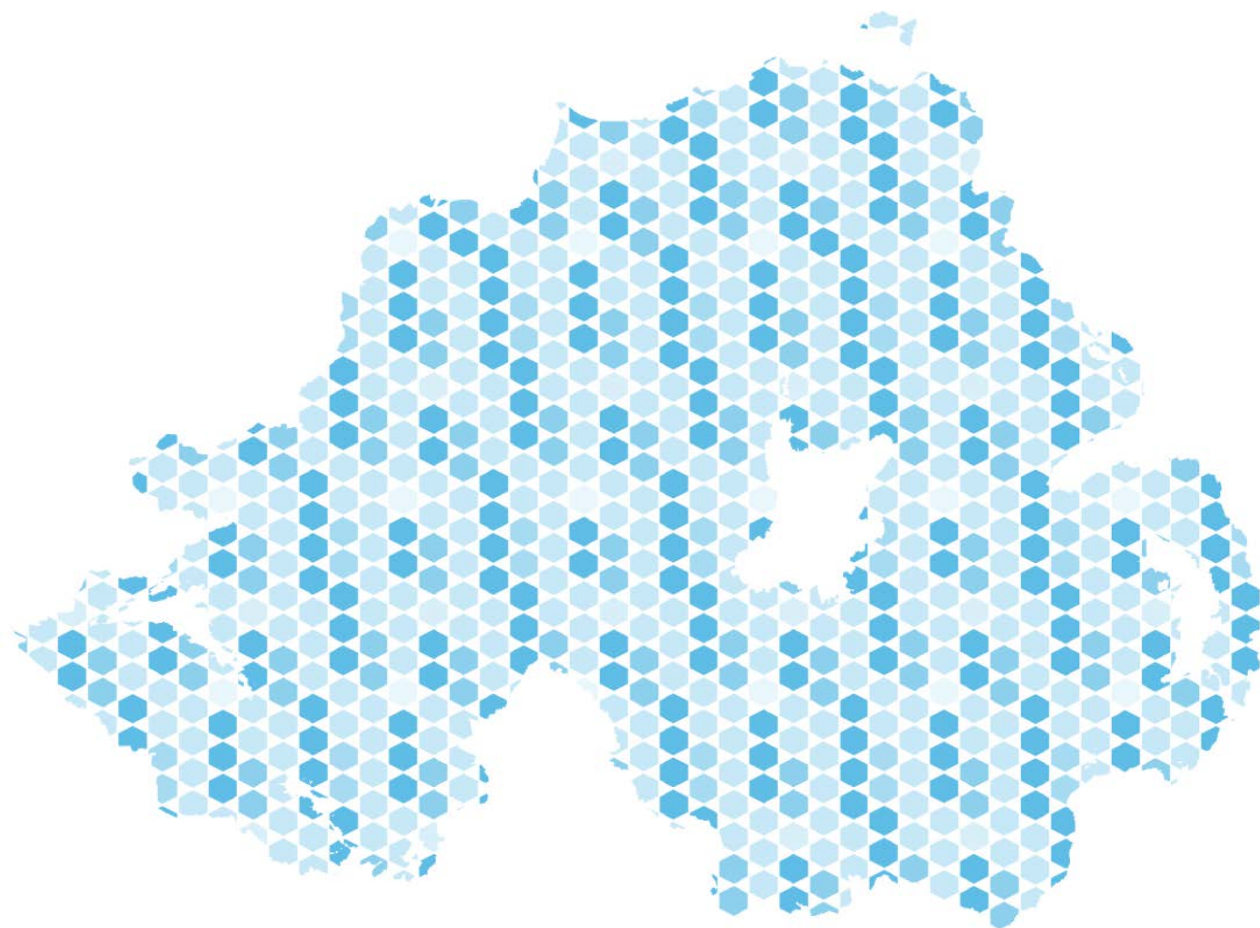


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Greenwood Primary School  
and Nursery Unit, Belfast

Report of an Inspection in  
February 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

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

Twelve percent of parents and 85% of staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. Almost all of the responses to the parental questionnaire were positive and indicated very high levels of support for the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the caring and supportive learning environment, the approachability of the staff and the high regard in which the school is held by the community. The staff responses were wholly positive and highlighted the very effective working relationships at all levels, the child-centred approach to learning and teaching and the much-valued support from parents and the community. The ETI has reported to the principal and the chair of the board of governors 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 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**

Greenwood Primary School and Nursery Unit is a controlled primary school and nursery unit situated on the Upper Newtownards Road. The Board of Governors appointed a new principal in September 2015. The nursery unit has two part-time sessions and the school caters for children in years one to three; almost all of the children transfer to Strandtown Primary School for years four to seven. The school and the nursery unit are currently full to capacity.

