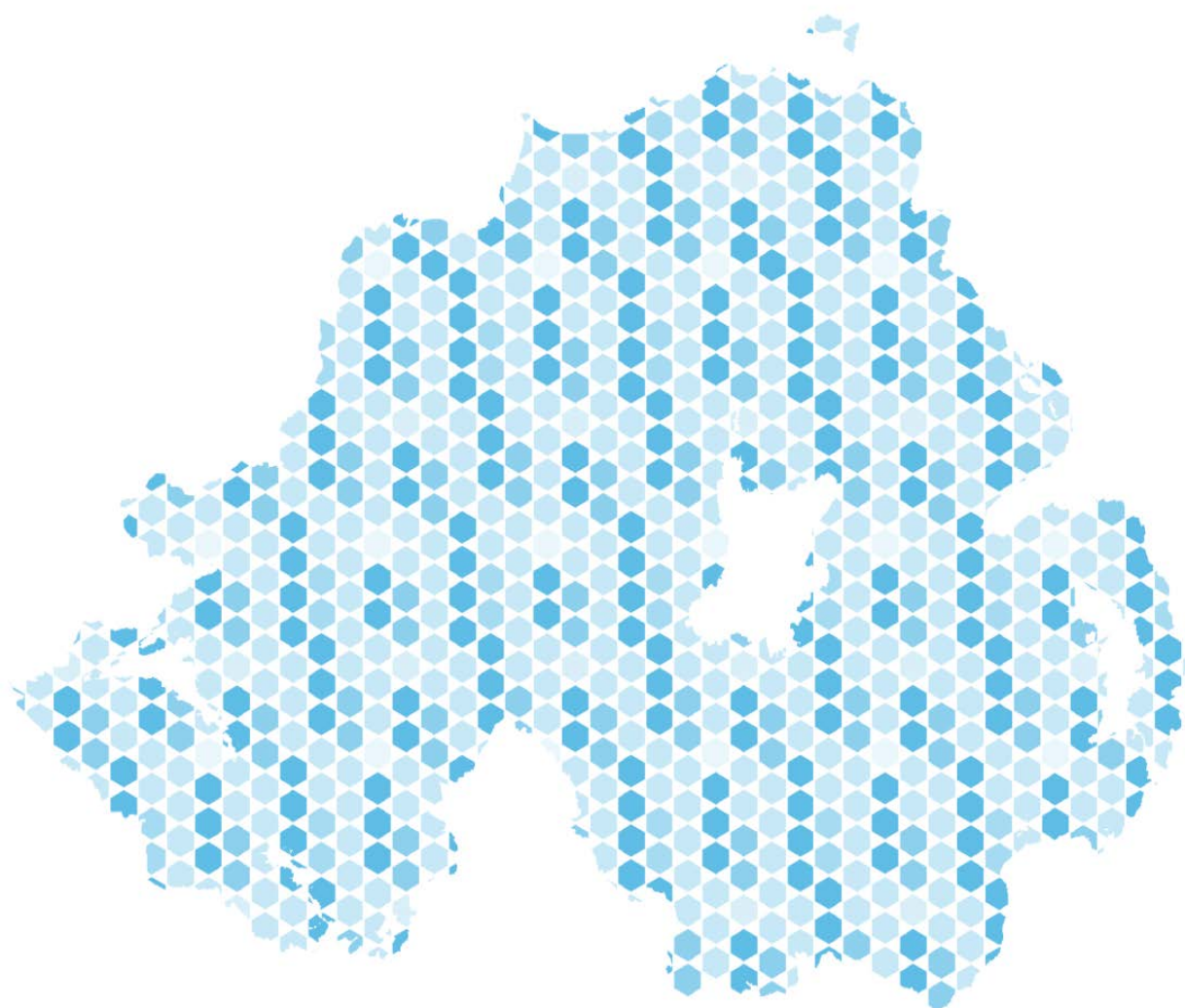


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Sacred Heart Primary School,
Derry City

Report of an Inspection in
September 2015

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. 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 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

Fourteen percent of parents and ninety-three percent 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 their appreciation of the teachers' and support staff's work and the high expectations of the staff for the children's learning, the nurturing ethos of the school and the leadership of the principal. Almost all of the staff completed questionnaires and their responses were wholly positive. ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the small number of issues emerging from the 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; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Sacred Heart Primary School is a maintained primary school situated on Trench Road in the Waterside area of Derry City. Most of the children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The enrolment has risen steadily over the last four years. The school lives out its motto, "*Live, Learn, Love, Laugh*", as evidenced by the questionnaire returns and the inspection findings. The percentage of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has increased. The school has recently re-established a link with the local controlled primary school and are in the early stages of planning a joint project about local place names.

