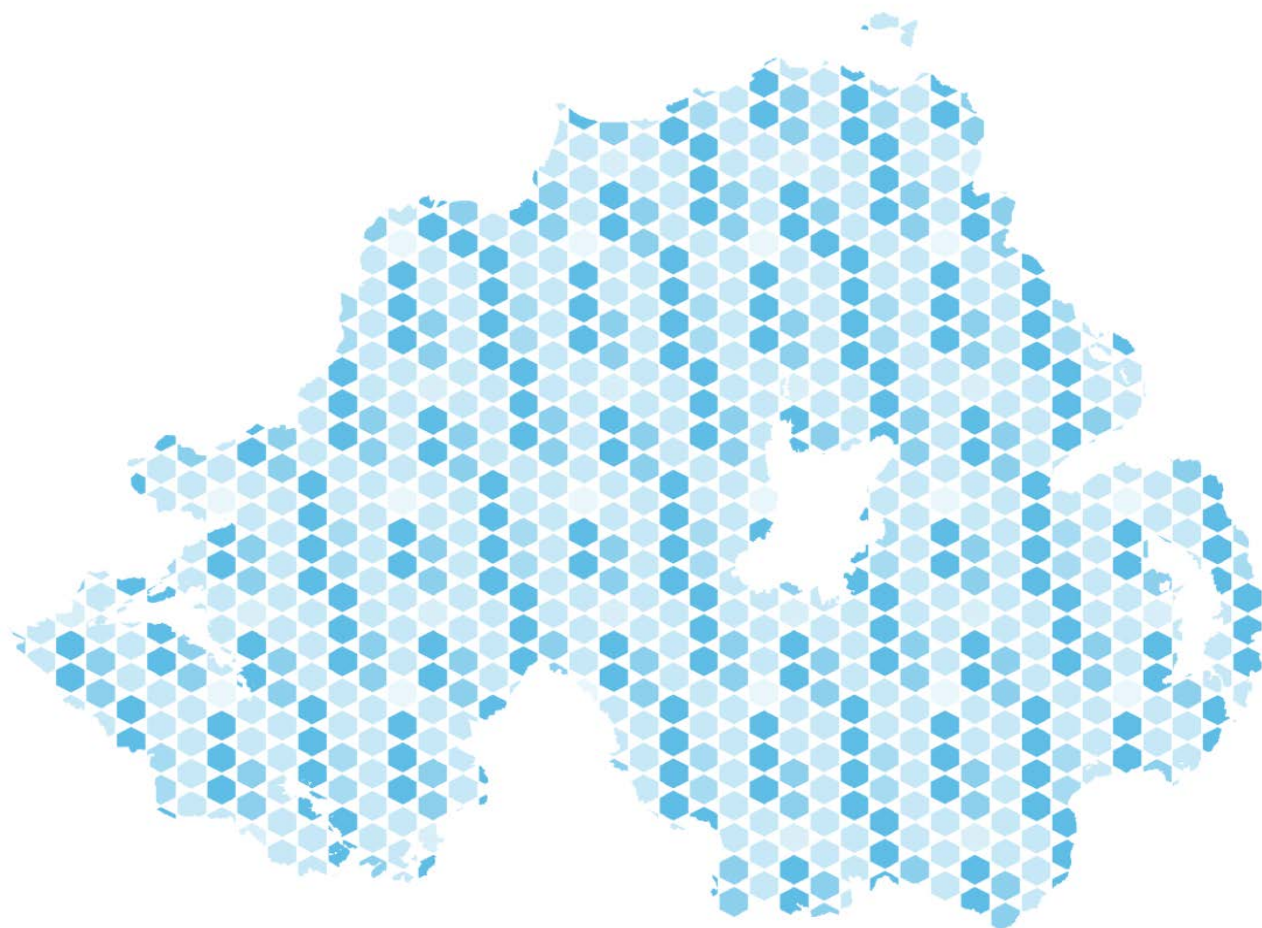


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Carnmoney Primary School,
Newtownabbey, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
April 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



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 confidential questionnaires.

