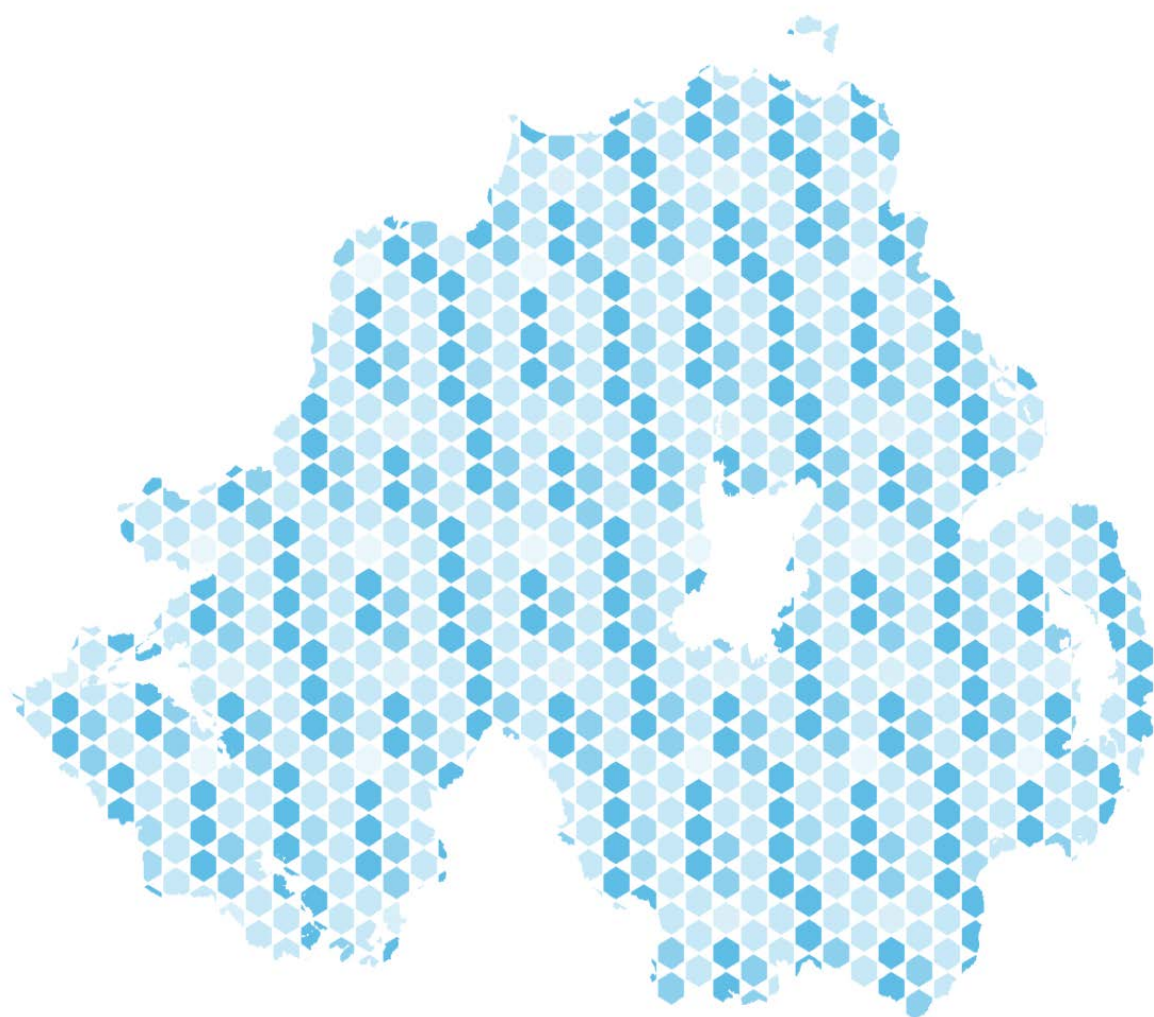


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School
and Nursery Unit, Crumlin,
Co Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
November 2014

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.

The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted how hard the teachers in the school and nursery unit work to make each child feel important and to encourage them to believe that they can achieve. The very few issues raised were discussed with the principal and governors. All of the teachers and almost all of the support staff completed questionnaires and their responses were wholly positive. In discussions with representatives of the governors, they emphasised their pride in the school, the very positive ethos and sense of community, the high quality of the provision for the children and the strong focus placed on the school's ongoing improvement journey.

2. 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 nursery unit; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St Joseph's Primary School and Nursery Unit are situated in the village of Crumlin, County Antrim. The children attending the school and the nursery unit come from the village and surrounding rural area. The enrolment currently stands at 698 children, 103 of whom are in the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection, approximately 18% of the children were entitled to free school meals and around 23% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. A new principal was appointed earlier in the year and he took up post in September 2014.

St Joseph's Primary School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	773	765	718	698
% Attendance	94.9	94.9	95.2	96.9
FSME Percentage ¹	13	15	16	18
% of children on SEN register	22.2	21.6	24.6	22.7
No. of children with statements of educational needs	19	18	18	16
No. of newcomers	11	11	9	9

Source: data as held by the school.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are confident, inquisitive and enthusiastic learners. They enjoy engaging in discussions with their peers and taking part in challenging activities, in which they demonstrate very well their ability to think flexibly and complete investigations. The children think about, and reflect on, their learning in a mature manner and suggest ways in which they can improve the quality of their work. The children's behaviour is exemplary; they respond very well to the positive ethos in all of the classrooms and the appropriately high expectations of their teachers.
- The school's performance data indicates that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make outstanding year-on-year progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The children in the nursery unit are very well settled and familiar with the various routines of the nursery. They are happy to explore and investigate the many interesting activities available to them in the attractive and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments. Almost all of the children show very high levels of confidence and independence; they spend lengthy periods of time engaged in sustained and purposeful play. They express their thoughts and ideas very well both orally and in representational form.

