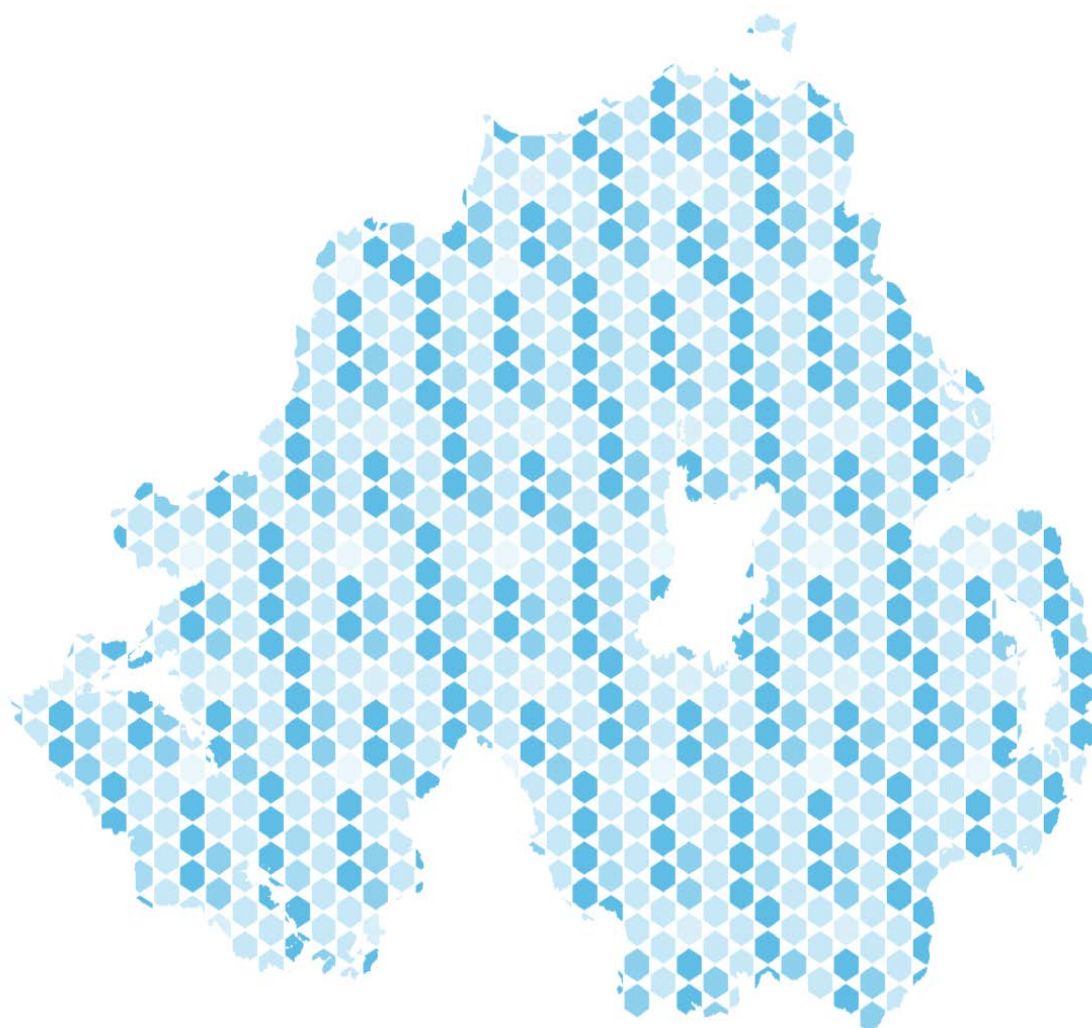


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Brigid's Primary School,  
Coalisland, Co Tyrone

Report of an Inspection  
in October 2013

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

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Teachers	6	6	100%	6
Support Staff	13	13	100%	13
Parents	87	51	58.62%	40

\* fewer than 5

The ETI is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents/carers about the life and work of the school. As a result of technical difficulties, reported to ETI by the school, the response rate to the parental questionnaires was low.

In the discussions held during the inspection, the governors and children spoke very positively about the school highlighting, the value placed on each child to achieve their potential, the high quality of the principal's leadership, the staff's commitment to the child-centred ethos and the school as the corner stone of the community.

