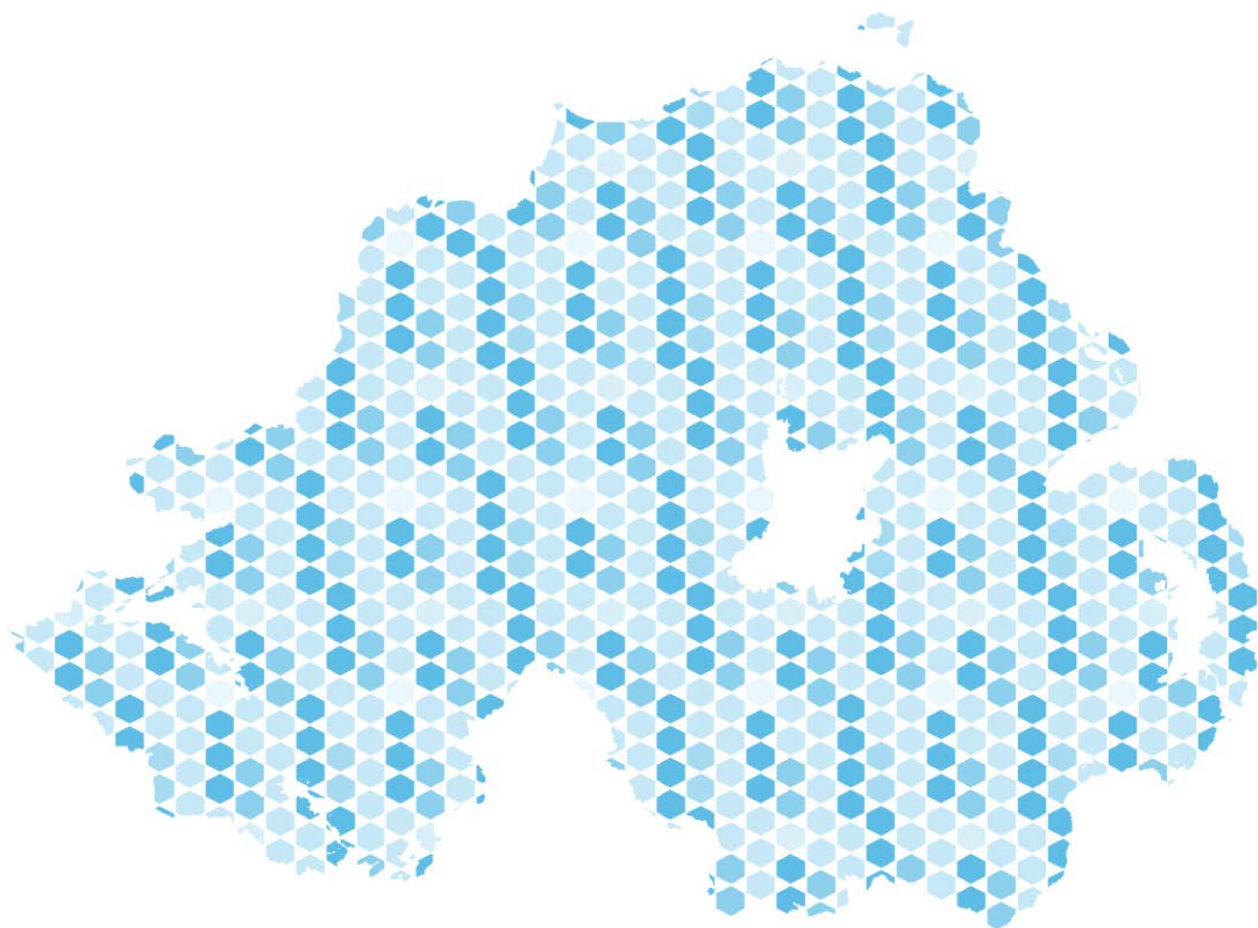


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Malachy's Primary School  
and Nursery Unit, Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection  
in October 2016

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST MALACHY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT, BELFAST, BT7 2BJ (103-6466)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St Malachy's Primary School and Nursery Unit in May 2015<sup>1</sup>, which concluded that in almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is inadequate<sup>2</sup>.

The areas for improvement were the need to:

- raise further the standards in literacy and numeracy attained by the children;
- develop further the planning, teaching, and assessment for learning in order to improve the children's learning experiences;
- ensure that leadership and management at all levels apply a more strategic approach to self-evaluation, action-planning and target setting leading to sustained school improvement;
- improve the quality of leadership and management and the provision for learning in the nursery unit in order to raise further the standards the children achieve; and
- address the health and safety issues outlined in an appendix to the report.

As a consequence, the Department of Education entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process under the Every School a Good School policy in June 2015.<sup>3</sup>

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

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in January 2016 and a follow-up inspection in October 2016.

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

- three new permanent teachers and two temporary teachers have been appointed to the school and a new permanent teacher has been appointed to the nursery unit;
- three new governors have been appointed;
- the health and safety issues have been addressed successfully; and
- the school reports that they have received very good support from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Education Authority (EA) with regard to strategic leadership including governance.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/%5Bcurrent-domain%3Amachine-name%5D/primary-inspection-st-malachys-primary-school-and-nursery-unit-belfast.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as inadequate has been reported as the school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/ESAGS%20Policy%20for%20School%20Improvement%20-%20Final%20Version%2005-05-2009.pdf>

## Key Findings

- The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement in the school and nursery unit is now good. The senior leadership team is now well established, with a clear strategic vision to reduce the children's underachievement and the staff have embraced the approach fully. The effective and structured approach to self-evaluation is impacting positively on both the quality of the provision and the children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. The governors are now well informed and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school and the nursery unit. They exercise their challenge function effectively; the use of link governors for the key learning areas enables them to monitor closely the work of the curriculum co-ordinators in effecting improvement in standards and provision. The co-ordinators are very confident in their roles and have identified clearly appropriate improvements based on the rigorous and detailed monitoring and evaluation strategies that are now well embedded in practice.
- The quality of learning and teaching is now good. All of the lessons observed were good or better; over one-quarter were very good. The effective practice observed included: higher expectations for the children's learning; well-planned lessons with appropriately differentiated activities and resources; and, effective questioning which enabled the children to explain their thinking in a range of contexts. The provision for play- and activity-based learning is now of a good quality and builds on the effective practice established in the nursery unit.
- The quality of the provision in the nursery unit is now very good. The children have good to very good opportunities for learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The quality of the adult interactions is consistently good or better with a clear focus on developing the children's thinking skills and the use of problem-solving approaches. Good use is made of tablet technology to record and track the children's progress across the areas of learning and to keep parents informed about their children's progress.
- The standards and achievements are now good. Almost all children are achieving as expected in literacy and most are achieving as expected in numeracy. The children in the foundation stage engage well in groups and work collaboratively in set tasks particularly during play- and activity-based learning. The standards of writing have improved across all year groups and the children write confidently in a range of forms to a good standard. The children use mathematical language more confidently. The school's focus on problem solving has improved the children's mathematical thinking and their ability to explain their answers. There is a need to continue to raise further the children's standards in numeracy.

## Conclusion

St Malachy's Primary School and Nursery Unit demonstrates the capacity to bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement in raising further the children's standards in numeracy.

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