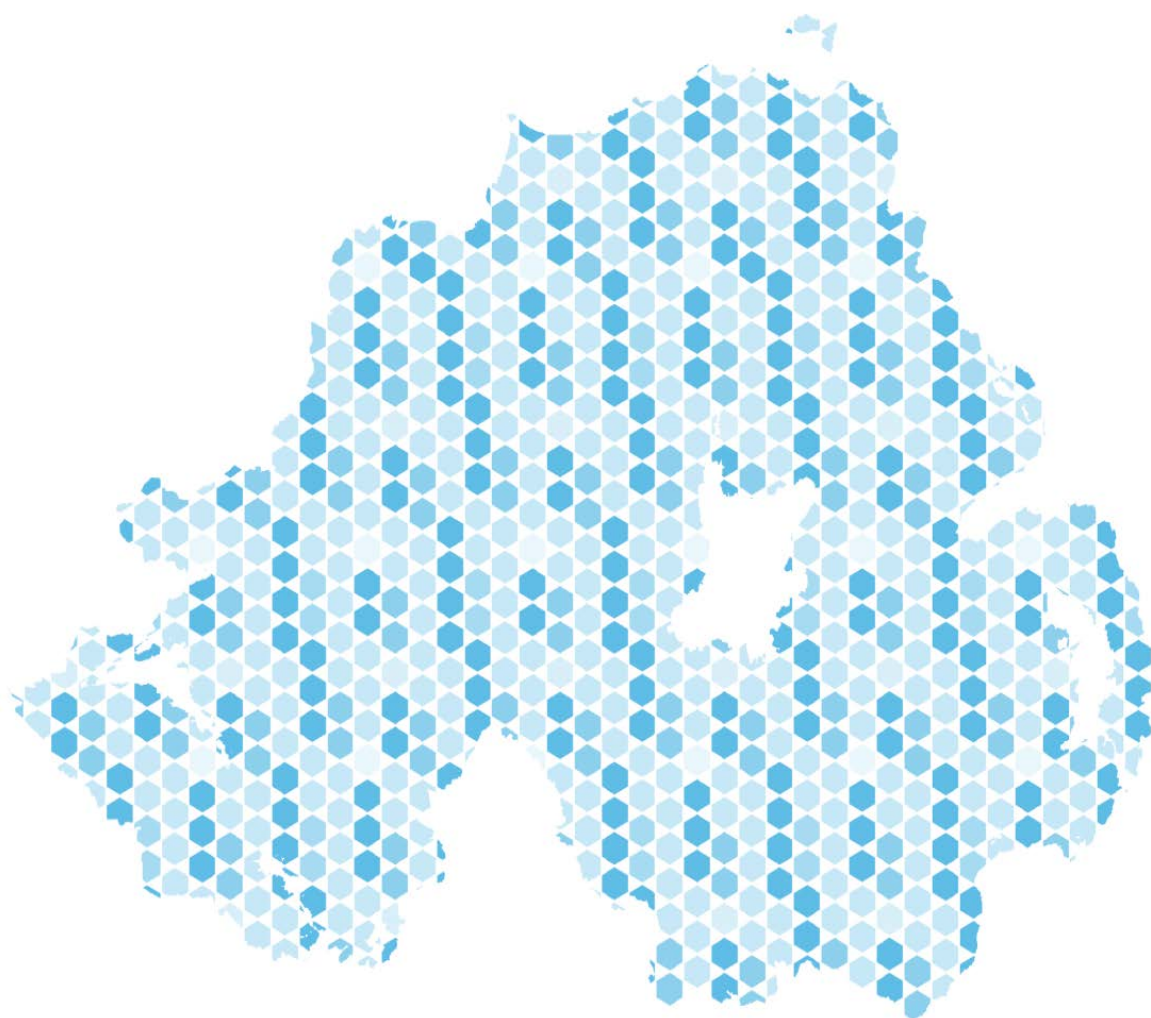


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Comgall's Primary School,  
Bangor, Co Down

Report of an Inspection in  
April 2014

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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

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 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 (total number in the school per category)	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	222	46	22%	28
Teaching staff	12	11	92%	10
Support staff	13	18	72%	*

\* fewer than 5

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents about the life and work of the school. As a result, the response rate to the parental questionnaire may be low.

Almost all of the responses from the parental questionnaire highlighted the caring and happy learning environment, the supportive and approachable teachers and the dedication and professionalism of the principal. The responses from the teachers and support staff were wholly positive and praised the collegial approach to learning and teaching, the supportive senior management team and the welcoming and friendly work environment. The small number of matters raised in the questionnaires was discussed with the principal and the representatives of the Board of Governors.

