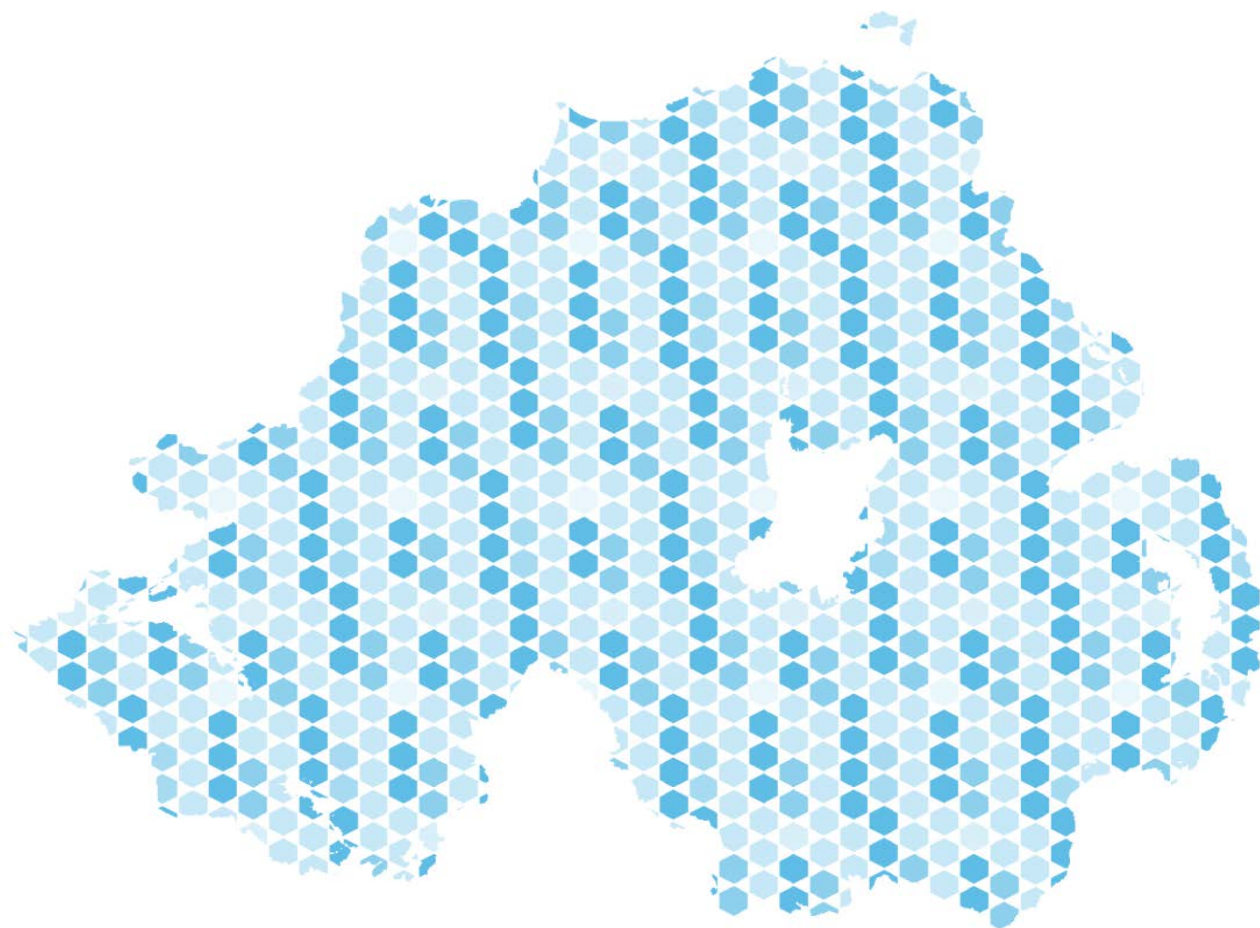


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
February 2016

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
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	3
7. Leadership and management	5
8. Overall effectiveness	6
Appendix	

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.

Fifty-one percent of parents and all of the staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted: their appreciation of the staff's work; the strong leadership; the high expectations of the staff for the children's learning; and the school's role in the community. The staff responses were wholly positive; they emphasised the quality of the working relationships across the school and the links with the parents and wider community. The ETI has reported to the principal and the chairperson of the board of governors the very few issues emerging from the parental questionnaires.

