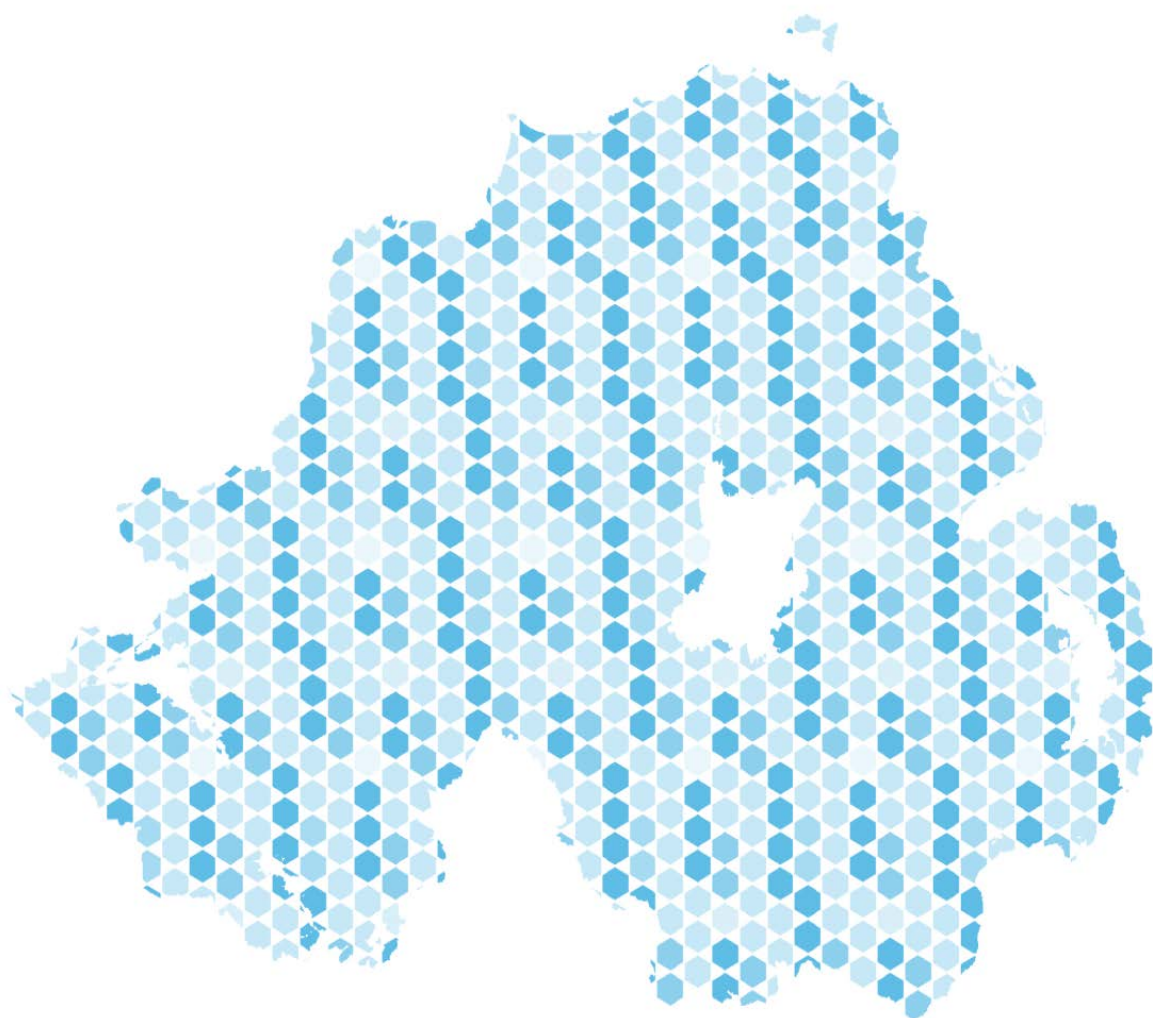


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St John's Primary School,
Swatragh, Co Derry

Report of an Inspection in
October 2013

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.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	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	115	16	14 ⁽¹⁾	10
Teaching staff	8	5	63	5
Support staff	-	*	-	*

* fewer than 5

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the hard work and support for those children identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. The teachers and the support staff emphasised the very good quality of the working relationships across the school and the links with the parents and wider community.

