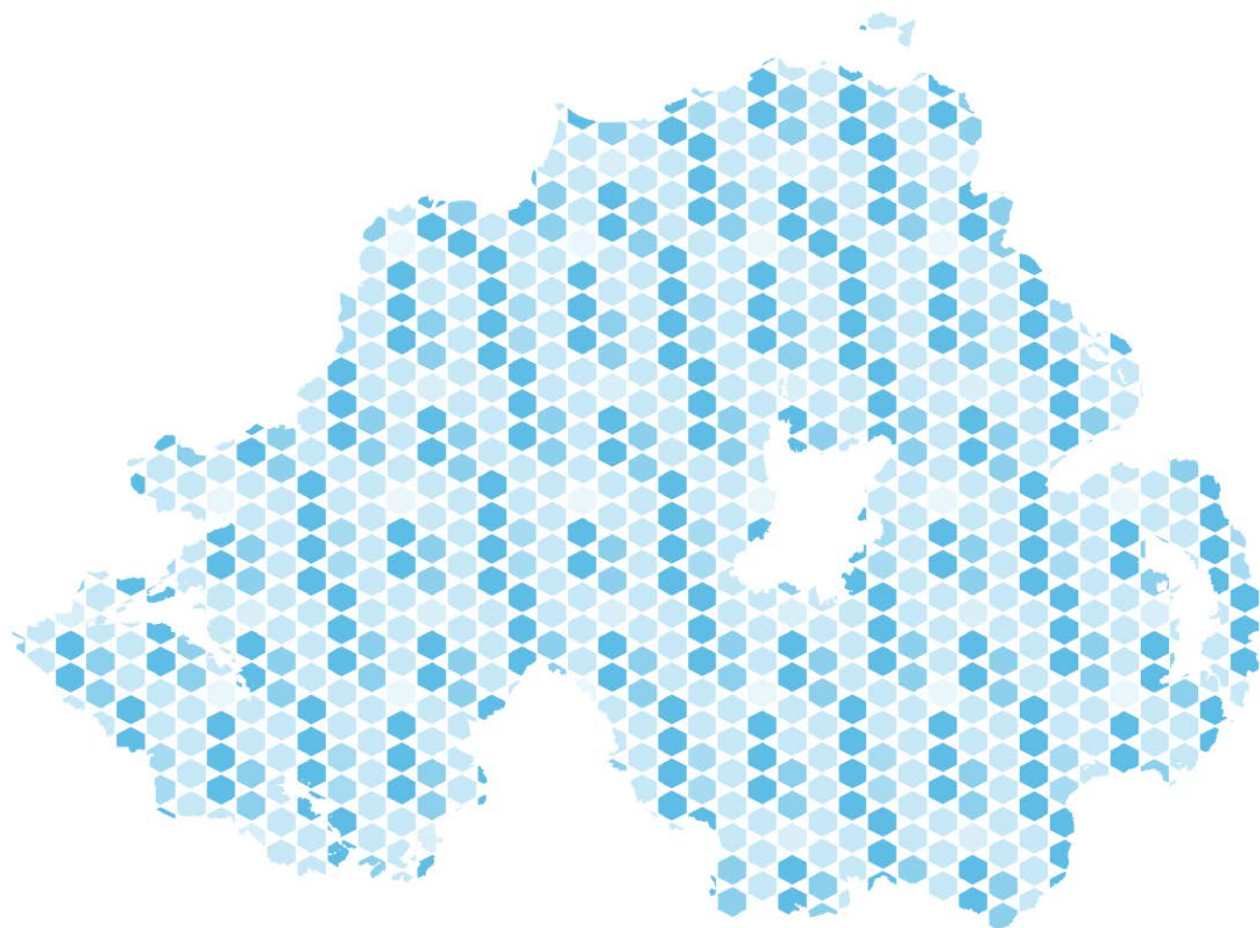


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Alexander Dickson Primary School,  
Ballygowan, County Down

Controlled, co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection  
in February 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ALEXANDER DICKSON PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLYGOWAN, COUNTY DOWN BT23 5TN (401-3046)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Alexander Dickson Primary School<sup>1</sup> in May 2016 which concluded that the school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement were to:

- improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching; and
- for leadership at all levels to implement a rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation in order to measure the impact of the school improvement work on the children's learning experiences and raising standards.

As a consequence, the Department of Education entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process under the Every School a Good School<sup>2</sup> policy in June 2016.

The school's action plans were of a good quality and the school's development plan was adjusted in light of inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim inspection visit in March 2017 and a follow-up inspection in February 2018.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- significant staffing changes including the appointment of two temporary teachers;
- changes to the working arrangements of the special educational needs co-ordinator;
- the senior leadership has consulted widely to inform the current school development planning process and agree a new mission statement;
- the implementation of reciprocal reading strategies across the key stages to support the guided reading activities;
- an extensive review of long- and medium- planning in literacy and numeracy;
- the establishment of link governors for curricular areas;
- the continued support of the parents' teachers' association including the funding for iPads;
- the review and updating of the pastoral policies including child protection; and
- training and support provided by the Education Authority (EA).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/primary-inspection-alexander-dickson-primary-school-ballygowan-county-down.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/every-school-good-school-policy-school-improvement>

## **Key findings**

- The outcomes for the learners in English are now good while the outcomes in mathematics continue to be good. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the children are confident to write across a range of genres and improve the quality of their work through editing and redrafting; initiatives, including the 'literacy detectives,' enable children to talk enthusiastically about their learning in both numeracy and English. The children indicated that they enjoyed reading for pleasure. In mathematics, in discussion with a group of children from year 7, they articulated clearly the mental mathematical strategies to explain their reasoning and are confident in their approaches to problem solving.
- The quality of the provision is now good. Planning is focused more on the children's needs and interests; it ensures progression and differentiation, in particular for those identified as requiring support with their learning. There remains however, a lack of challenge for the more able. During the follow-up inspection, the majority of the lessons observed were good or better; the children's voice was more apparent with the children confident in responding to teachers' effective questioning. In mathematics, there was a greater provision for practical and problem solving activities. The individual education plans have been re-formatted to include greater input from the children and the parents; they identify appropriate short- and long- term targets for the children and include very purposeful and regular processes for evaluating the progress of the children who receive additional support. While the teachers are increasingly confident in reflecting on their practice, there remains the important need to evaluate clearly the impact of the range of teaching strategies that have been introduced since the original inspection.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management has improved; however, there remain important areas for improvement. The literacy, numeracy and special educational needs co-ordinators have implemented a more rigorous process of monitoring the quality of the children's work. The board of governors and the link governors have a clearer understanding of the life and work of the school and are exercising their challenge function more effectively regarding the children's outcomes. The school has been very well supported by the Education Authority.

## **Overall effectiveness**

Alexander Dickson Primary School needs to address important areas for improvement. The follow-up inspection has identified the following areas for improvement:

- the need to evaluate further the impact of the learning experiences; and
- the need to use the qualitative and quantitative data to supply clear evidence of improved outcomes for all of the children.

The ETI will conduct a further follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

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