Greenwood Primary School and Nursery Unit	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	259	259	262	261
Enrolment in the Nursery Unit	53	52	52	52
% School attendance	96.6	96.4	97.1	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	9.2	8.1	6.9	10.3
No. of children on SEN register	35	38	33	23
% of children on SEN register	13.5	15	12.2	8.8
No. of children with statements of educational need	5	*	*	*
No. of newcomer children	*	0	*	*

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

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>	Good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children in the school and the nursery unit show high levels of interest, motivation, engagement and enjoyment in their learning. The children remain focused on their tasks and the high levels of independence developed in the nursery unit are built upon in the school. From an early age, the children take on a range of responsibilities and are keen to discuss their work and roles within school. The children respond well to the school ethos where they are encouraged to have a go and take risks in their learning. They are kind to their peers, respectful of staff and welcoming to visitors; the children's behaviour is exemplary.
- The children in the nursery unit are well settled and almost all of them play purposefully for sustained periods of time. The majority of the children are beginning to play collaboratively, make independent choices regarding the selection of resources and activities, and are confident in the nursery routines. They approach adults for help and support if required and discuss their play with enthusiasm. The children enjoy browsing in books and can retell a familiar story in great detail using books and puppets. Almost all of the children listen well to stories and create detailed and expressive representational drawings. During the inspection, small groups of children engaged confidently in early mark making and a number of children participated in sorting activities.

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

- The children attain very good standards in literacy. They are highly articulate and can express their ideas and opinions with confidence. The children have a keen interest in books and enjoy listening to stories. The most able children in year 3 read with fluency and expression from a wide range of books including classic novels and information books. They discuss their favourite authors and choice of reading material with enthusiasm. The children are able to use their phonological knowledge very effectively to read and write unfamiliar words. The children write for meaningful purposes across a range of genre with increasing competence and accuracy; they are able to transfer their reading and writing skills across the curriculum.
- The children display very positive attitudes towards mathematics and engage enthusiastically in numeracy lessons. They work well independently and also collaborate effectively in pairs and groups. As they progress through the school, the children become increasingly competent in core aspects of mathematics including number operations, measures and data-handling. The children use an age-appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary accurately and are able to discuss well the strategies they use to carry out investigations and solve problems. During the inspection, a small group of year three children discussed with the inspectors their experiences of mathematics; the children demonstrated a very good understanding of mathematical concepts and were able to apply well their knowledge, understanding and skills to unfamiliar situations.
- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make very good progress in meeting the targets in their individual education plans. The children are identified early and support is provided through good quality withdrawal sessions for literacy and numeracy and effectively differentiated activities within the classes.
- The children achieve very good standards in the use of information and communication technology. They use the available resources with confidence and are able to work independently and collaboratively in pairs and small groups. The children's skills are developed incrementally as they progress through the nursery unit and school so that by year three they are able to draft and edit their own work and use research skills to extend their learning.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The teachers' planning is detailed, comprehensive and well-informed by the analysis of relevant performance data and evaluations of previous learning. The recently developed whole-school continuum of reading skills is guiding very effectively the planning for children in differentiated reading groups. The school has appropriately identified the need to further extend this approach to whole school planning for developing children's writing skills.
- All of the teaching observed was good or better and the majority of lessons were very good. In the most effective practice, the learning was well-paced and responsive to the needs and abilities of the children. The teachers used effective open-ended questioning to further consolidate the children's learning and extend their thinking. The children's interests and ideas were reflected in the choice of themes and learning was set within meaningful real life contexts. Learning activities were appropriately differentiated to meet the individual needs of the children. There are effective opportunities for the children to develop further their

independent reading and writing skills through well-planned and resourced play activities. The children's work is marked regularly and affirmatively and in the most effective practice, the teachers provide appropriate comments to support the children in making continuous progress in their work and meeting individual learning targets.