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 in literacy (Irish and English) and numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning in the school, including the nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh is situated on the Ballymurphy Road in West Belfast. Almost all of the children who attend the school and naíscoil come from the Upper Springfield Area; the remainder come from the Greater Belfast Area. Over the last four years the school enrolment has increased steadily to 188 including 29 nursery children; the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has remained steady over the last two years at 60%. At the time of the inspection 25% of the children had been identified by the school as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	169	179	178	188
% School attendance	95.1	95	95.4	94.1
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	54	59	60	60
No. of children on SEN register	52	50	53	46
% of children on SEN register	19	17	28	25
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	5

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- Throughout the school the children are highly motivated and demonstrate excellent levels of engagement and enjoyment in their learning; their behaviour is exemplary. The children interact confidently with their teachers and demonstrate interest and skill in learning collaboratively through group and paired work. They respect and respond sensitively to the contributions of others and support one another well in their learning. Across the school, the children have very good levels of independence and manage their learning very effectively. The children communicate a real pride in their school.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in Irish, English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The quality of the children's talking, listening and understanding in Irish is outstanding. The children use Irish naturally as the language of social communication throughout the school and engage readily and fluently in discussions about their learning with their teachers, classroom assistants, visitors and peers. Throughout the school the children are developing very well their reading skills and use confidently a range of well-embedded strategies to support them with their reading. By the end of key stage (KS) 2 the children read with fluency and expression in both Irish and English and speak enthusiastically, using sophisticated language, about authors, characters and the material that they are reading. In the best practice, in a small number of classes, the children write to a very good standard with high levels of accuracy in both languages and present their work well.

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

- The standards achieved by the children in numeracy by the end of KS 2 are very good. The most able children demonstrate a very good understanding of number, displaying flexibility in their thinking. Throughout the school almost all of the children apply their mathematical understanding suitably in real and relevant contexts and use a range of mental mathematics strategies proficiently to approach problem-solving and investigative tasks.
- The children in the naíscóil are very well settled and are making outstanding progress in all aspects of their learning and development. They spend sustained periods concentrating on tasks with confidence and independence. The children participate fully in well-managed song, rhyme and story sessions and show imagination and creativity in their use of materials at the art and construction areas. They have a keen interest in books and make very good, independent use of the wide range of books around the playroom. They join readily in play with others and talk to the staff and one another about their work and learning experiences. All of the children show a very good understanding of spoken Irish and many are beginning to use the language naturally in their play.
- Throughout the school, the children use information and communication technology (ICT) very competently to extend their learning and as a result, their skills are well developed.

6. Provision for learning

- In all of the lessons observed, the learning environment was highly stimulating and inclusive; interactions and working relationships at all levels were of a high quality. Almost all of the lessons observed were good or better in promoting learning; a majority were very good and outstanding. In the most effective practice, the learning experiences provided for the children were creative, engaging and appropriately challenging to meet the range of needs within each class. The children were provided with purposeful opportunities to: work together collaboratively, in pairs and small groups; and develop further their independence and resilience in learning. The teachers used effective questioning and immersion-specific techniques to extend further the children's thinking and evaluate their understanding.
- There is a whole-school approach to planning across the curriculum which provides very effective guidance for the teachers. The recent introduction of a common theme in the World Around Us has resulted in shared learning throughout the school and a range of interactive and investigative learning experiences, which are integrated well across other areas of learning. It will be important that the teachers explore opportunities to develop further the children's writing through the common theme. The teachers know all of the children very well and track effectively their achievement and progression using a range of internal data. This data is used, in conjunction with teacher judgement, to plan a range of appropriate interventions and to set individual, group and class targets. There is an agreed whole-school policy for marking the children's work which is concise and comprehensive. Almost all of the teachers mark the children's work regularly and in the best practice, provide the children with appropriate feedback on how to improve their work, in line with the school's policy.