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

- The younger children use confidently a range of practical resources and participate in very well-planned play-based activities which lead to a very good understanding of mathematics including, for example, number, shape and patterns. As they progress through the school, the children use mathematical language confidently and demonstrate flexibility in their thinking, using and applying their knowledge to increasingly complex everyday situations. By year 7, the most able children apply and adapt an extensive range of mental strategies to solve mathematical problems.
- Across the year groups, the children listen respectfully to one another and articulate confidently their ideas and opinions. They read with fluency, expression and high levels of understanding; they speak enthusiastically and knowledgeably about their favourite authors and books. The children write with accuracy and flair for a range of audiences and purposes; the standard of writing in the children's books and on display is consistently very high.
- The children identified as requiring additional help with their learning make outstanding progress in meeting the targets outlined in the very effective individual education plans.
- The children use very confidently a wide range of digital media to research information for their topic work and to support their learning in other aspects of the curriculum. By year 7, the children have developed a very wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills which prepare them well for working independently and for the next stage of their learning.

6. Provision

- The planning, teaching and assessment for learning in the nursery and across the school are of a very high quality. The teachers make highly effective use of assessment information to inform their planning. As a result, the planning for learning is detailed, thorough and progresses well the children's learning. The teachers have a very detailed knowledge of the learning needs of the children in their classes; they have high expectations of, and for, all of the children and the planning and teaching reflect these well.
- The lessons observed during the inspection were of a very high standard. Key characteristics of this high-quality learning and teaching are; the sharp focus on developing the children's readiness to learn and the promotion of positive attitudes and dispositions; the progressive development of the children's knowledge, skills and understanding; and the use of real-life contexts to make the learning meaningful to the children. A key strength is the very effective use of plenary sessions, in which skilful questioning by the teachers is used both to assess, and to consolidate, the children's understanding. There is a very high level of collegial reflective practice across the school and in the nursery.
- The teachers mark the children's work regularly; they provide guidance to the children on how to improve their work further and set appropriate individual targets. As the children move through the school, they are increasingly able to assess accurately their own work and to measure their progress against personal targets.

- The detailed planning for language and literacy ensures progression across the year groups. There are very well-conceived opportunities for the children to discuss their work with peers and adults, explain their learning and acquire high-level talking and listening skills. The programme for shared, modelled and guided reading supports effectively the children's development as independent readers who enjoy a wide variety of literature. A particular strength of the provision for literacy is the outstanding range of meaningful opportunities for the children to write for different purposes and audiences.
- There is a consistent approach to numeracy planning across the school. The long-term planning outlines clearly the progression in knowledge, skills and understanding across each year group and provides effective guidance for class teachers to create medium and short-term plans. The seamless integration of mental mathematics and problem-solving activities into lessons consolidates and extends the children's learning. An important feature of the numeracy provision is the skilful blend of regular well-planned activities and incidental opportunities for the children to apply their numeracy skills and make connections across the curriculum.
- The staff in the nursery unit use appropriate topics and themes to plan a varied and progressive programme that takes account of the children's differing needs and interests. Every opportunity is used effectively to develop the children's language and learning and to enhance the quality of their experience at nursery. The staff are friendly and caring in their approach and the quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is consistently of a very high standard. The children who require additional help with aspects of their learning are identified at an early stage and appropriate support is put in place to address individual needs. Highly effective links have been established with the parents who contribute significantly to the provision in the nursery to enhance further the learning experiences of the children.
- The school and the nursery unit are committed fully to meeting the needs of the children who require support with aspects of the learning. This commitment is exemplified by the extensive additional resources the school has allocated to meeting these often complex needs. The assessment and diagnostic arrangements for identifying children who require additional support and the resulting individual educational plans are outstanding. The teachers and the highly qualified classroom assistants provide excellent support for the children in their care. As a result of the support given, the children are settled in class and engage very well in the learning process.
- The outstanding pastoral care provision is highly effective in supporting the children in their learning and in developing a sense of their own worth and a respect for others. The very high quality of the working relationships at all levels is an important feature of the school and there is a common drive to ensure the holistic development of each child. The children play a meaningful and valuable role in school improvement; their views are sought and acted upon, and they take on roles and responsibilities with maturity and confidence.
- The school and nursery unit give outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The principal, vice-principals and senior leadership team, working in close collaboration with the staff, parents and governors, place an important focus on maintaining a reflective approach to school improvement. The clear focus on sustaining a culture of continuing improvement permeates all aspects of curricular leadership, ensuring the provision meets the needs of all of the learners across the ability range. The ongoing refinements to the well-established and effective self-evaluation processes are designed to ensure further improvement in the children's learning and the standards they attain. The school development planning process is underpinned by extensive and meaningful consultations with the children, their parents, the staff and the governors. The robust quality assurance arrangements, at all levels, ensure that the priorities for improvement, agreed in the school development plan, are being met.
- The school values and encourages the positive contribution the parents make to developing further their role in their children's education. The school has an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and after-school arrangements which benefit the children's learning and development and supports their families.
- The governors use very well their individual and collective experience and expertise to support the school in meeting the needs of each child; they carry out very effectively their associated challenge function, adopt a proactive role in the school development planning process, and support the principal and staff in ensuring that all of the children reach their full potential. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and nursery unit have comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children, which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the children spoke enthusiastically about their wider learning experiences and the support from their peers and adults which enhance and progress their learning. They reported that they feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Conclusion

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

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