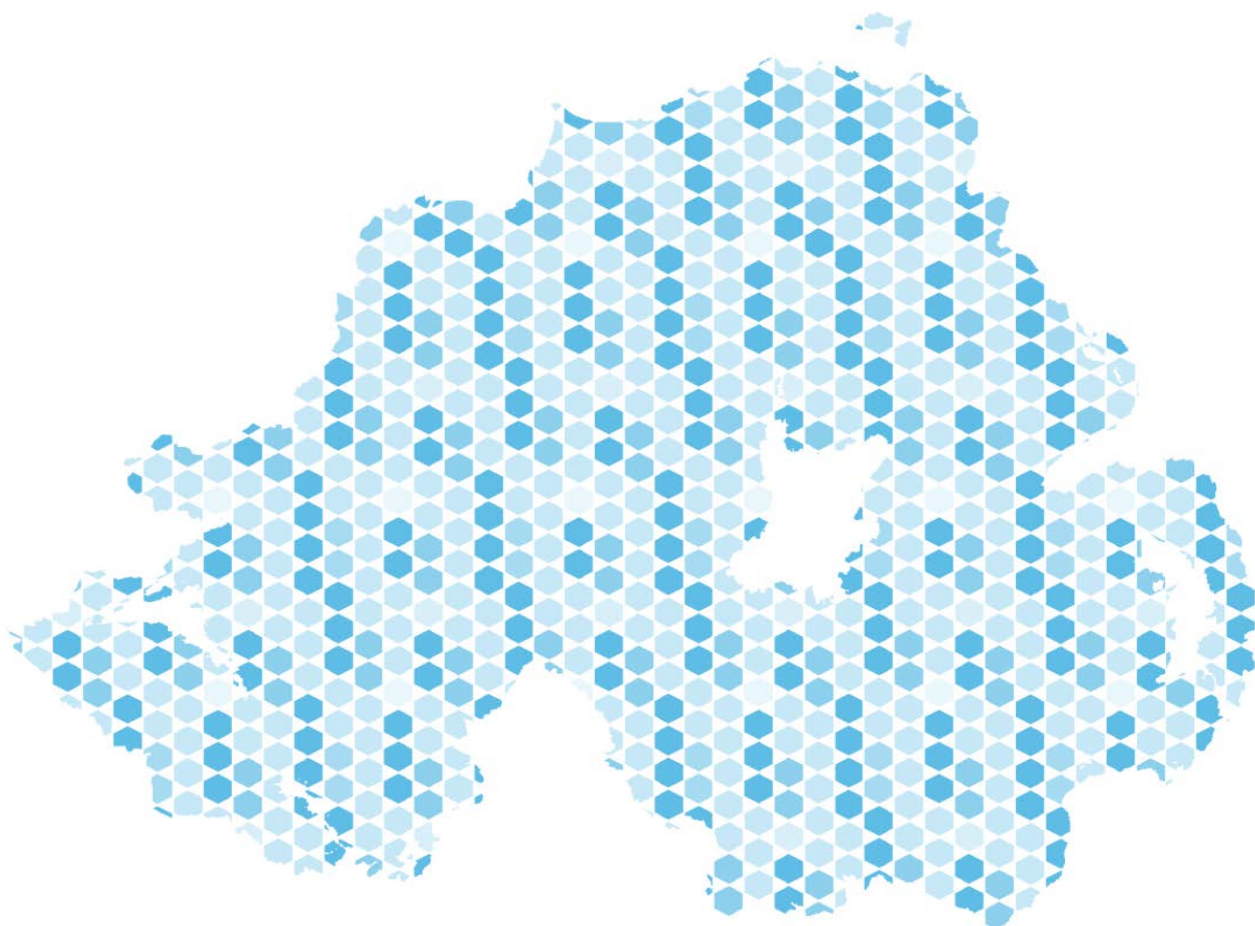


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bellarena Primary School,
Limavady, County Londonderry

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in
September 2016

Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
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. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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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 ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed learning and teaching, 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 a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Almost 25% of parents and 50% of staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses were wholly positive. The parents praised the principal and the staff for their commitment to the school and the children. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the main findings emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

- children's achievements and standards with a particular focus on numeracy (including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable);
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on numeracy; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Bellarena Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in the Magilligan area, near the town of Limavady. Almost of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has remained low over the last four years.

