

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Cumran Primary School, Clough, County Down

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 401-6650

Report of an Inspection in November 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Cumran Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in the village of Clough. Most of the children attending the school come from the local and surrounding areas. Enrolment in the school has remained steady and stands currently at 204 children; this includes 15 children in the double class social communication unit. The school is involved in a well-established shared education partnership with a local maintained school. The school has achieved a wide range of accredited information and communication technology (ICT) awards including the Digital School of Distinction Award; the Capita Excellence Award; and, two National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (Naace) Awards. In addition, the school has been accredited as a Thinking School; a Rights Respecting School at silver level; and, is an Ambassador Eco School, holding an eighth Green Flag.

Cumran Primary School	2016-17	2017-18	2018 -19	2019-20
Enrolment	192	195	210	204
Social Communication Unit	19	18	16	15
% School attendance	95.8	95.9	95.9	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	94.9	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	30.1	23.7	22.2	19
No. of children on SEN register	32	30	36	32
% of children on SEN register	18.5	16.9	18.5	16.9
No. of children with statements of educational need	6	6	*	8
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not applicable

2. Children's, parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Nine percent of parents and almost all staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaires. Most of the responses to, and written comments, in the parental and staff questionnaires were highly positive about the life and work of the school. The parental responses highlighted the effective leadership, the supportive and caring staff and how happy their children are in the school. The staff responses endorsed the committed staff and the regular opportunities for continued professional development. All of the responses to the year 7 online children's questionnaire were wholly positive, with the children indicating their enjoyment of the wide range of learning experiences available to them, and their appreciation of the caring and supportive staff. In particular, the children enjoy the joint-learning opportunities with children in their shared education partnership. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has communicated to the principal and members of the board of governors, including the chairperson, the main findings, and any individual issues arising, from the questionnaires.

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

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum and including the social communication unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

The provision in the social communication unit is outstanding.

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- In this school, the children lead the learning. The children work creatively and take personal responsibility for working collaboratively with their peers. They seek and respect fully respect the views and opinions of each other, and take great pride in sharing their learning with others. Through shared education, the children have extended further their social and communication skills through re-establishing former friendships, making new friends and presenting their learning to each other. The children use and apply expertly their extensive leadership skills within and beyond the school to: develop the skills of the children and parents through, for example, the coding club and parental workshops; improve the local environment; and, support those who are vulnerable. The behaviour of the children is exemplary.
- The outcomes for children in literacy are outstanding. Throughout the school, the children are highly motivated, articulate and confident to communicate their ideas and opinions in whole-class discussions and in group or paired activities. In discussion with the inspectors, a group of year 7 children spoke of their enjoyment of reading and talked confidently about their reading preferences, favourite authors and the effective approaches that the staff use to improve their reading skills. As the children progress through the school, they plan, draft and edit their work with increasing confidence and competence across a wide range of genres. The recently developed writing rubrics are used effectively by the children to engage in high quality self-evaluation and identify aspects of their writing to improve upon.

- The outcomes for children in numeracy are outstanding. The children engage positively in the extensive range of practical, connected learning opportunities and have a clear understanding and appreciation of the importance of mathematics in everyday life. They embrace enthusiastically the many opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding to investigative and problem-solving activities. Through the year groups and key stages, the children extend and employ appropriately their mathematical skills and vocabulary. The small group of year 7 children, who met with the inspectors, are highly confident across all mathematical concepts and can apply competently their knowledge and understanding in everyday situations.
- The outcomes for children in ICT are outstanding. From the foundation stage, the children collaborate using educational technology to express their ideas through, for example, creating digital pictures and adding voiceovers. As they progress through the school, the children: research information; investigate and solve problems using digital devices and environments; create original musical compositions using digital audio applications; and, communicate and collaborate online including participation in a well-established E-learning² link with an inner-city, maintained primary school. They have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe online and have produced an informative video to share their learning with others.
- The outcomes for the children in the social communication unit are outstanding. The children develop their curriculum skills, and social and communication skills to a level where they can participate in leadership roles within the school, for example, the school council. A minority of the children from the social communication unit transfer to mainstream classes within the school, or to mainstream post-primary schools for year 8.

6. Quality of provision

- The curriculum experienced by all of the children is relevant and creative; it empowers them to develop their full potential as confident individuals who are well prepared to contribute to society in an ever changing world. A notable strength is the sector-leading provision for ICT where the highly skilled staff use an extensive range of educational technology to enrich and deepen the children's learning experiences.

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- The staff have developed a language-rich learning environment where the children's achievements in literacy are recognised and celebrated in attractive interactive displays in the classrooms, corridors and shared spaces. The staff employ a wide range of creative and innovative approaches, such as, a programme which focuses on developing the children's critical thinking skills and, the use of question matrixes, thinking frames and stories to develop and extend the children's talking and listening and reading skills. The children have excellent opportunities to write in meaningful contexts and for a wide range of audiences across the curriculum.

² A **learning** system based on formalised teaching with the help of **electronic** resources is known as **E-learning**

- The children experience a very well-balanced and progressive, child centred mathematics programme. They are provided with very imaginative and appropriately challenging learning activities which extend further their mathematical thinking across the curriculum in a variety of meaningful real-life contexts.
- Planning at all levels is detailed, holistic and centred around well-chosen themes and topics which reflect the children's interests and the local context. Almost all of the teaching observed was very good or better; one-half of the lessons observed were of an outstanding quality. This highly effective practice is characterised by a clear focus on the development of the children's thinking skills and outstanding use of: connected learning opportunities across the curriculum; creative and active learning strategies; and, highly skilful questioning by teachers and classroom assistants.
- Assessments to identify the children's perceptions about their learning and attitude towards school are analysed rigorously and bespoke strategies are designed and implemented to support prioritised children to become more self-confident learners and improve their feelings of well-being. Amongst these is an inspirational child-led building project which has engaged thoroughly a group of boys in project-managing the design, financial management and building of an outdoor arts room in the grounds of the school. This has transformed positively their engagement in learning and their understanding of the relevance and importance of acquiring literacy and numeracy skills for future employment.
- The provision for children who require additional support with their learning is outstanding. Early identification is prioritised and the literacy and numeracy interventions are of an excellent quality. Adept use of a wide range of practical and interactive strategies and games develop effectively the children's skills and confidence. The meticulous tracking and recording of the effectiveness of the interventions, and the resulting information, is used effectively to inform future planning. The children are supported and appropriately challenged to extend further their skills through, for example, child-designed, imaginative activities linked to school and local community projects.
- The provision in the social communication unit is outstanding. The children are assessed thoroughly with the resulting data interrogated precisely to inform and extend further planning for learning. The lessons have excellent pace and the range of practical activities support the development of the children's communication and problem-solving skills and their ability to work in groups.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes.

7. Leadership and management

- Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The highly positive and inclusive ethos permeates all aspects of school life and school improvement. The collegial commitment to focusing on the 'voice of the child' is inspirational and the staff take great pride in their role in addressing the holistic development of all of the children, and in improving further their learning potential and experiences, and the outcomes the children attain. The culture of developing creative initiatives to improve the learning, teaching and outcomes of the children is sector-leading. This is underpinned by a significant investment in the continuing professional development of all staff, the allocation of time for school improvement and the purposeful deployment of staff.
- The school's development planning process is highly effective, with rigorous consultative and communication processes, including notable children's input. Detailed use of the school's extensive range of qualitative and quantitative data, along with ongoing action research, informs fully the well-focused action plans. There are well-embedded and robust processes to monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions taken.
- 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. The governors collaborate very effectively with the staff in developing school improvement. They attend and participate fully in professional development opportunities alongside the staff; engage in ongoing monitoring and evaluating procedures, policies and practice; and, are actively involved in a wide range of school activities.
- The school values its links with parents and provides regular opportunities for the parents to be involved in their child's learning through, for example, 'Digital Thinking Week,' 'Confident Coders Club' and school coffee mornings. The school has extensive links with local businesses to make the curriculum relevant and enhance and extend the children's learning opportunities.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the Department of Education. The children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. In particular, the children are conversant in online safety procedures and contribute actively to the development of child protection policies and procedures in the school.

9. Overall effectiveness

Cumran 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.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website: [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observe learning and teaching, scrutinise documentation and the children's written work and hold formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for inspection include:

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

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management⁴:

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

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.

⁴ And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

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 in 12 to 18 months.
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 in 18 to 24 months.

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