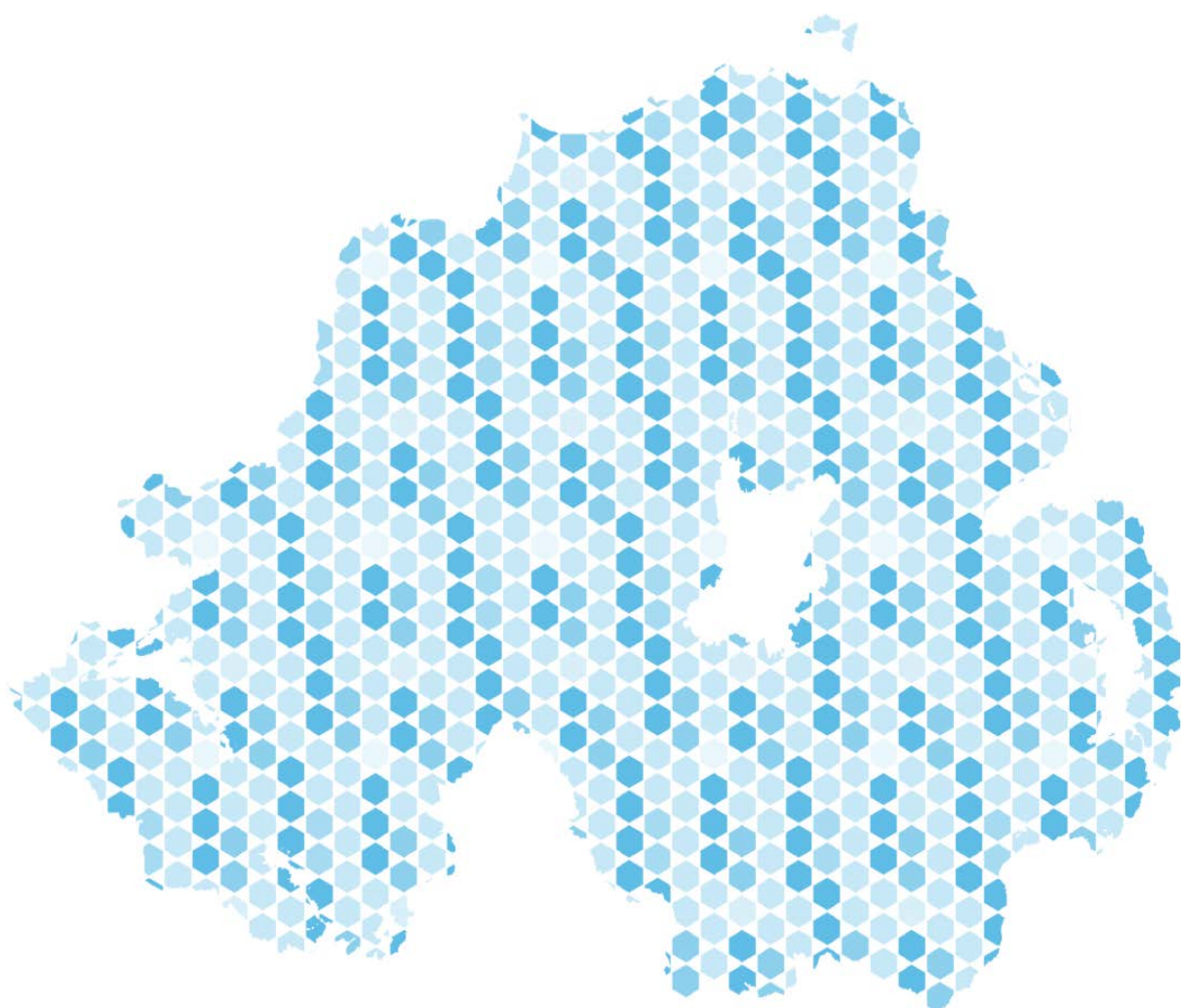


# PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Colman's Primary School,  
Kilkeel, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in  
November 2014



*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

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.

Eight percent of parents responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the approachable, friendly staff and principal. Almost all of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were very positive. ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the outcomes of the questionnaires.

## **2. Focus of inspection**

The inspection focused on:

1. the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy; 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**

St Colman's Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Kilkeel, County Down. Most of the children attending the school come from the immediate area. Over the past four years, the enrolment has increased steadily and currently stands at 204 children. Approximately 48% of the children are entitled to free schools meals and 20% of the children have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school leadership has undergone significant changes since September 2014 with the appointment of a new principal and changes in the management structure.

