop further the children's linguistic competency, in both Irish and English. There is insufficient use of other curricular areas as contexts in which to apply and develop the children's writing skills.
- There is a whole-school overview for mathematics which ensures the coverage of all areas of the mathematics curriculum across the key stages. The teachers use well the mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of the lessons to develop the children's flexibility and thinking skills and to consolidate their prior learning. Throughout the school, the teachers need to broaden their teaching approaches in mathematics to link the children's learning experiences more effectively to real life situations and, where appropriate, to connect their mathematics learning with other areas of the curriculum.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early through, for example, teacher observations and the analysis of a range of internal assessment data. The children are supported well through effective withdrawal sessions and the work of the classroom assistants in the classrooms. There is insufficient differentiation in the planning to guide the work of the teachers. The individual education plans need to be more clearly focused on the individual needs of the children and linked to effective interventions and strategies to support the children more effectively in their learning.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is a strength. There is a welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos evident throughout the school. The children are proud of their school and they show care and respect for one another and for the staff. The culture of the school ensures that all of the children are listened to by the staff; this is evidenced by, for example, the work of the school council.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the healthy break policy and the opportunities to take part in sporting activities, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal and the recently appointed senior leadership team are committed to the well-being of the children and staff and to the ongoing improvement of provision within the school. There has been a reorganisation of the leadership and management of almost all of the curricular areas. It will be important that each of the roles is developed further in order to enable the senior leadership, co-ordinators and teachers to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of the children's learning experiences and attainments.
- There is a comprehensive school development plan in place which identifies key priorities for improvement. The associated action plans need to be more closely connected to the school development planning process and more focused on the learning needs of the children in order to guide more coherently the process of monitoring, evaluation and improvement.
- The school has effective links with the parents who are well-informed about their children's progress and the life and work of the school through, for example, the school newsletters. There are regular opportunities for the children to participate in choral, drama and writing competitions and sporting tournaments. There are very effective links with the local and wider community, including the naíscoil, local primary schools and post-primary schools, which enhance further the children's learning.
- At the time of the inspection, the newly formed Board of Governors had not yet met and was represented at the meeting with the inspectors by the acting chairperson. The outgoing Board of Governors has been involved in developing the school within the community to ensure sustainability and to secure capital funding.
- 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 reported that they felt very secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, in the learning and teaching and in the leadership and management, which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- plan more effectively for the needs and abilities of the individual children and to ensure there is sufficient progression and challenge in the learning for all of the children; and
- ensure that the school development planning process and associated action plans are more focused on the learning needs of the children in order to guide better the process of monitoring, evaluation and improvement.
- address a health and safety issue which is detailed in an appendix to this report.

Health and safety

1. There is an urgent need to review the security of the temporary classrooms on the Crumlin Integrated College site.

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