- The broad and balanced range of activities in the nursery unit provides good opportunities for learning in most of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff plan collaboratively and the weekly play resources are shared with the parents to enable them to talk with their children about their play, thereby supporting the children's learning. The staff's interactions with the children, when most effective, extend the children's vocabulary and oral responses. The staff need to ensure that all interactions are of a consistently high quality to enable greater challenge for the more able children and develop further their thinking skills.
- The reading programme throughout the school has been reviewed recently and additional resources have been purchased including new reading books, high interest books for boys and electronic books. There is a well-stocked central library and class libraries which are used regularly by the children. The planned programme for shared, modelled and guided reading supports the children's development effectively; the linguistic phonics programme is well embedded throughout the school and teachers use this strategy very effectively to support the children in their reading and writing across the curriculum. The children have further opportunities to develop their oral communication skills through involvement in wider aspects of school life including the eco-council, choir, assemblies and participation in local festivals.
- The very good provision for numeracy is underpinned by effective planning and high expectations of what the children can achieve. The children are benefitting from the focus on problem-solving and open-ended investigations, which is developing well their abilities to think critically and creatively. The numeracy lessons are challenging, enjoyable and meet well the children's individual learning needs. A particular strength of the numeracy provision is the contextualisation of the learning activities, which engages the children and ensures the activities are meaningful to them. The children's skills in mental mathematics are developed well through the learning activities at the beginning of numeracy sessions; these consolidate previous learning and are linked well to the main learning focus of the lesson. As a result, the numeracy provision develops very well the children's knowledge, understanding and skills across the core areas of the mathematics curriculum.
- The individual education plans for children requiring additional support with their learning contain appropriate and achievable targets and their progress towards meeting their targets is closely monitored. Of particular note is the support provided for a small group of children for the development of their social skills. Throughout the school and nursery unit, the classroom assistants provide valuable support and contribute very effectively to educational provision for the children.

- The pastoral care in the school and nursery unit is of a high quality and there is a warm, welcoming and calm ethos. The children enjoy learning in a very nurturing and supportive environment, which is characterised by mutually respectful working relationships between all members of the school community. The children's work and achievements are recognised and celebrated in numerous ways and they benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which develop their talents, skills and confidence. The children are afforded many opportunities to express their views and are encouraged to be aware of the needs of others. Consequently, they raise extensive funds for charities and are involved fully in, and demonstrate very good levels of understanding about, the school's eco-work for which they have been awarded eco-flag status.
- The school and the nursery unit gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the healthy break and the very good opportunities for energetic physical activity, which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The newly formed leadership team has a shared strategic vision for the future development of the school and nursery unit with a clear focus on improving learning and teaching and the standards the children attain. This improvement process is underpinned at senior and co-ordinator level by professional knowledge, understanding of the curriculum and high expectations for the children. Appropriate qualitative and quantitative performance data is analysed effectively to identify individual children's need, track progress and set whole school priorities for improvement. The senior leadership team has seamlessly continued the school improvement process and has, for example, identified appropriately the need to build on existing whole-school procedures for monitoring and evaluation to develop a more distributive approach to this aspect of self-evaluation.
- The school development plan<sup>2</sup>, is in its final year; the associated action plans guide effectively the areas identified for improvement. The staff have undertaken a range of professional development to meet better the needs of the children, including those who require additional support with their learning.
- The school and nursery unit has very good working partnerships with parents and with external partners and agencies, which support and enhance the children's learning. There are effective arrangements in place for consulting with parents and involving them in the work and life of the school; the active parent and teacher association supports the children's learning through significant fund-raising to purchase further resources. The core curriculum staff are involved in cluster arrangements with other local schools to support the sharing of expertise and effective practice. The school has long-established and very strong working links with the local primary school which aids the children's transition to the next stage of their learning.

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<sup>2</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.



- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. There is a range of expertise within the membership of the governing body and they are an integral part of the school team. The school's finances are managed very effectively and the governors are involved fully in the school improvement process.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and nursery unit has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. Children informed the inspectors that they feel safe at school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Greenwood Primary School has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The nursery unit 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, in particular the need to ensure that all interactions within the nursery unit are of a consistently high quality to enable greater challenge for the more able children and develop further their thinking skills.

**Health and Safety / Accommodation**

1. The latch mechanisms on several of the small school gates within the boundary fence are not working effectively.
2. A risk assessment of the boundary fence at the grass area, where the children play and have outdoor lessons, needs to be carried out.
3. Several classroom doors in the school do not have visibility panels.

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