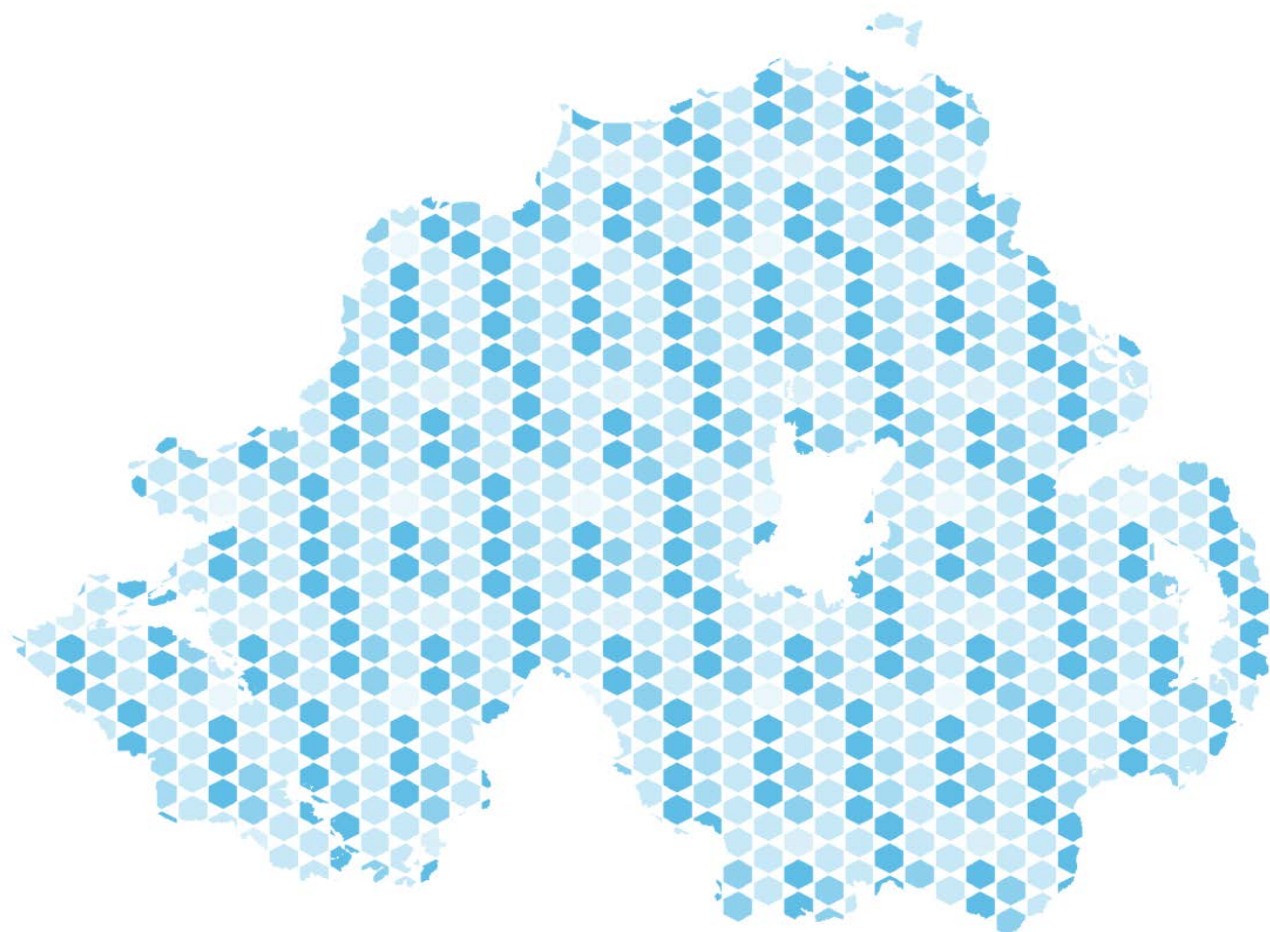


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Kells and Connor Primary
School, Ballymena,
County Antrim

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
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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 confidential questionnaires.

Thirty-seven percent of parents and 65% of staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental confidential questionnaire indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the positive working relationships that exist at all levels within the school, the staff's commitment to the education of their children, and the very effective communication between school and home. Almost two-thirds of the staff completed the confidential questionnaire and their responses were also very positive; they emphasised the good quality of the working relationships across the school and the inclusive, welcoming ethos for all members of the school community. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors all of the responses, including the very few issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

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

Kells and Connor Primary School is a controlled co-educational primary school situated just outside the villages of Kells and Connor, County Antrim. Almost all of the children come from the two villages and the remainder from the surrounding rural area. Over the past four years the enrolment has increased slightly to 181 while the proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has increased by 30%. The school currently operates at almost 90% capacity.