Twelve percent of parents and 40% of staff (14) 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 leadership of the principal, the staff's prompt and effective responses to concerns, and the support for children who require assistance in aspects of their learning. The responses to the staff questionnaires were wholly positive; they emphasised the team-work at all levels and the child-centred ethos in the school. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the very positive findings and the small number of concerns emerging from the 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 and numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision for learning in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Carnmoney Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in Newtownabbey. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the wider Carnmoney community. The enrolment has risen significantly in the last four years and the school operates at close to capacity. The school's motto, *'Learning for life, together'* reflects the high levels of co-operation between the children, the parents and the staff, and is demonstrated by the highly positive questionnaire returns and the inspection findings. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has remained generally constant, while the percentage of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has doubled in the past four

years. There have been important changes in roles and responsibilities at middle and senior leadership level, with several new co-ordinators being appointed in the last two years. The school is justly proud of its 'Rights Respecting School' status which is positively influencing the academic and pastoral provision, and relationships at all levels.

Carnmoney Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	371	388	395	402
% Attendance	95.0	95.6	95.6	N/A
% Attendance for those children on the SEN Register	92.2	94.1	94.4	N/A
Percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	22.6	21.6	19.5	21.4
% of children on SEN register	11.5	13.1	18.8	23.4
No. of children with statements of educational needs	5	*	5	9
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	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	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Achievements and standards

- Across the school, the children demonstrate high levels of motivation, engagement and enjoyment in their learning. They are courteous and respectful to one another and to adults, including visitors to the school; their behaviour is exemplary. The children work well independently and collaborate effectively in pairs and in groups. As they progress through the school, the children develop well their personal and interpersonal skills. They become more confident, self-assured and ready for the next stage in their education.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. In English, most of the children who require additional support in aspects of their learning make progress in line with their ability or above expectation. In mathematics, a majority of the children who require additional support make expected or better progress.

- The standards achieved by the children in literacy at all key stages are very good, with almost 90% attaining at or above expectation. This high proportion is matched well by the evidence of work in the children's books, where the writing is characterised by accuracy and fluency in expression. The children progress very well in English and the school's tracking data shows a rising trend of higher achievement across all ability levels over the last three years.
- Most of the children have a very good understanding of the core mathematical concepts in relation to number, measures, shape and space and data handling. In the foundation stage and key stage (KS) 1, the children display high levels of independence and the capacity to apply their thinking skills through recording their findings and completing practical mathematical activities. In discussion with year 7 children, they are evidently knowledgeable about the key mathematical concepts and display flexible thinking when attempting unfamiliar problems.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are making good progress measured against the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). Through well-planned opportunities to work in small group withdrawal sessions and with their peers in class, the children acquire the social skills, confidence and communication skills required for transition from one year group to the next and ultimately into post-primary school.
- The children are confident and at ease in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). Across the key stages there is appropriate progression in the children's use of ICT and development of skills. By the end of year 7 they demonstrate very good skills in researching, exhibiting and evaluating their own and their peers' work.

6. Provision for learning

- Most of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective in extending the children's knowledge and understanding, and in developing their skills. Almost two-fifths of the lessons seen were very good. The characteristics of these lessons include the consistent sharing of clear learning intentions and success criteria, leading to plenary sessions which consolidate the children's learning and deepen their thinking. The teachers set the learning activities in contexts which are meaningful to the children and resources are used effectively to support the children's understanding. ICT is used adeptly by the teachers to engage the children and stimulate their learning. In the best practice, the teachers' short-term and medium-term planning makes for well-structured lessons with carefully differentiated strategies which provide appropriate levels of challenge and support.
- In the less effective practice, in a minority of the lessons observed, the teaching strategies and learning activities do not meet the needs of all the children in the class.
- The class teachers, the learning support staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator review regularly the children's progress and identify at an early stage those children who require additional support in aspects of their learning. The children benefit from a highly effective programme of withdrawal support, complemented by liaison with, and support from, relevant external agencies, which helps them develop core communication, mathematical and social skills.

The teaching assistants have benefited from the opportunities for professional development provided by the school; they work skilfully to meet the children's needs both in class and in withdrawal sessions to develop the children's motor skills, as well as their speech and language. The IEPs have been reviewed and updated to include the most relevant details about the children's abilities, interests and needs to inform the teachers' planning. Most of the IEPs have clear, measurable targets and detailed evaluations of the children's progress against those targets. In the small number of less effective IEPs, the targets and strategies are not adjusted appropriately in the light of progress made.