## 2. Context

St Brigid's Primary School is situated in the village of Brocagh, approximately four miles from Coalisland. Almost all of the children who attend the school come from the local village or the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has remained relatively steady over the last four years and stands currently at 114; approximately 16% of the children have been identified as requiring additional help with their learning and approximately 23% are entitled to free school meals.

<b>St Brigid's Primary School</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Enrolment	126	121	115	114
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.4%	96.6%	95.9%	-
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	22.2%	24.79%	22.6%	22.6%
% of children on SEN register	13.49%	17.35%	16.52%	16.52%
No. of children with statements of educational needs				
No. of newcomers				

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

### 3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

### 4. Overall findings

#### Key findings of the inspection

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Very good</b>

### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children work well in paired and group work, having very good opportunities to discuss and extend their learning. They possess very good personal and social skills and they are friendly, confident, well behaved and positively disposed to learning.
- An analysis of the key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared to schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the school's performance in English and mathematics is above the average in the past four years.\* The school's internal performance data shows that all children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good or outstanding progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.

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

\* Due to the current transition period in the arrangements for statutory assessment, this analysis of the end of KS2 performance data is based on the outcomes up to but not including the 2012/13 school year.

- By the end of key stage (KS) 2, in mathematics, the children have a very good understanding of all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. They use their knowledge in real-life contexts and have outstanding flexibility in their mathematical thinking. In English, the children read with very good fluency and have an excellent understanding of various texts. They produce very good writing across all areas of the curriculum.
- Most of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make very good progress in line with their ability.
- The children participate in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) KS2 information and communication technology (ICT) accreditation scheme. By year 7, they attain excellent standards in information and communication technology (ICT).

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The teachers' planning and assessment, including their evaluations of the children's responses to the planned programme, are detailed and inform well their work with the children. Most of the teaching is good or better; in a significant minority of the lessons observed, it was very good and outstanding. In the effective practice, the teachers use skilful questioning to engage and challenge the children, and encourage them to reflect on and explain their thinking using the appropriate vocabulary. The well-structured lessons focus on the progression in learning and the development of the children's knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy through a very good range of active learning approaches.
- The children with additional learning needs are supported well in class and the lessons are well matched to their capabilities. The learning support assistants provide very good support that enhances the children's learning experiences and their personal and social development.
- The children have very good opportunities to talk and listen, read and write across the curriculum. In the foundation stage and KS1, the children's reading develops systematically through an effective programme of phonological awareness and modelled, shared and guided reading experiences. By KS2, the children apply their maturing skills to understand and derive enjoyment from a variety of more complex texts and they express their viewpoints competently in meaningful contexts.
- All aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered systematically to support the development of the children's knowledge. Particular strengths in the provision are: the development of mathematical language; the structured acquisition of mental mathematics strategies; and, the application of the mathematical knowledge to problem solving and investigative work.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding; it is characterised by the inclusive, welcoming ethos and positive working relationships at all levels.

- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, through the participation in the Healthy Breaks initiative and a wide range of extra-curricular activities which help the children to develop healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The principal and the senior leadership team are highly effective and they are clearly focused on improving further all aspects of the school's provision. Together, the whole staff team ensures that every child's welfare and achievements are at the centre of the school's vision. The principal has developed a culture of self-evaluation that is well embedded across the school, underpinned by the collegial approaches to decision-making that involve all staff, parents, children and the governors.
- The school development plan (SDP) and the associated action plans guide appropriately the development work of the school. There are effective arrangements in place for the monitoring of the quality of the provision with regard to literacy and numeracy; as the school has already identified, the staff need to approach the review of the provision for special educational needs and ICT with similar rigour.
- The school has excellent links with parents and the wider community. The children spoke enthusiastically about the wide range of enriching cultural and sporting experiences in which they participate.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors challenge and support appropriately the work of the principal and staff to effect school improvement, including the raising of the standards attained by 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 year six children, they indicated that they feel happy in school and that they have someone they can speak to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being. They spoke positively about their helpful teachers and the wide range of learning opportunities available to them.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

### **Health and safety**

- The playground to the rear of the school building is not secure; the school governors, staff and the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) need urgently to carry out a risk assessment regarding access arrangements.



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