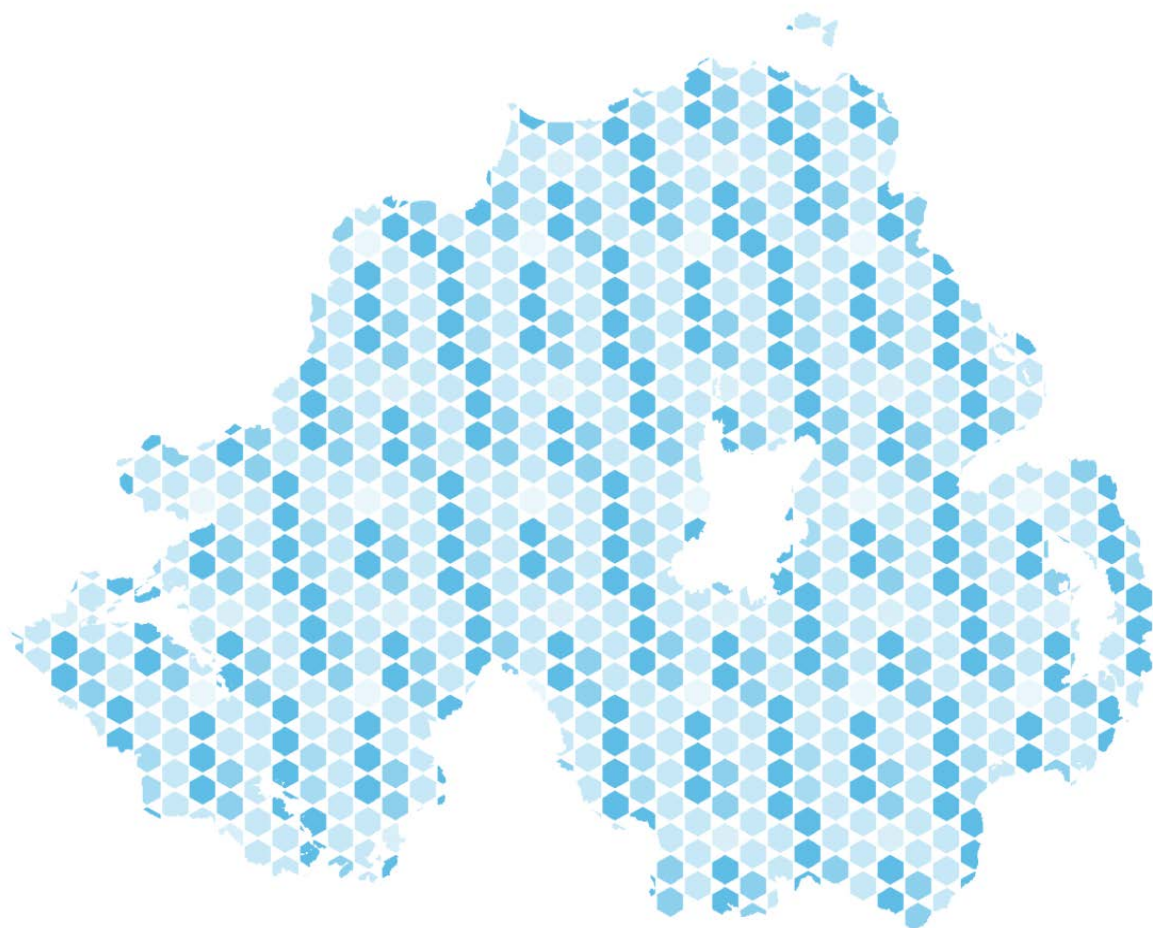


# PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Cairnshill Primary School and  
Nursery Unit, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in  
October 2015

*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  
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## 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 representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Sixteen percent of the parents and 67% percent of the teaching and non-teaching staff responded to the questionnaires. Almost all the responses to both the parental and staff questionnaires were positive about the life and work of the school. In particular the parents highlighted their appreciation of the pastoral care provided for the children, the welcoming and supportive ethos and the dedication and hard work of the staff. The staff responses were also very positive; they emphasised the team approach and the opportunities for professional development and learning. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main messages and the small number of issues 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 in literacy 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**

Cairnshill Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated in the residential area of Beechill Park North and Cairnshill Drive in the Upper Saintfield Road area in South Belfast. Most of the children attending the school come from the local surrounding area. The school has a nursery unit with 2 part-time sessions. Over the past 4 years the nursery unit has operated at full capacity and enrolment in the primary school has risen steadily. The school has identified approximately 15% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and approximately 15.5% of the children are entitled to free school meals. A recent programme of refurbishment has provided a new school entrance and updated foundation stage (FS) facilities.

