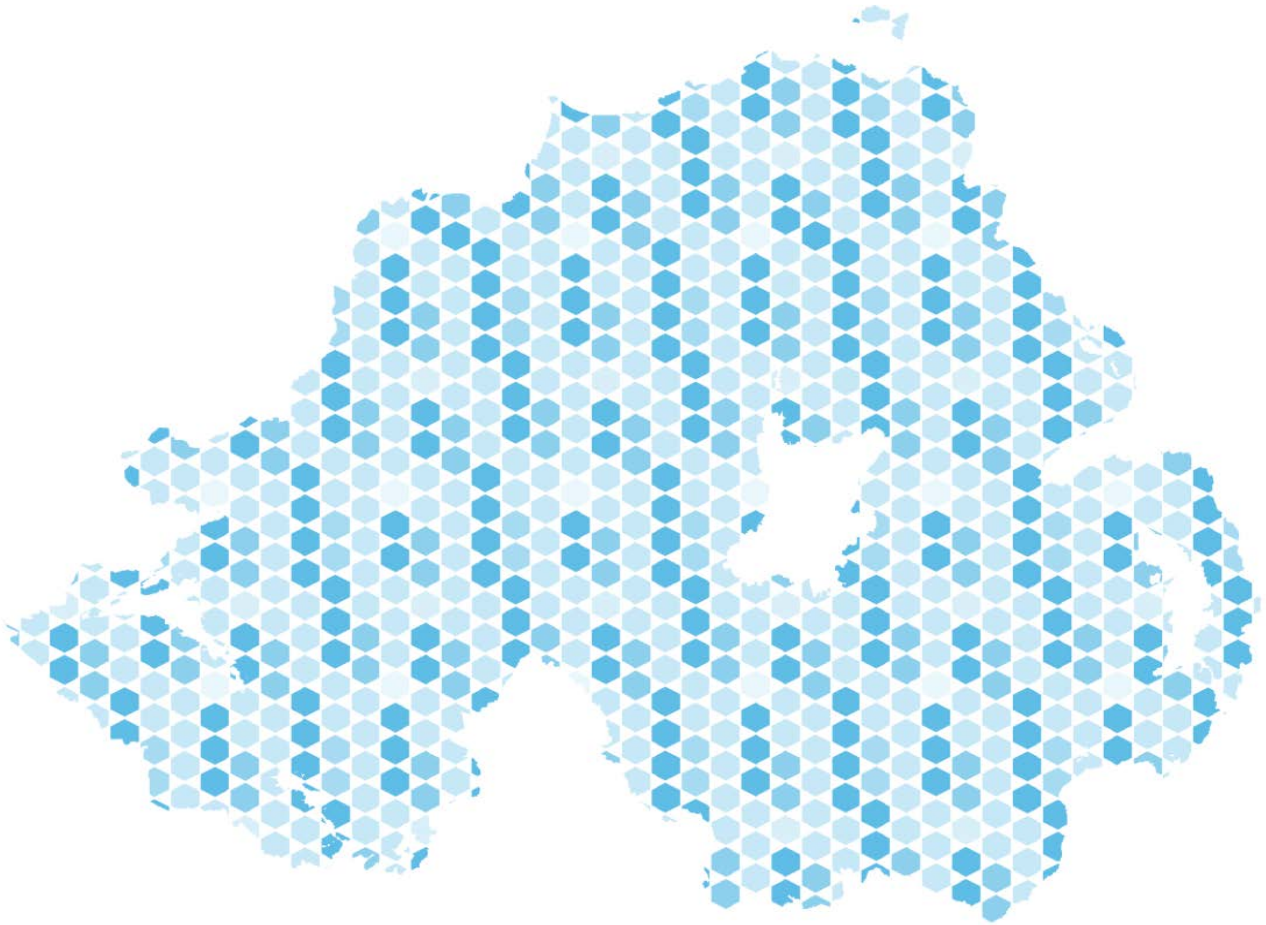


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Ballytober Primary School,  
Bushmills, County Antrim

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 BALLYTOBER PRIMARY SCHOOL, BUSHMILLS, COUNTY ANTRIM, BT57 8UR (301-0892)**

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

The areas for improvement were:

- 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;
- to develop further the planning for, and assessment of, learning to meet more effectively the needs of all the children;
- to provide the children with a broad and balanced curriculum which supports the development of the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities; and
- for the principal to provide the board of governors with an annual written report on child protection and safeguarding.

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 April 2016.

The school's action plans were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings. The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in January 2017 and a follow-up inspection in February 2018.

In the interval since the initial inspection, actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- the staffing has stabilised, with the appointment of two permanent teachers and a principal release teacher;
- the co-ordinators' roles and responsibilities have been reviewed and three co-ordinators have been appointed to key areas of the curriculum;
- the school leadership, teachers and governors have undertaken professional development provided by the Education Authority (EA);
- the teachers have further self-sourced professional development in leadership, school development planning, literacy and numeracy, including visits to other schools to observe and share good practice; and
- the leadership, in consultation with staff, children, parents and governors, has updated the school development plan and key policies and has undertaken an extensive review of planning for learning across the school.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/primary-inspection-ballytober-primary-school-bushmills-county-antrim>

<sup>2</sup> [Every school a good school - a policy for school improvement | Department of Education](#)

## Views of parents and staff

- Nine per cent of the parents and 60% of the staff responded to the confidential, questionnaire. The responses to the parental questionnaire affirmed the caring atmosphere in the school and the positive impact of the school improvement work. The responses to the staff questionnaire endorsed the leadership of the principal and the effective collegial approach to school improvement. The ETI has communicated to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main findings, and any individual issues arising, from the questionnaires.

## Key findings

- The children's outcomes in numeracy are now good. An analysis of the school's internal data indicates that most of the children are achieving as expected in numeracy. In discussions with the inspectors, the most able children in year 7 were able to apply a range of mental mathematical strategies to answer questions with confidence. In lessons, the children were engaged and talked confidently about their learning using appropriate mathematical language to justify their thinking.
- The quality of provision in numeracy is now good. The staff have developed significantly their knowledge of the curriculum and their teaching through extensive professional development, which has impacted positively on the children's learning experiences. The planning for learning has been reviewed and is meeting more effectively the wide range of needs within the composite classes. The lessons facilitate the children's development of their language and oral communication and their investigative, problem-solving and self-management skills. The teachers now provide the children with regular feedback and the children now reflect on and improve their work. The planning requires further development in order to provide appropriate challenge for the more able children.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the follow-up inspection, the school's approaches to the care and welfare of the children impact positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The school's motto 'Children First' permeates all aspects of school life and the voice of the child is now a significant strength of the school. Through the outworking of the Eco- and School Councils, for example, the children have initiated important improvements in the school environment, resources and daily routines. As a result, the children have developed further their thinking skills, personal capabilities and sense of social responsibility.
- The quality of leadership, management and action to promote improvement, evaluated previously as requiring significant improvement, has improved and is now an important area for improvement. Under the leadership of the principal, the staff have embraced the school improvement process reflectively and with commitment. Significant work has been undertaken in order to clarify key roles and responsibilities and to establish systems and processes for planning, monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The evaluation of the impact of the learning experiences and outcomes of the children, and the use of such information to inform the ongoing action planning process, are areas for further development.

- There can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors have developed significantly their roles, undertaking a range of professional development, and communication has improved greatly. The governors now have a clearer understanding of their roles and exercise more effectively their support and challenge function.
- The area identified in the safeguarding arrangements in the original report has been addressed. In discussions with the inspectors, the year 6 children reported that they feel safe and happy in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.
- It continues to be important that the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and budget in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

### **Overall effectiveness**

Ballytober Primary School needs to address an important area for improvement. The follow-up inspection has identified the following area for improvement:

- for the co-ordinators to develop further their roles in evaluating the impact of the learning experiences and outcomes of the children.

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

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