St Colman's Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	185	186	196	204
% Attendance (NI Average)	94	93	94	-
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	44	51	48	48
% (No) of children on SEN register	23	22	21	20
No. of children with statements of educational needs	12	12	8	6
No. of newcomers	*	*	6	6

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

\* fewer than 5

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- Throughout the school, the children are well-behaved and are keen to learn. They are respectful of their teachers, listen well in class and settle quickly to their learning tasks. 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.
- The school's performance data indicates that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- Throughout the school, the children have good talking and listening skills; they present confidently in school assemblies and share their views during class or group discussions. By year 7, the children read with fluency, expression and enjoyment and discuss their favourite novels and authors. The children's standard of writing is very good; they write in different forms and for a variety of purposes. In the most effective practice, the children plan and redraft their work to improve the quality of their writing.
- By year 7, the children are secure in their knowledge of the key mathematical concepts and are confident and flexible in their thinking across all the areas of mathematics. They use mathematical language precisely and can apply their mathematical understanding in real and relevant contexts.

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

- The children's use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their learning is good. They use ICT to engage in meaningful research and to present their ideas for a variety of audiences.

## **6. Provision**

- In the most effective practice, the lessons observed were 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 scaffold effectively the progress of all the children. They used meaningful plenary sessions to consolidate the children's learning and made very good use of their evaluations to guide effectively future planning. In the less effective practice, in a minority of lessons, the teachers held low expectations for the children's learning and there was insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all of the children. In these lessons, over-direction by the teachers restricted the opportunities for the children to develop their language and self-management skills, to work collaboratively together in pairs and small groups and to take responsibility for their learning.
- The school's literacy programme ensures good progression in the children's learning throughout the three key stages. The children develop effectively their reading capabilities through guided-reading sessions that explore their understanding of text, grammar and punctuation in context. The use of reading support programmes, such as, accelerated reading and reading partnership, develop well the children's confidence and enjoyment of reading. In a minority of classes, the teachers need to develop meaningful, follow-on reading activities that focus clearly on the reinforcement and extension of key reading skills that match the needs of the children. A significant strength of the literacy provision is the progressive development of the children's writing skills. The play-based learning programme in the foundation stage (FS) provides the children with very good opportunities to write independently. The effective use of ICT by year 7 children enables them to produce written work in various contexts, for example, comic stories regarding anti-bullying week. Across the three key stages, the teachers need to develop further the children's greater involvement in the review of their learning in English through assessment for learning approaches and develop writing styles across the curriculum.
- The mathematics programme is comprehensive, ensuring the progressive development across the key stages in mathematical processes, number, measures, shape and space and handling data. In the best practice, the teachers make effective use of a range of practical materials, games and strategies to stimulate the children's mathematical curiosity and to reinforce their mathematical thinking. The children benefit from appropriately differentiated group work which enables them to work collaboratively and develop mathematical language and skills. In the foundation stage (FS), the children have well-planned opportunities to develop a good understanding of numeracy and to use appropriate mathematical language with increasing fluency during the play-based learning sessions. The teachers need to develop further opportunities for the children to use mathematics more widely across the curriculum and in real-life contexts.

- 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 individual education plans are focused on the short term needs of the children and effective interventions and strategies are planned to support the children in their learning. In the most effective practice, these plans guide well the learning and teaching in the classrooms. The school has developed effective links with a range of external agencies to support the children with, for example, speech and language therapy and motor-sensory development. The school has appropriately identified the need to track more rigorously the progress made by children with additional learning needs and to co-ordinate and evaluate more effectively the intervention programmes.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. There is a caring, welcoming 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 children have very good opportunities to contribute to decision-making in the school, for example, through the school council and Eco-committee.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the healthy eating policy and the range of sports activities provided for the children thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The recently appointed principal is highly committed to the well-being of the children and staff and to the ongoing improvement of the provision within the school. She has a clear, shared vision for the development of the school based on a good knowledge of all aspects of school life. There has been a reorganisation of the leadership and management roles of almost all the curricular areas. It will be important that the roles are 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 school improvement. The evaluations of the plan are clear and outline the further actions to be taken by the teachers and governors. The associated action plans, however, need to be more focused on the learning needs of the children in order to develop more effective processes of monitoring and evaluating by the teachers and coordinators.
- 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, informative school newsletters and curriculum meetings. There are regular opportunities for the children to participate in joint activities with the local, controlled primary schools through, for example, cultural activities sporting tournaments and inter-school science and technology projects. There are very effective links with the local and wider community, including the local Sure Start, pre-school settings and post-primary schools which enhance further the children's learning.

- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are actively involved in the school development planning process and provide a challenge function in relation to achievements and standards, finance and the curriculum.
- 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 the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

### **The areas for improvement are:**

- the teachers need to plan for greater differentiation in the learning to ensure that the needs of all the children are met more effectively to raise further their attainment; and
- the senior leadership, co-ordinators and teachers need to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of the children's learning experiences and attainments.



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