Cairnshill Primary School and Nursery Unit	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Enrolment (Yrs 1 – 7)	429	429	453	476
Nursery Unit enrolment	52	53	52	53
% School attendance	96.2	96.5	96.1	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	8.4	11.9	14.3	15.5
No. of children on SEN register	65	67	71	71
% of children on SEN register	15.2	15.6	15.6	14.9
No. of children with statements of educational need	7	8	7	8
No. of newcomer children	29	27	23	37

**Source:** data as held by the school N/A = not available

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children throughout the school including the nursery unit demonstrate high levels of interest, motivation, engagement and enjoyment in their learning. They participate effectively in group and paired work and display high levels of concentration when working independently. There is a well developed level of creativity evident throughout the children's work and activities in both the school and the nursery unit. The children have high expectations of themselves and take pride in their school. They are very welcoming, engage easily with visitors and their behaviour is exemplary.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The standards achieved by the children in literacy are very good. Almost all of the children, from an early age, have very good talking and listening skills and discuss confidently their learning with their peers and adults. The younger children demonstrate good auditory discrimination, rhythm and rhyme as they participate enthusiastically in their music sessions. Throughout the school, the children systematically develop a range of effective reading strategies and have a positive attitude to reading. As they progress through the foundation stage and by year 7, the children read enthusiastically, with fluency and expression, and talk about the material they are reading and their favourite authors. The children write for meaningful purposes across a wide range of genre with increasing competence and accuracy and present their work to a very high standard.

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

- The children demonstrate very positive attitudes to mathematics and engage readily in the challenging learning activities provided for them. They appreciate the importance of mathematics and are aware of its relevance to everyday life and to their future learning and careers. As the children progress through the school, they become increasingly secure in their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills. They apply a range of strategies competently to mathematical investigation and problem-solving activities and they use mathematical language confidently to articulate their thinking. By the end of Key Stage 2, most of the children are secure in their understanding of mathematics; they demonstrate flexibility in their thinking and achieve very good standards in mathematics.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their literacy and numeracy are making good or better progress. Those identified with a wider range of additional needs are well supported to participate fully in school life, are well motivated in their learning and also make good progress.
- The children in the nursery unit settle well, even early in the school year and are making very good progress in all aspects of their learning and development. They spend sustained periods concentrating on tasks with confidence and have developed high levels of independence. The children participate fully in well-managed song, rhyme and story sessions and show imagination in their use of materials at the art and construction areas. They readily join in play, communicate effectively with each other and can talk to the staff about their work and learning experiences.
- The children's achievements and standards in information and communication technology are very good. In the best practice in a majority of classes, the teachers frequently incorporate problem solving and investigative activities using a range of digital applications which allow the children to develop further their thinking skills and personal capabilities.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- In the most effective practice the planning is rigorous and thorough, focuses clearly on the learning and is well informed by robust evaluations of the children's previous learning. There are effective arrangements for the transfer of information on the children's progress from year to year. The school is currently reviewing the planning process to bring about further consistency of approach to differentiation and evaluation.
- Overall the learning and teaching is of a high quality. All of the teaching was good or better; three-fifths of the lessons observed were very good or outstanding. In the most effective practice, in the majority of lessons observed, there was: a clear understanding of the learning matched well to the needs of the children; high expectations leading to a high level of challenge for children of all abilities; creative and effective connected learning links across the curriculum set within meaningful real-life contexts; skilful questioning to extend the children's thinking and consolidate their understanding; and a confident willingness of the teachers to be led by the children's responses. The teachers are well supported by the classroom assistants. The less effective lessons were excessively directed by the teacher, leading to missed opportunities for the children to manage their learning and solve problems; challenge was also lacking and differentiation was not well focused.