## 2. Context

St Comgall's Primary School is situated on the Brunswick Road in Bangor adjacent to the St Comgall's Church. The school has a wide catchment area and the enrolment has steadily increased over the past three years.

St Comgall's Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	291	282	285	302
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.7%	95.5%	95.6%	96.6%
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	3.1%	5.2%	8.94%	12.58%
% (No) of children on SEN register	8.93 %	9.0%	13.58%	12.25%
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	6	10
No. of newcomers	17	13	12	*

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

\*fewer than 5

### 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 finding

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

### Key findings of the inspection

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data in three of the past four years<sup>2</sup> shows that in English and mathematics the school's performance is consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. Compared with schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category, the performance in English is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average in two out of three years and, in mathematics is on or above the NI average across the three years. The school's internal performance data shows that almost all the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are achieving in line with or above expectation.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

- The children's behaviour is exemplary; they are well mannered and courteous to their peers, staff and visitors. The children demonstrate high levels of motivation and are enthusiastic, independent learners. As they progress through the school, the children are increasingly reflective of their learning and have high expectations for the standard of their own work in terms of presentation and accuracy. The children are confident when communicating with others and are able to explain clearly their opinions and ideas. The most able children are enthusiastic readers and discuss a range of authors and their preferences for styles of writing. The children are very skilful in applying a range of mental mathematics strategies to solve problems accurately and can select and transfer their knowledge across the curriculum.
- The children's achievements in using information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum are of a very high standard. They are able to select and use a range of technology to research, analyse and present their learning.

## **6. Provision**

- Most of the teaching is very good or better; almost half of the lessons are of an outstanding quality. A key strength of the teaching is the integration of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum in meaningful and practical contexts. The teachers have high expectations of the children's work and behaviour, and the children take pride in their achievements. The teachers are adept at meeting the range of needs of all of the children through appropriately differentiated teaching and learning. There is comprehensive planning at all levels, linked to the children's own experiences and interests. The planning is well informed by on-going thorough evaluation of the children's learning. The highly skilled team of classroom assistants provide very effective support for the teachers and children and are fully involved in the process of evaluating and monitoring the children's progress.
- The provision for those children who require additional support with their learning is very well focused. The children and parents are appropriately involved in setting and reviewing their targets for learning. The staff know the children well and provide sensitive in-class support to enable these children to make very good progress.
- The teachers provide a supportive and stimulating learning environment which nurtures the children's creativity and sense of enquiry. There is an effective whole school approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, where skills and knowledge are systematically developed as the children progress through the school. A particular strength of the mathematics provision is the development of appropriate mathematical language and the regular opportunities for the children to use their mental mathematics strategies in imaginative contexts. In literacy, the children are provided with well-planned and relevant opportunities to develop and use their talking and listening, reading and writing skills for a range of purposes and audiences.

- The quality of the pastoral care is outstanding. The caring and inclusive ethos is characterised by highly effective teamwork and collegiality at all levels. Children's achievements are regularly recognised and celebrated; for example, the success of the school choir, the traditional music group and various sports teams at recent local and regional events. The children have very good opportunities to express their ideas and opinions on the life and work of the school, for example, through the eco-council, pupil questionnaires and circle time. The school has in place a range of appropriate strategies and procedures to involve parents in supporting their children's learning and becoming involved in the life and work of the school.
- The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The principal provides outstanding strategic leadership. The innovative and highly skilled senior management team and co-ordinators, all of whom have a clear and shared vision for achieving continuous improvement in the interests of all learners, ably support the principal.
- The school development planning process is underpinned by rigorous, effective and well-established self-evaluation and guides well the strategic direction of the school. All members of the school community have appropriate opportunities to contribute to the school development planning process. A comprehensive range of performance data is analysed effectively to raise standards for children of all abilities and improve further the quality of the teaching and learning. The school has an extensive range of links with the local, regional and global communities which are used to enhance the children's learning experiences.
- 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 are well informed about all aspects of school life and recognise their role in supporting the staff as they develop the provision in the school. The governors apply effectively their challenge function to all aspects of school leadership and management.
- 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 year 6 children reported that they felt safe and secure in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being. They spoke enthusiastically and confidently about their experiences in school.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**Health and safety/Accommodation**

- There is a need for the employing authority, the South-Eastern Education and Library Board and the board of governors to review the secure access to the mobile classrooms.



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