Sacred Heart Primary School	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Enrolment	338	362	371	392
% School attendance	93.7	94.3	94.2	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	48.5	49.4	49	43.9
No. of children on SEN register	59	82	100	104
% of children on SEN register	17.7	22.7	22.6	26.3
No. of children with statements of educational need	11	13	13	13
No. of newcomer children	0	0	*	0

Source: data as held by the school N/A = not available

* fewer than 5

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	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are highly motivated and articulate, responding positively to the high expectations set by their teachers. They engage actively and enthusiastically in all of their learning, working collaboratively in pairs and small groups. From an early stage, they have high levels of self-management and creativity, take pride in their learning and their behaviour is exemplary. By key stage (KS) 2, they take on roles and responsibilities with great maturity.
- The school's performance data shows that most children make progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation.
- The school's internal performance data shows that most of the children who require additional support with their learning achieve the targets set out in their individual education plans and make very good progress in English and mathematics in line with their ability. Almost all children who receive withdrawal support for literacy achieve their targets.
- As they progress through the school, the children can discuss their view points with growing maturity and listen respectfully to the views of their peers. The very good standards in talking and listening and the value placed on their development are evident in the fact that every child in the school performs in the annual school show in a local theatre. Throughout the school, the children develop a range of reading strategies, and, by the end of KS2, they have a positive attitude to reading and are fluent and expressive. They write to a good standard across a range of forms; the development of empathy in their writing is evident in KS2.

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

- The children achieve very good standards overall in numeracy. By year 7, the children are secure in their knowledge of key mathematical concepts and are confident and flexible in their thinking across all the areas of mathematics. They use a range of mathematical language and can apply their understanding in real and relevant contexts. Across the key stages, the children show a high level of engagement and enthusiasm during practical mathematical activities.
- The children use information and communication technology (ICT) with increasing confidence, as they progress through the school. They use a range of devices and programs, including green-screening and codes, to enhance their learning and to develop their creativity.

6. Provision for learning

- The quality of planning, assessment, learning and teaching in all of the lessons observed was effective. In the most effective practice, in the majority of lessons, the learning was well-paced and provided very good opportunities for the children to work together on challenging tasks and engaging activities to develop their critical and creative thinking skills. There were effective plenary sessions to assess and consolidate the children's learning. A key strength of all the lessons observed was the teachers skilful use of questioning to assess the children's learning and to develop their oral responses. The teachers' planning is comprehensive, guides well the children's learning and is well informed by the teachers' knowledge of their individual needs.
- The provision for the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is outstanding. The early and thorough identification of need ensures appropriate intervention through purposeful links with parents, local pre-school providers and external agencies. The careful, ongoing analysis of assessments, staff observations and internal data and the effective individual education plans promote further high quality provision. Those children who have wide-ranging barriers to their learning are supported well by the highly skilled and effective classroom assistants. A particular strength in the provision is the high quality withdrawal support.
- The teachers employ a range of creative stimuli, including music, art and ICT, to develop children's understanding of literacy and to promote imaginative responses. A love of reading is fostered very successfully through well-planned guided reading and work with the class novel, supported well by computer-based reading resources. The children's confidence and enthusiasm to read is raised successfully through a range of support programmes, including paired reading with parents and older children being 'reading buddies' with peers and younger children. The children have good opportunities to write in a variety of styles and across the areas of learning. The school has identified the need to develop further the writing process and produce a clearer line of development of the writing forms.

- A comprehensive whole-school programme for mathematics provides clear guidance for class teachers to plan a balanced coverage of topics which meets the learning needs of all the children. The children benefit from a wide range of mathematical experiences through each key stage. They have regular opportunities to develop their investigative skills through well-planned activities often linked to meaningful contexts across the curriculum. Play-based learning provides valuable experiences to develop the children's early mathematical language and thinking. ICT is integrated effectively into learning to support, enrich and extend the children's mathematics.
- The quality of pastoral care in the school is outstanding. It is underpinned by an inclusive ethos, an appreciation of the community it serves and a positive regard for all of the children. The children's development is fostered and their achievements recognised by a well-conceived, positive behaviour management policy and by the rewards system, devised and reviewed in consultation with the children. A preventative education curriculum is integrated skilfully through their learning experiences and the school engages effectively with a range of external agencies in order to meet the diverse needs of the children. A rich and varied extra-curricular programme supports their holistic development and raises their aspirations and self-esteem. The school council provides the children with opportunities to undertake leadership roles and to make a positive contribution to the improvement of their school.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through its healthy break policy and extra-curricular sporting activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership team is deeply committed to meeting the individual needs of all the children and gives priority to providing high quality pastoral care and raising further the standards achieved by the children through effective learning and teaching. They inspire high levels of confidence and respect from the staff, parents and children. The school development plan is informed well by a rigorous process of self-evaluation and consultation with the whole school community.
- Senior leaders, governors and staff have developed a collegial approach to school improvement. The co-ordinators make effective use of teacher observations and a wide range of performance data to identify low- and under-achievement and to track the progress of individual children. They monitor and evaluate regularly the provision for learning throughout the school and have appropriate action plans in place to support improvement. The continued professional development of all staff is a high priority within the school and a programme for staff development is in place to support the current action plans.
- 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 are very well informed and engage actively in the life and work of the school. They have a well-developed strategic overview of the school and understanding of the school's place within the local and wider community.

- The school values the contribution of the family and the wider community to the children's learning. Engagement is promoted through a culture of openness and accessibility, supported by effective use of social media and regular newsletters. The school has developed very effective links with the local pre-school providers and the relevant post-primary schools to ensure better transitions for the children.
- 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 said 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. ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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