Bellarena Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	37	36	39	34
% School attendance	98.4	97.8	97.2	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	16	42	49	38
% of children on SEN register	7	8	9	9
No. of children with statements of educational need	0	0	0	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Important areas for improvement
Provision for learning	Requires significant improvement
Leadership and management	Requires urgent improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- The standards the children attain in mathematics have important areas for improvement. There is variation in the learning experiences and progress the children make in all aspects of mathematics across the key stages. In almost all classes, the children have a good understanding of number facts but have limited opportunities to apply their mathematical understanding in meaningful contexts, in planned problem-solving and investigative work. The children in the foundation stage can work in small groups on purposeful and practical numeracy-based tasks.
- The children's thinking skills and personal capabilities are underdeveloped. There are limited opportunities for the children to take responsibility for their learning, manage their work and engage actively and purposefully with their peers. Most of the children engage readily, however, in the individual learning tasks set for them by their teachers and their behaviour is consistently good.

6. Provision for learning

- The provision for learning requires significant improvement. The medium-term planning lacks sufficient detail to guide the learning and teaching across the school; it does not support effectively the development of the children's skills and capabilities in all areas of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Across the school, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning is underdeveloped.

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

- The quality of learning and teaching during the inspection was good in most of the lessons observed. In the most effective lessons: the intended learning was clear; the teachers built effectively on the children's previous learning and there were opportunities for the children to engage in practical learning activities. The teachers mark the children's work regularly. There is, however, variation in the quality of the marking to promote improvement and there are no opportunities for the children to engage in self- or peer-assessment. The quality of the individual education plans is inconsistent across the key stages; although in the foundation stage and key stage 1, the individual education plans are effective in guiding the additional support that the children require to support their learning. In all of the lessons observed, there were good working relationships at all levels and the classroom assistants supported the children effectively with their learning.
- The quality of the provision for numeracy requires significant improvement. The teachers' planning in numeracy lacks sufficient detail to meet effectively the needs of all of the children and ensure continuous progression in their learning across all areas of the mathematics curriculum. There is an over-emphasis on de-contextualised number work, which is guided primarily by commercial text books. Consequently, there are insufficient opportunities for the children to develop their mathematical thinking and understanding of mathematical processes in problem-solving activities.
- The quality of the pastoral care provision is an important area for improvement. There are positive working relationships between the children and the staff and there is an inclusive welcoming ethos. The children have no formal mechanisms to express their ideas on the life and work of the school.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the school requires urgent improvement. There are no formal systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality and consistency of: the provision for learning in all areas of the curriculum across the school; the children's learning experiences; and, the standards they achieve. At the time of inspection, there was neither a school development plan nor action plans in place. As a consequence, leadership and management does not have a clear oversight of priorities for school development and continuing improvement. There are insufficient formal administrative and organisational procedures to guide effectively the work of the school.
- The school has a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in place and is developing further links with parents, encouraging them to become more involved in the life and work of the school. Effective links have also been formed with the pre-school provider to support the children with the transition into year 1.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are very supportive of the school; however, in order to carry out more effectively their statutory responsibilities they need to:
 - become more directly involved in the school development planning process; and

- provide an effective challenge function to senior leadership to address the areas of improvement in: leadership and management; the provision across the school in all areas of the curriculum; and, the children's learning experiences and the standards they achieve.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.
- 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 children in key stage 2 reported that they are happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Bellarena Primary School needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

The areas for improvement are to:

- develop an understanding of, and establish a process of school development planning which includes more formal and effective lines of communication and consultation at all levels and meets the necessary statutory requirements;
- establish accountable, rigorous and effective monitoring and evaluation strategies to lead and guide the staff in planning to meet the needs of all of the children and whole-school improvement;
- develop effective, formal administrative and organisational procedures to guide the work of the school; and
- clarify leadership roles and responsibilities at all levels and strengthen the governance of the school.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

Health and Safety / Accommodation

1. The boundary fence, to the north side of the school site, requires securing to ensure the safety of the children.
2. The fire escape access in two of the classrooms is limited to a quite inaccessible fire escape window.
3. The front door sticks rendering the secure door-entry mechanism ineffective.

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