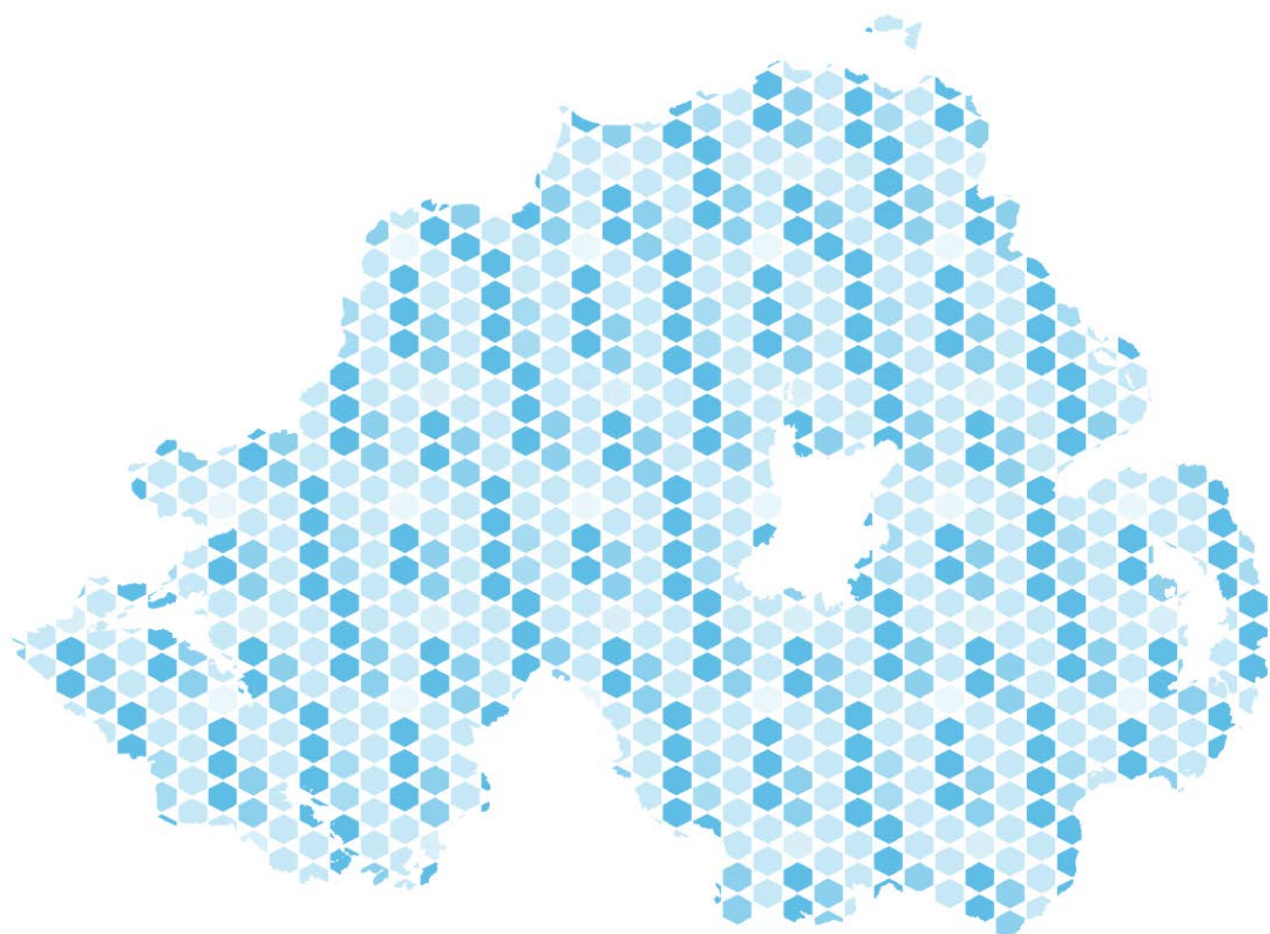


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Our Lady's and St Mochua's
Primary School, Derrynoose,
County Armagh

Report of an Inspection in
November 2015



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

Thirty-nine percent of parents and 75% of staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted how happy their children are at the school, the high regard for the school in the local community and their appreciation of the commitment, dedication and leadership shown by all staff in providing a child-centred learning environment. Most of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were wholly positive; they emphasised: the focus on realising the potential of every child; the quality of the working relationships across the school; and, the strong links with the parents and the wider community. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the very few concerns emerging from the questionnaires. The governors expressed their appreciation of the hard work and dedication of the principal and staff, valuing highly their collegial approach to providing high quality provision for all of the children.

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 numeracy; including how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision for learning with a particular focus on numeracy, including the children in the reception group; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Our Lady's and St Mochua's Primary School is a maintained co-educational primary school situated in Derrynoose, County Armagh. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area of Derrynoose and Carnagh; a very small number come from the nearby town of Keady. The enrolment has remained steady; at the time of the inspection, there were an additional four children enrolled in reception provision. The school has a long history of working with other schools in the community: its extensive range of links and partnerships include a sporting partnership with two controlled and two maintained primary schools. The school prides itself on its 'Changemaker School' status; this initiative is influencing positively the academic and pastoral provision throughout the school.