- Planning, learning, teaching and assessment in literacy are very good. The children benefit from a broad and balanced programme, which is tailored further at class level, to target individual need in order to promote progression and raise standards. The children receive a good start at Foundation Stage where they are reading and writing with increasing confidence and independence. As they move through the year groups, the children benefit from engaging with more complex reading and writing activities that enable them to explore more unfamiliar texts, including digital material, and demonstrate progression in their comprehension skills. They write accurately and neatly in an appropriate form and respond well to the texts they read. By the end of KS 2, most of the children are independent in their reading and writing; they can use more sophisticated vocabulary and sentence construction in order to write for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- In the foundation stage and in KS 1, the children develop a very good understanding of mathematics through the effective use of practical resources and differentiated activities that are relevant to real life contexts. The play-based and activity-based programmes enable the children to use mathematics in everyday situations and reinforce effectively the key mathematical concepts. The staff have appropriately identified the need to update the mathematics scheme and address the variation across KS 2 in teaching approaches and content. The teachers in KS2 need to develop further the children's handling of real data, extend their use of mental mathematics strategies, and provide more opportunities for the children to apply their understanding to open-ended investigations.
- The provision for pastoral care is highly effective in meeting the children's personal, social and emotional needs through the school's holistic approach to the children's development. The very caring and inclusive learning environment is clearly child-centred and characterised by very good working relationships at all levels. A high priority is placed on keeping the children safe and the school promotes very effectively personal and online safety messages.
- The children benefit from access to a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities; these include after-school sports and clubs, participation in school plays, concerts and residential trips, all of which develop very well the children's talents, skills and confidence. The children have very good opportunities to express their views, including through the well-established pupil and eco-councils, which provide the children with opportunities to play an important role in effecting improvements in, for example, the provision of lunchtime play equipment.

- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example by encouraging the children to bring healthy snacks and participate in a wide range of sports, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leaders work effectively as a team and inspire high levels of respect and confidence in the staff and wider school community. They share and articulate a clear vision for sustained improvement which places the learning, development and well-being of all of the children at the centre of the school's work. The realisation of this vision is underpinned by a consistent and appropriate emphasis on the professional development of the staff, linked closely to the priorities in the school development plan. Several of the co-ordinators have recently taken up post; as a result, the senior leaders have identified the need to build further their capacity to monitor, evaluate, review and plan for further improvement.
- The school development planning ¹ and action planning processes are informed by rigorous analysis of performance data and by extensive consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors. The SDP and associated action plans identify appropriate priorities for improvement in order to raise further the outcomes for the children. The impact of the improvement work is evident in the quality of the provision and in the rising standards attained by the children. In order to sharpen further the action plans, the senior leaders and co-ordinators need to reduce and refine further the targets they set.
- The children benefit from the school's strong links with the parents and the wider community, notably with Carnmoney Presbyterian Church, Newtownabbey Borough Council and other local schools. The parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and important events through, for example, weekly newsletters, a messaging service and the school website. High numbers of parents attend the curricular evenings and workshops which provide practical guidance on how they can support their children's learning. Through the school's significant contributions to national and international charities, the children gain a greater understanding of their responsibilities as active global citizens.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. Through presentations from, for example, post-holders and members of the school council, the governors are very well informed about the life and work of the school. For example, in response to the rising proportion of children requiring additional assistance in their learning, they targeted the school's finances on extending the provision for learning support.

¹ The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (2010) NI.

- 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 feel happy and secure in school, and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Carnmoney Primary 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.

Health and Safety / Accommodation

1. While the school has secured parking restrictions outside the school gates, the practice of using the school car park to drop off and collect children at the beginning and end of the school day is a concern with respect to the children's safety. Based on the school's risk assessment, this matter remains an ongoing concern.
2. The school is using well the available accommodation, but there is insufficient space to meet effectively the learning needs of the children in small group or individual sessions, such as special educational needs withdrawal and peripatetic support.

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