- The children's work is consciously and consistently marked and in the most effective practice the teacher provides appropriate comments to support the children in making consistent progress in their work. There are also very good examples of peer and self-assessment; this effective practice should be disseminated throughout the school. The school has identified the need to review the annual written reports to parents to provide information on how parents can support children further with their learning.
- Children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early using an appropriate range of qualitative and quantitative data. A range of detailed plans, including individual education plans, are drawn up and used effectively to guide the interventions provided by the class teacher, the classroom assistant, where appropriate, and the learning support teachers in withdrawal sessions for small groups. Where appropriate, comprehensive notes on the children's progress are kept and shared regularly with parents to ensure very good home-to-school communication. Children receive good pastoral support to make smooth transitions to other schools. The introduction of a friendship club and the school's involvement in the Roots of Development programme provide a broader range of suitable approaches which contribute to developing the children's wider social skills, confidence and self-esteem. The nursery unit staff have benefited from involvement in a special educational needs capacity building project and have disseminated aspects of the programme effectively to the year one teachers to ensure a shared approach in supporting children from the nursery into the foundation stage.
- The detailed planning for literacy ensures continuity and progression across the school and guides well the learning and teaching. The well-planned programme for shared, modelled and guided reading supports the children's development effectively as independent readers who enjoy a wide variety of literature. The children's confidence and enthusiasm to read is raised further through a range of additional initiatives, including reading partners and accelerated reading. A particular strength of the provision for literacy is the excellent range of meaningful opportunities for the children to write for different purposes and audiences across all areas of the curriculum.
- The children benefit from access to a broad and balanced range of learning activities across the key areas of number, shape and space, measures and data-handling. A particular strength of the provision is the emphasis placed on developing the children's skills in mental mathematics, investigations and problem-solving, all of which encourage the children to become confident and flexible in their mathematical thinking. Across the school, the children benefit from the excellent provision for numeracy through connected learning, such as in the World Around Us topics, and the teachers' skilful exploitation of incidental opportunities to promote mathematical understanding. This extensive and varied range of learning experiences in numeracy supports the children's learning very well and enables them to apply and consolidate their learning effectively.
- The quality of the provision in the nursery unit is very good. The positive, stimulating learning environment provided in the nursery unit promotes effectively the children's development, decision making and self management skills. The staff are caring and supportive in their approach; they listen attentively to the children, take account of their ideas and promote skilfully the children's language development. The very good quality of the staff interactions

with the children ensure that the opportunities for learning through the play, daily routines and group story sessions are exploited fully. The staff plan an interesting and varied programme that provides appropriate challenge and progression for the children throughout the year. An appropriate range of methods is used 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.

- Pastoral care in the school is outstanding. There is an inclusive ethos where children from a diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds are valued and cared for. One of the many strengths of the provision is the priority given to developing the children's leadership skills; they take on responsibilities enthusiastically throughout the school through for example, the award-winning Eco-club, student council, librarians and playground buddies. The link with 'Young Enterprise' is providing the year 7 pupils with good opportunities to be aware of the how their attitudes, skills, and aspirations can be applied to business. The children develop empathy and care for others through links with Artscare and Orbit Adult Group.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through the curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular music programmes and other activity programmes that encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- The school has effective arrangements in place for communicating with parents and has established good links with other schools to learn from each other and share best practice across the curriculum.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The school is emerging from a lengthy transitional period of change. The senior leadership, with its more recently established roles and responsibilities, has a clear strategic vision for the future of the school and has led and managed a significant programme of improvement in recent years. This has included more strategic and effective use of performance data to inform improvement across whole school, key stages and individual classes. The school has developed and implemented a distributive model of leadership and has prioritised the need to continue to develop the roles and responsibilities of the curriculum co-ordinators and the curriculum teams.
- The comprehensive school development plan has been developed through a rigorous process of consultation with all stakeholders including the children who, through class and school council discussion, have developed a child-friendly version.
- The current action plans identify appropriate priorities that focus on teaching and learning. The senior leadership plan to use the inspection findings to refine these further and monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions on the children's learning and progress. The processes for self-evaluation and continuous improvement are well developed in the nursery unit. The senior leadership team maintain strong links with the nursery unit and oversee the continuous development of this important aspect of the school.



- There is an increasing diversity and range of children requiring support for additional needs and the school has prioritised appropriately the need to monitor and evaluate the provision for special educational needs more rigorously and strategically across the school. It will also be important to ensure that the skill of the whole staff and resources available are kept under review and keep pace with the changing profile of need.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. Particular features of the governance include: the range of expertise across the membership; the skilful management of the school budget in response to significant reductions in available funding; the pastoral care of the staff during a period of significant change; regular opportunities for staff to meet the chair of the board of governors; and involvement of the governors with the children in the Eco and School Councils.
- 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 year 6 children spoke maturely about their enjoyment of school life and reported that they feel secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

The school and nursery unit has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school and nursery unit sustains improvement.

**Health and Safety/Accommodation**

1. There is serious traffic congestion outside the confined entrance to the school grounds.
2. At times there is a strong and unpleasant odour in a corridor of the school.
3. There is damp in the walls and ceiling of the staircase and corridor, and leaks in several classrooms.

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