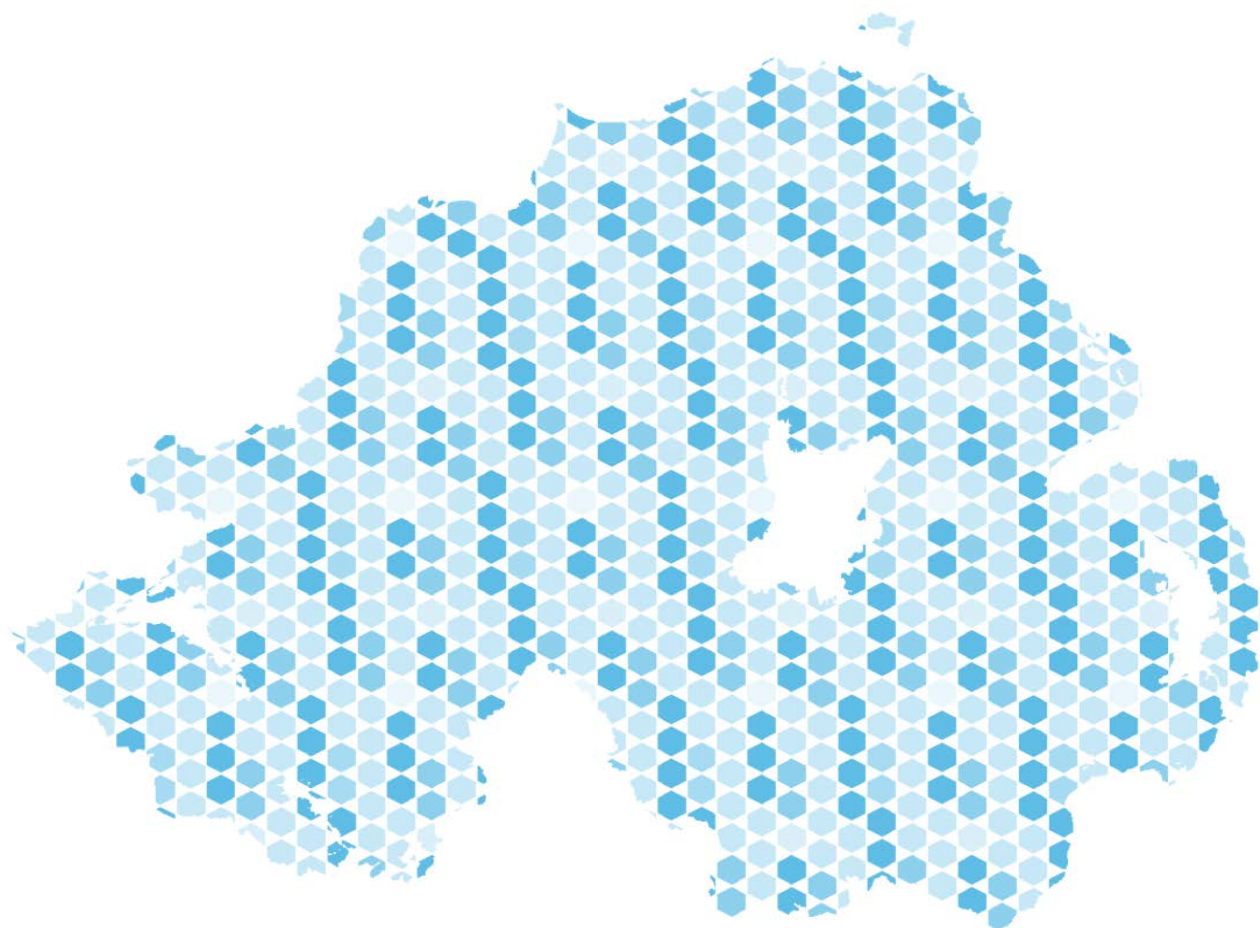


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Gortin Primary School,
County Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
June 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities

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.

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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.eti.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 confidential questionnaires.

Twenty-seven percent of the parents and most of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. Almost all of the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted that the school is well respected within the community; they valued the nurturing environment of the school where the staff work effectively as a team, and indicated that the children are happy at the school. The staff responses were wholly positive. The governors expressed their appreciation for the hard work of the staff. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors, the few concerns and main findings emerging from the parents and staff questionnaires and, where appropriate, these have been commented on within the report.

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 with a particular focus on literacy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on literacy; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Gortin Primary School is a controlled primary school situated on the Plumbridge Road, on the outskirts of Gortin. Most of the children attending the school come from Gortin or Plumbridge and the surrounding rural area. The enrolment and the percentage of children entitled to free school meals have remained stable over the past four years. The proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has fluctuated slightly. The school has three composite classes with three full-time teachers including the principal.

Gortin Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	51	57	52	54
% School attendance	96.7	97.8	96.9	97.7
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	16	21	13	17
No. of children on SEN register	22	17	19	19
% of children on SEN register	42	30	36	35
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*

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

- The children are friendly and welcoming; they co-operate and support each other, and work well in pairs and groups. They engage well in their learning, and by key stage (KS) 2, the children are reflective learners, able to transfer their learning to a range of contexts.
- The school's performance data shows that most of the children, including those who require additional support with their learning, make progress in English at or above expectation. In mathematics, all of the children achieve at or above expectation.
- From the foundation stage, the children enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about their activities and their books. During the inspection, the year 7 children read with expression and talked about their favourite books and authors. The children write well in a range of forms and for a variety of audiences and purposes; the evidence in the children's books indicates that their writing is of a high standard.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make very good progress and meet the targets outlined in their individual education plans. By the end of year 7, all of the children can read with fluency.

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

6. Provision for learning

- The quality of learning and teaching, in all of the lessons observed, was very good. The planning is very well informed by the teachers' knowledge of the children's individual needs and thorough evaluation of the children's assessment data. There is effective differentiation, good pace and challenge, and the intended learning outcomes are clear. The teachers provide helpful, constructive feedback to the children with the marking focused consistently on guiding the children as to how to improve their work. The quality of the children's learning experiences across the year groups is consistently very good. The children's learning is enhanced by skilled use of information and communication technology.
- The individual education plans are effective for the children experiencing difficulties with their learning; the achievable targets are reviewed at the end of each term and are based on a range of appropriate assessments and standardised tests. The children benefit from an effective blend of learning strategies by the teachers and classroom assistants, the widely differentiated activities in year groups, and small group sessions. The staff provide numeracy and literacy information workshops to enable the parents to understand how to support their children's learning more effectively at home.
- The whole-school literacy provision links effectively the development of the children's reading, writing and spelling skills. All the teachers have engaged in a substantial professional development programme for literacy which is reflected in the clear and progressive literacy programme throughout the school. They provide a literacy-rich environment reflecting the interests of the children, and engaging them well. A high priority is placed on the development of the children's reading skills, and throughout the school, the children are articulate and confident when reading aloud. The teachers plan a broad range of opportunities for the children to develop their writing skills in a variety of contexts. The children are encouraged and supported to evaluate their learning from the foundation stage, and engage well in the regular plenary sessions where their learning is consolidated effectively.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. There are excellent working relationships at all levels and a positive, caring ethos. The children's achievements are celebrated through the effective rewards system and displays throughout the school. The school has a clear focus on developing the children's confidence, thinking skills and personal capabilities through an effective development programme. The children develop well their social responsibilities through the playground 'buddy system' and the opportunity to discuss and agree their classroom rules and responsibilities. All of the children benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities and all have the opportunity to develop leadership skills through posts of responsibility on the school's council. The exceptionally well-kept and very pleasant school environment is further enhanced through the work of the Eco-council in growing fruit trees and bushes, salads and vegetables, and providing bird tables and nesting boxes.

- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating through the provision of milk and fruit, and physical activity through regular sporting activities, thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. The school has achieved a gold award in the Action Cancer Health Awards scheme by demonstrating a sustained commitment to healthy activities. The school has effective links with a neighbouring maintained school and have a joint committee with them to organise a fundraising event each year to support the schools and local charities. The school has participated recently in a shared education project that relates to the local history of the area with two local maintained primary schools.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership of the school is highly effective, demonstrating a clear, strategic vision for school improvement. The comprehensive school development plan² is based on widespread consultation and has insightful associated action plans. There are effective systems in place to track and evaluate effectively the children's progress and attainments through classroom observations, scrutiny of planning and learning evaluations, and analysis of data with an effective individual child target-setting process.
- The teachers co-ordinate very effectively their key curriculum roles, with skilful joint levelling of examples of children's work. The school promotes effective links with the parents and a range of organisations to support the children's academic, personal and social development.
- 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 are very well informed about the school's life and work and have identified appropriately the need for all the teachers to develop further a shared responsibility for the leadership and management of the school.
- 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 six reported that they are happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

8. Overall effectiveness

Gortin 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.

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

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