- The quality of the provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is outstanding. The school and naíscoil identify at an early stage the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning and put in place a wide range of innovative and highly effective interventions to address the children’s emotional, social and learning needs. All interventions and their impact on learning are closely monitored, reviewed and amended, when necessary, by the special education needs coordinator (SENCO). Appropriate, detailed information is collated on each child. The information is presented in a clear and helpful way and shared with parents, teachers and classroom assistants to ensure that all of the children’s needs are met consistently and sensitively. The individual education plans, which are of a very high quality, are informed by a range of data, teacher judgement and parental information and are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Excellent individual support is provided through the highly effective withdrawal sessions by the SENCO.
- The detailed planning for literacy (Irish and English) ensures continuity and progression across the key stages; guides well the learning and teaching; and promotes effectively the integration of literacy in a range of meaningful contexts across the curriculum. A particular strength of the provision in literacy is the opportunity for the children to develop their spoken Irish in the classrooms through debates, dramas and play-based learning. The well-embedded practice of Cairde Comhrá, which encourages the children from the naíscoil to the end of KS 2 to share their ideas and opinions with their partner, is highly effective in developing their fluency and communication skills. The children’s confidence and enthusiasm to read and their development as independent readers have been enabled through the introduction of a range of additional resources, initiatives and support programmes, such as An Liosta Cliste, all of which are used particularly well to monitor the children’s reading skills, preferences and attainment and to raise standards in reading. The staff work very effectively together and have recently introduced collaborative practices for peer observations and book monitoring, in order to ensure that the teaching of writing and the quality of presentation in the books are consistent throughout the school.
- The teachers provide a stimulating learning environment for numeracy which promotes very well the children’s language and thinking skills. In the foundation stage the play programme provides very good opportunities to consolidate the children’s numeracy skills. Throughout the school the teachers provide effective opportunities for the children to work in pairs and groups to apply their learning to open-ended problem-solving, problem-posing and investigative activities. In the most effective lessons observed, the planning for mathematics was used effectively to ensure appropriate progression and challenge across all areas of the primary mathematics curriculum and the children were given appropriate opportunities to develop further their numeracy skills within the context of the whole-school World Around Us theme.

- The positive, stimulating and high-quality immersion learning environment in the naíscoil develops effectively the children’s decision making and self-management skills. The staff listen attentively to the children, take account of their ideas and promote skilfully the children’s language development. They plan an interesting, varied and creative programme that provides appropriate challenge and progression for the children throughout the year. The high quality of the staff interactions with the children ensures that the opportunities for learning through the play, daily routines and group story sessions are exploited fully. The staff use an appropriate range of methods to gather information about the children’s progress and development; this information is used well to inform the future planning to meet the children’s individual needs.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in both the school and the naíscoil is outstanding. The school vision of “Gach páiste, gach lá” (Every child, every day) is evident in the commitment of all the staff to the holistic care and well-being of all the children. Working relationships are excellent at all levels. A strong sense of family and community exists in the school and this is underpinned by a caring, supportive and inclusive ethos. A whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour encourages the children to share readily their thoughts, feelings and opinions and raises their confidence and self-esteem.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership team provides highly effective strategic leadership which promotes a strong collegial approach among the whole staff and has effected improvement in the school’s provision, standards, and learning and teaching. The co-ordinators are also highly committed to improving the quality of the provision and to raising standards. They work very well collaboratively to develop clear links across the curriculum and provide appropriate guidance to their colleagues.
- The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed school development plan² underpinned by widespread and inclusive consultative processes with the whole staff, the children, their parents, the governors and the wider school community. These consultations, along with the very effective analysis of relevant quantitative and qualitative data, are instrumental in the continuous improvement of the school’s provision.
- The school and naíscoil have very effective links with the parents who are well informed about their children’s progress and learning, and about the life and work of the school. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their children’s learning through curriculum information events and assemblies, as well as opportunities to come into the school and naíscoil to observe and participate in aspects of the play-based learning. The school is well-embedded within the community and has established good links with a range of other schools and with various external support agencies to enhance further the children’s learning opportunities. The school also works very closely with local community groups and sporting organisations to provide facilities and organise events for children and young people and their families throughout the school year and outside term time.

² The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors exercise effectively their challenge function and are very well informed and engaged in the life and work of the school. They have a well-developed strategic overview of the school and understanding of the school's place within the local and wider community.
- 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 year 6 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

Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh 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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2016

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk