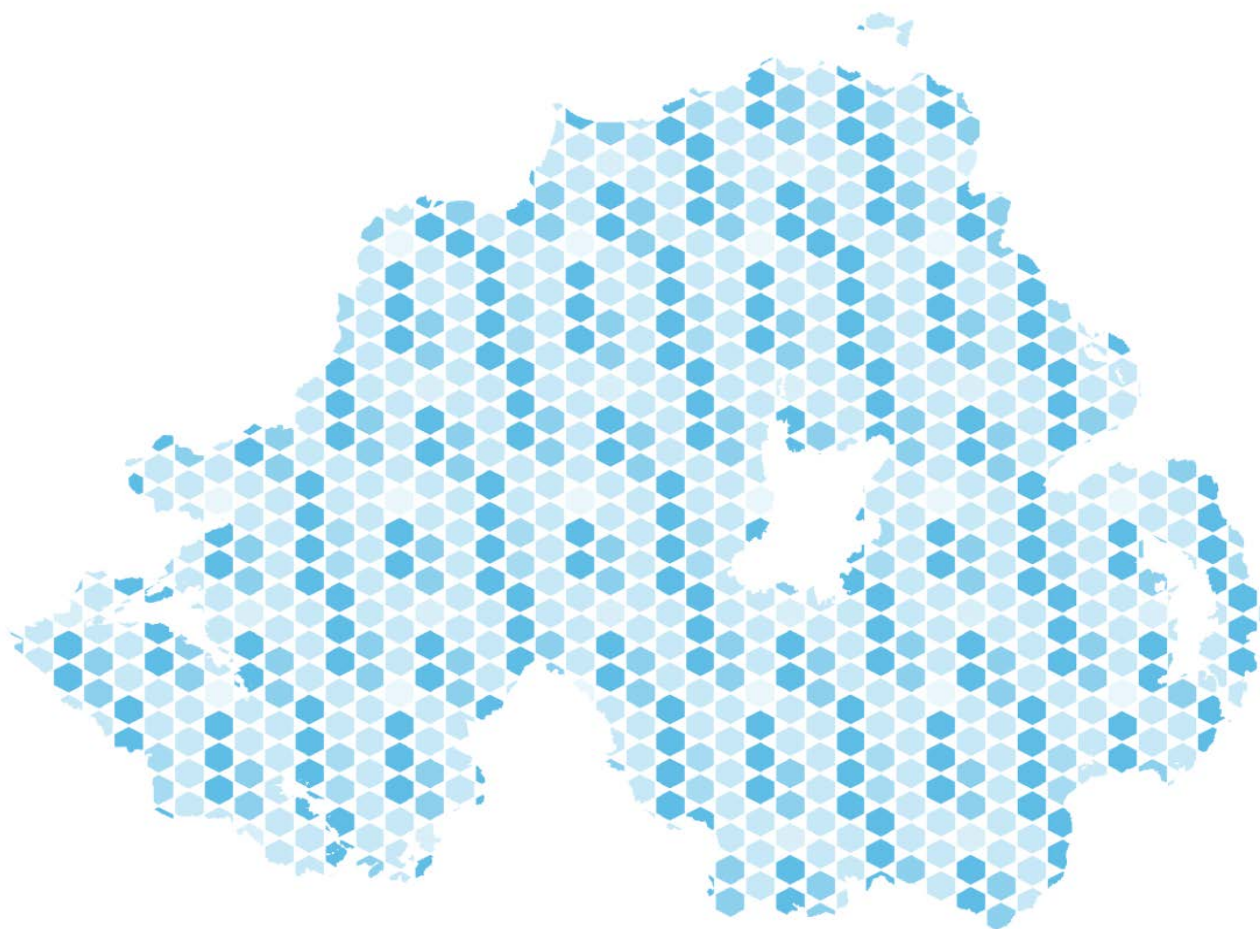


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Gaelscoil Uí Néill, Coalisland,
County Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
May 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



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.

Nineteen percent of parents and 65% of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the approachable, hard-working and caring staff and principal. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the nature of all of the views expressed in the parental and staff confidential 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 naíscoil; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Gaelscoil Uí Néill and Naíscoil Uí Néill are situated in mobile accommodation in the Annaghmore area of Clonoe, near Coalisland. The children attending the school come from the local area and from further afield.

Gaelscoil Uí Néill and Naíscóil Uí Néill	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	152	165	163	160
Enrolment in Nursery Unit	26	25	26	30
% School attendance	94.9	96	95.1	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	55	53	53	49
% of children on SEN register	19	17	15	13
No. of children with statements of educational need, including the speech and language classes	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school

N/A = not available

* fewer than five

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address important areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement
Naíscóil	Good

5. Achievements and standards

- Throughout the school, the children are very well-behaved and are respectful of the staff, each other and visitors. They listen well in class and complete all of the learning tasks set for them by their teachers. When given the opportunity, in most of the lessons observed, the children work well in pairs.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children make progress in Irish in line with their ability or above expectation, and most children make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The standards achieved by the children in numeracy are good. The work in the children's books and the learning observed in classes demonstrate that, throughout the school, most of the children have a good knowledge of mathematical facts and are able to complete calculations readily and accurately. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the most able children have a good knowledge and understanding of number and most are confident in their understanding of the other areas of the mathematics curriculum.

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

- The children achieve good standards in both Irish and English. They have a very good understanding of the Irish spoken to them and, when given appropriate opportunities to engage in discussions during class, most children respond fluently and confidently in Irish. The children complete all of the grammar and comprehension-based written tasks set for them and almost all of the children present their work to a good standard. They are beginning to write for a wider range of purposes and audiences and to develop a deeper understanding of the processes of planning and drafting their work. By year 7, the children read with a good level of fluency and understanding, in both Irish and English, and a small number engage confidently in discussions about their favourite authors and the material they are reading.
- The school's performance data shows that most of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make progress in English in line with their ability or above expectation, and a majority make progress in Irish and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. The children are fully included in the life and work of the school; they work well alongside their peers in class and respond very well to the effective individual and small group literacy withdrawal sessions.
- Almost all of the children in the naíscoil are well settled and are making good 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 join readily in play with others and can talk to the staff about their work and learning experiences. The children use appropriately mathematical language as they count, sort, match and make comparisons as part of their play. All of the children show a very good understanding of the Irish spoken to them and are beginning to use the language naturally in their play.
- The children in the naíscoil and foundation stage use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to support their learning and are developing well their ICT skills. As the children progress through the school, their skills in using ICT are underdeveloped.

6. Provision for learning

- There are whole-school schemes of work and medium-term planners which guide appropriately the teaching in almost all areas of the curriculum. The school has identified the need to review and update their approach to planning and, in particular, the need to plan more rigorously in the short-term to: meet more effectively the needs of all of the children; ensure progression in learning; and, ensure consistency in the quality of the learning experiences across the school.
- The teachers know the children well and have established good working relationships in all of the classes. In the very effective practice, in almost one-quarter of the lessons observed, the teachers employ a range of stimulating resources and active learning approaches to engage and motivate the children and use effective questioning to elicit extended responses from the children and consolidate their understanding. This is particularly notable during the effective play-based learning lessons in the foundation stage. In the less effective

practice: the learning is not suitably challenging; there is an over-reliance on the completion of low-level, routine, decontextualised tasks; and, there is insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all of the children, particularly the more able. In these lessons, there are also insufficient opportunities for the children to develop their oral presentation skills and their thinking skills and personal capabilities, through for example, assuming specific roles and responsibilities during group tasks. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and, in most classes, provide positive feedback to the children. The quality of the marking to promote improvement is inconsistent throughout the school and requires improvement in almost all classes. The teachers need to ensure that the children are given opportunities to make improvements and corrections in order to raise further the standards they attain.

- The provision for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning has important areas for improvement. The teachers write individual education plans for the children and, for the majority of children, the targets within the individual education plans are appropriate and are reviewed regularly. There is a need to develop a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of the individual education plans in all classes and to tracking the progress made by the children in their learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed effective working relationships with all staff and, in particular, has supported well the staff in the naíscoil with planning for those children who have been identified as requiring support.
- The provision for literacy has important areas for improvement. The teachers throughout the school and naíscoil are effective linguistic role models and have created an attractive and stimulating immersion learning environment for the children. In the most effective literacy lessons, one-fifth of those observed, the teachers were secure in their knowledge of the intended learning, the children were challenged appropriately in their learning and thinking and the learning was set within a meaningful context. The staff need to develop a more coherent approach to planning, learning and teaching in order to integrate better the children's learning experiences in literacy with other curricular areas and to real-life, meaningful contexts. It will also be important for the staff to provide further opportunities for the children to develop their oral presentation skills in both Irish and English.
- The provision for numeracy has important areas for improvement. In the most effective numeracy lessons, one-third of those observed, learning experiences had a purposeful context and the children had opportunities to extend their thinking through open-ended investigations and collaborative working. In the less effective practice, the planning for learning was not sufficiently well developed to meet the needs of the children, resulting in a lack of challenge and in missed opportunities to promote learning. While the long-term planning for numeracy outlines a progression from year 1 to year 7 across each of the areas within mathematics, this breadth of experiences is not evident in the children's work as there are insufficient opportunities for the children to develop their mathematical thinking and understanding of mathematical processes.

- The positive, well-organised learning environment in the naíscóil promotes effectively the children's development, decision-making and self-management skills. The staff in the naíscóil are caring and supportive in their approach; they listen attentively to the children, take account of their ideas and promote effectively the children's language development. They have developed a comprehensive approach to observing the children at play and to recording their responses and are making good use of the information gathered to inform the short-term planning. The staff need to provide further challenge in the play activities and to engage all of the children in their learning.
- The provision for pastoral care in the school and naíscóil is good. There is a welcoming atmosphere and the working relationships are positive and respectful. The children's development is supported by the school's positive behaviour management policy and their achievements are recognised and celebrated through the school rewards system. Extra-curricular activities, including Gaelic football, hurling, soccer, choir and chess extend the children's learning experiences and provide opportunities for them to take part in competitions with their peers from other schools. The children are consulted on aspects of school life which directly affect them, and through the recently established student council the children are beginning to undertake leadership roles to enable them to contribute to the improvement of the school.
- The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through its healthy eating policy and a range of extra-curricular sporting activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership team is committed to the well-being of the children and staff. The management structure within the school requires review; the co-ordinator roles within the school are underdeveloped and there is a need for leadership to be developed at all levels.
- The school development planning² processes are informed by consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors. The senior leaders have processes in place to monitor and evaluate improvement and to track the children's progress and learning experiences. The associated action plans need to be more closely connected to the school development planning process and more focused on outcomes and on the learning needs of the children, in order to guide better the process of monitoring and evaluation.
- The school has effective links with the parents who are well informed about their children's progress and the life and work of the school through, for example, school newsletters and the informative school website.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors carry out their roles supportively and understand well the challenges and opportunities faced by the school. The governors need have a more meaningful role in the school development planning process, including the monitoring and evaluation processes.

² 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 satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. There is a need to ensure that the recently-appointed governors receive appropriate safeguarding information and training. In discussions with the inspectors, the children reported that they felt safe in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Gaelscoil Uí Néill needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. 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 12 to 18 months.

The main areas for improvement include the need to:

- review the management structure within the school and develop further leadership at all levels;
- ensure the action plans are connected more closely to the school development planning process and more focused on outcomes and on the learning needs of the children, in order to guide better the process of monitoring and evaluation; and
- plan more rigorously in the short-term to: meet more effectively the needs of all of the children; ensure progression in learning; and, ensure consistency in the quality of the learning experiences across the school.

Health and Safety / Accommodation

As a matter of urgency, the school needs to:

- address the dangerous traffic flow within the school grounds at drop-off and pick-up times;
- ensure that the school gates are locked during the day;
- carry out a risk assessment of access to the mobile classrooms; and
- carry out a risk assessment of the perimeter fence of the school.

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