| Kells and Connor Primary School | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Enrolment | 176 | 177 | 177 | 181 |
| % School attendance | 95.2 | 96.4 | 96.4 | N/A |
| % NI Primary school average | 94.9 | 95.6 | 95.4 | N/A |
| FSME Percentage ¹ | 24.3 | 25.4 | 23.2 | 23 |
| No. of children on SEN register | 33 | 33 | 46 | 43 |
| % of children on SEN register | 18.7 | 18.6 | 25.9 | 23.7 |
| No. of children with statements of educational need | * | * | 5 | 7 |
| No. of newcomer children | * | * | * | * |

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

| Overall effectiveness | Capacity to identify and bring about improvement |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Achievements and standards | Very good |
| Provision for learning | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are very well motivated and settle quickly to their learning. They are articulate and express themselves confidently and with courtesy and respect for others, demonstrating very good personal and social skills. They engage in collaborative and sustained learning and take pride in their work and achievements. As they move through the school, the children are increasingly able to apply well their wider skills across the curriculum within and beyond the classroom.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The children respond to their literacy lessons with enjoyment and enthusiasm, expressing themselves in a confident manner as they contribute their opinions and ideas with clarity and purpose. Their attention and listening skills are well developed throughout the school. The presentation of the children's written work is of a high standard and they write with increasing awareness of audience and purpose. A variety of well-planned opportunities allows them to apply these writing skills very effectively to the wider curriculum. The children have a strong disposition to read and throughout the school they read regularly for research and personal interest. By the end of key stage 2 the children read with accuracy, confidence and understanding.

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

6. Provision for learning

- Overall, the quality of the planning, learning, teaching and assessment is good. Most of the lessons observed were good or better in promoting learning; just over two-fifths were very good or better. In the most effective lessons, the pace and challenge kept the children fully engaged and the teachers' skilful questioning developed very well the children's learning and thinking. In addition, the teachers' evaluations of the children's learning and the analysis of relevant assessment information were used effectively to inform future planning and classroom practice. In the less effective practice the children had insufficient opportunities to develop their own creative ideas, make choices and solve problems. Sharing the best practices and reviewing the planning, learning and teaching is not sufficiently regular to improve further the children's learning experiences. The staff have, however, identified appropriately this development need.
- The provision for children with additional educational needs is good. The children are identified at an early stage and are integrated and supported well in the classrooms by the teachers and the classroom assistants. There is close liaison with parents and external agencies when appropriate and the individual education plans (IEPs) identify clearly the children's strengths and include appropriate targets. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions used by the school and tracking the children's progress are not well enough developed.
- The provision for literacy is good. The teachers plan well a variety of literacy-based learning experiences which are connected across the curriculum. They use effectively a variety of interactive strategies, in particular group work, to stimulate the children's interest and to broaden their thinking and vocabulary. The class library is used well to promote reading and the taught curriculum is enriched by the use of the school garden, trips, visitors and a range of interesting events with a focus on literacy. The whole-school literacy programme should include a richer range of challenging resources and open-ended activities, in particular, to promote language and literacy through play-based learning: the teachers have identified the need to carry out a review to improve further the integration of literacy throughout the school.
- The quality of pastoral care is very good. The staff provide a supportive and caring environment in which the children feel valued, work well together and respect the views and opinions of others. During discussions with the year 6 children they spoke positively of their enjoyment of learning and of the many opportunities they have to participate in extracurricular activities. The children's personal and social development is enhanced significantly through their participation in a range of innovative national and international projects.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the school promotes high standards in the children's learning and behaviour and plans effectively to ensure a broad range of wider learning experiences. The school improvement planning is informed by appropriate analysis of performance data and regular consultation with the whole-school community to identify relevant areas for further development.

Responsibilities within the leadership and management are not well enough defined in order to develop management roles more fully and equitably. It is timely, as the school prepares a new three-year development plan, that this issue has been recognised.

- The school development plan² (SDP) provides a suitable framework to focus on school improvement and sets out appropriate priorities for the medium and longer term. The associated action plans are not well enough focused on the learning experiences and the attainment of all the children, in order to guide better the process of monitoring and evaluation at all levels.
- The school maintains effective links with parents, communicating frequently about the children's learning and progress and on how to support their learning. The active parent-teacher association contributes significantly to many aspects of the life and work of the school.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are kept well informed by the principal and the co-ordinators about the life and work of the school and have a well-developed understanding of its value in the local community. There is an aspect of governance to review, namely, to contribute more fully to the process of monitoring and evaluation of school improvement work.
- 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 are happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Kells and Connor Primary School demonstrates capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement and in particular the need to develop the roles, responsibilities and systems for sharing best practice and monitoring and evaluating the quality of the children's learning experiences and tracking their progress in order to raise standards further.

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

Health and Safety

1. There is a need to review the access to and the safety of the children around the school pond.

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