2. Context

St. John's Primary School is situated in the village of Swatragh, County Derry. Most of the children attending the school come from the village. The enrolment has increased over the last four years and currently stands at 197 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 18% of the children were entitled to free school meals and around 19% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

¹ 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, the response rate to the parent/carer questionnaires may be low.

St. John's Primary School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Enrolment	180	182	194	197
% Attendance	97	96	98	
FSME Percentage ²	4	9	13	18
% of children on SEN register	14	15	17	19
No. of children with statements of educational needs	5	*	6	5
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

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

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

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are independent and mature learners, who respond positively and with enthusiasm and enjoyment to the learning opportunities. They have well-developed personal and social skills, make informed decisions, solve problems, think creatively and manage their own learning well. They apply their learning in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, in a variety of contexts and for real purposes. Their talking and listening skills are developing well through frequent opportunities to share their ideas with and learn from others in pairs and groups.

² The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 performance data over three years³ shows that in English and mathematics, the school's performance was consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average, and in line with or above that of schools in the same free school meals (FSM) category.⁴ The school's internal performance data shows that almost all of the children make progress in line with their ability. The school's records show that those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are meeting the targets identified in their education plans.
- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently, (innovatively and appropriately). Their attainment in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) information and communication technology accreditation is above the Northern Ireland average.

6. Provision

- The teachers have a clear understanding of how children learn, demonstrated through the innovative connected learning opportunities. They set the learning in meaningful contexts which reflect the children's interests and needs. The teachers' planning for, and subsequent evaluation of, learning is comprehensive and rigorous. The teachers employ a wide range of assessment approaches to evaluate the children's learning; they use the data effectively, together with very detailed classroom observations, to inform learning and teaching. The teachers' feedback, together with the children's own evaluations of their work enables the children to reflect on, and progress, their own learning.
- The quality of the teaching and learning observed was either very good or good in almost equal measure. In the best practice observed, the teachers met effectively the range of individual needs within each class. These lessons were typified by good pace, appropriate challenge, support and progression. The classroom assistants support effectively and sensitively the children's all-round development.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is very good. The holistic development of each child is central to the work of the school and a very good sense of community and partnership is evident throughout the nurturing and inclusive environment. The children have very good opportunities to contribute to decision-making in the school, including for example, through the school council. The curricular and pastoral links with other schools in the community ease transition and progress the children's learning. The children benefit from the excellent range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities which meet their needs, interests and abilities.
- The early identification of children experiencing difficulties with aspects of their learning ensures their needs are addressed appropriately. The teachers are developing a sharper focus on using data to evaluate the progress made by the children. The inspection endorses this important work.

³ 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.

⁴ The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership group has undergone a period of transition over the last two years. During this time, the school has maintained a child-centred approach to school improvement, with a clear commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, high quality learning, a concern for individual children and a respect for diversity. The school has identified as a priority the further development of those teachers with specific responsibilities, with an appropriate focus on the effective use of performance data, evaluation of the quality of the children's work and observations of the children's learning.
- The school is involved in a wide range of initiatives designed to improve the quality of the children's learning. It will be important that the senior leadership group monitors the effect in the classroom of the range of initiatives.
- The comprehensive school development plan has been informed increasingly by the views of all stakeholders and has a clear focus on improving further the provision for the children and raising the standards they attain.
- The school has effective links with the parents and the local community. The parents are fully involved in their children's learning and make a valuable contribution to the life of the school.
- 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 very well informed about the school and carry out effectively their support and challenge functions.
- 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 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 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.

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