Our Lady's and St Mochua's Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment (years 1 – 7)	191	189	187	187
Reception children	0	*	0	*
% School attendance	96.9	97.6	97.1	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	21	23	25	22
No. of children on SEN register	19	21	28	29
% of children on SEN register	10	11	15	15
No. of children with statements of educational needs	5	5	5	5
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	*

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	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are very welcoming and are respectful towards their peers, the staff and visitors to the school; their behaviour was exemplary during the inspection. They give of their best at all times throughout the school day; happy and enthused, they have pride in their work and enjoy being challenged. The children listen attentively in class to their teacher and their peers. As they progress through the school, they become increasingly independent and confident in self-managing their learning, by selecting appropriate resources and strategies.

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

- The school's performance data shows that almost all the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and in mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. The very few who are under-achieving are being supported very effectively.
- By year 7, the children reach outstanding standards in mathematics. Almost all of the children are flexible in their thinking; are able to apply a range of strategies and can justify their choices using appropriate vocabulary. The children enjoy mathematics and talk confidently about their mental mathematics processes. The standard of the work in the children's books shows progression and the presentation of their work is of a consistently high quality across the key stages.
- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) competently to extend, to demonstrate and to assess their learning.

6. Provision for learning

- There is a coherent approach to planning, learning and assessment throughout the school. The teachers are fully committed to meeting the academic and pastoral needs of all of the children; their thorough, insightful weekly evaluations of the children's progress against the learning objectives are used effectively to inform future planning for learning. The learning experiences for the children are of a good quality or better in all classes and outstanding in one-half of the classes. In all lessons, there was a child-centred ethos; and, in the most effective lessons, the teachers had high expectations of what the children could achieve, built thoughtfully on the children's prior learning and used a range of meaningful contexts.
- The teachers give the children regular oral and written feedback which celebrates good work and highlights how they can improve. The children engage in individual target setting and self- and peer-assessment with confidence and competence.
- The provision for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is outstanding. The children contribute to and understand the effective individual education planning process. They are supported well by the highly skilled and effective classroom assistants. Particular strengths in the provision are the early and thorough identification of need and the high quality of the withdrawal support for literacy and numeracy.
- The quality of the provision for numeracy is very good. The children benefit from a wide range of learning experiences in mathematics. They have regular opportunities to develop their problem-solving and investigative skills through well-planned and interesting activities. A systematic approach to the teaching of mental mathematics is impacting positively on learning; resulting in almost all of the children by year 7 having a secure understanding of number. The numeracy co-ordinator has identified appropriately the need to review the planning for mathematics to benefit the learning experiences of the children by further exploiting the connections between the different aspects of mathematical learning.

- There are important areas for improvement in the provision for the children in the reception group. Whilst the children are well settled and engage readily with the staff and their peers, a majority of the activities and routines provided for them are too formal and limit their independence and creativity. The staff need to ensure that all aspects of the provision for these children is in line with the Pre-school Curricular Guidance and is matched appropriately to their needs and stage of development.
- The quality of pastoral care is outstanding and is an integral part of the learning and teaching. Within an inclusive, nurturing and supportive environment, the holistic approach by the staff to the children's development meets their personal, social and emotional needs very effectively. Priority has been given to developing in the children, empathy for those within the school community and beyond. The children have many opportunities to take on leadership roles, for example, as house captains and within the Eco-council and the student council. The children's achievements, both in and out of school, are shared and celebrated. The school lives out its motto, "reaching for the future, a voice today", as evidenced by the questionnaire returns and the inspection findings. The views of all in the school community are listened to and acted upon to further benefit the children with, for example, extra-curricular provision being extended significantly to offer a wider range of after-school clubs.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership at all levels is highly effective and there is a collaborative approach to school improvement. The senior leadership team (SLT) is well supported by the highly skilled co-ordinators, the teaching staff and the non-teaching staff who all share the vision of, 'still learning, still chasing perfection and achieving excellence.'
- School improvement is linked clearly to a school development plan constructed through a rigorous process of self-evaluation and extensive consultation with the children, parents, staff, parents, governors and the community; resulting in an engaged, dynamic school community working together to realise every child's potential. The key priorities are continually under review and focus appropriately on improving the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards that they attain. The associated action plans guide effectively the development work which is robustly monitored and evaluated.
- The SLT and governors place a high priority on capacity building and continuous staff development. The school is involved in a cluster with three other primary schools to provide a well conceived staff development programme which allows teachers and co-ordinators to benefit from the sharing of expertise and professional development opportunities.

- The school has outstanding links and partnerships with the parents and the wider community including the Church, the Community Association and the local Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) club. Parents and the wider community have been very proactive in supporting the development of a vibrant, well resourced environment that results in the improvement of the children's learning experiences and attainment. The school has established very effective links with the local post-primary school to which almost all of the children transfer, resulting in smooth transitions for the children from year 7 to year 8.
- 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. The governors exercise their challenge function to monitor and evaluate rigorously the work of the school. The governors, in consultation with the SLT, need to review the provision for those children in the reception group.
- 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

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.

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