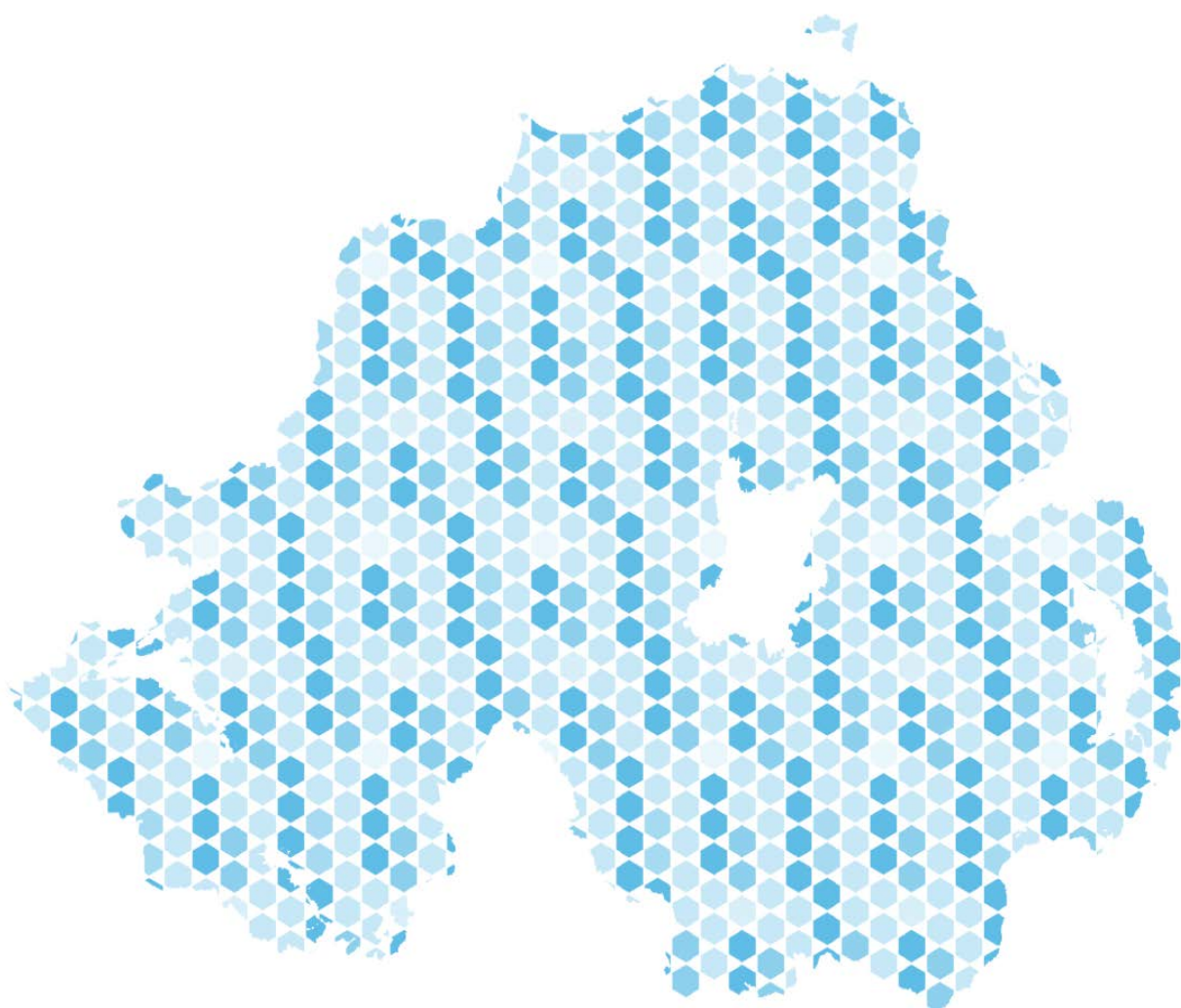


PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Brigid's Primary School,
Mayogall, County Derry

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

Twenty-eight percent of parents and 83% 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 principal's, teachers' and support staff's work and commitment to providing high quality education, care and support for all of the children. The staff responses were also very positive; they emphasised the quality of the working relationships across the school and the opportunities all staff have to avail of personal and professional development. ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main messages 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

St Brigid's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in Mayogall, County Derry. All of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area within the Parish of Lavey. The school has a long history of working with other schools and is currently involved in a shared education programme with Knockloughrim Primary School. The school has been awarded level two Rights Respecting Schools status.

St Brigid's Primary School	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Enrolment	217	236	246	256
% School attendance	96.0	97.1	96.9	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	12	13	11	11
No. of children on SEN register	37	47	39	46
% of children on SEN register	17	20	16	18
No. of children with statements of educational need	14	10	11	7

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

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and outcomes	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are very welcoming and are respectful towards their peers, the staff and visitors to the school; their behaviour is very good in class, in the corridors and in the playground. They are well-motivated and respond positively to the stimulating learning environment that has been created in all of the classrooms. They interact confidently and engage collaboratively with their peers, are able to reflect on and discuss their learning in an increasingly mature manner and they present their work to a high standard.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all 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.
- Almost all of the children, from an early age, have very good talking and listening skills and discuss confidently their learning with their peers and adults. The quality of the children's written work across the curriculum is of a very high standard; they plan, draft and edit their work from an early age and write in a variety of forms for a range of purposes and audiences. During the literacy and numeracy lessons and play based-learning, the children in the foundation stage display high standards in literacy and numeracy.
- By year 7, the most able read enthusiastically, with expression, and talk about the material they are reading and their favourite authors. During numeracy lessons, the children engage confidently in mental mathematics activities and in a range of meaningful and active individual and shared learning opportunities. By year 7, the children are secure in their knowledge of important mathematical ideas and concepts; they show flexibility in their thinking and justify their answers using accurate mathematical language.

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

- The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make excellent progress, meet the targets in their individual education plans, and all reach the standard expected or above expectation.
- The children are well-motivated, share willingly their expertise with each other and achieve very good standards when using information and communication technology (ICT). They talked with enthusiasm about their use of online discussion forums and the creation of shared e-books when they collaborated with children in their partner school in the Shared Education Programme.

6. Provision for learning

- There is a highly effective, coherent and collaborative whole-school approach to planning, learning and assessment. The teachers' planning is comprehensive and informed well by a thorough evaluation of the children's previous learning and detailed knowledge of their individual needs. In the foundation stage, the children are consulted on their learning during effective plenary sessions and encouraged to express their ideas and opinions, thereby making meaningful contributions to their own learning.
- In the most effective practice, in a majority of the lessons observed, there were: meaningful contexts and purposes for the learning; suitably challenging activities that were matched well to the children's abilities; appropriate opportunities for paired and group work; and, highly effective working relationships. In these lessons, the teachers used skilful questioning to develop the children's understanding and thinking and used incidental opportunities to optimise learning and build on their experiences. In a minority of the lessons evaluated, challenge was lacking, and the teachers' supplementary questioning was less effective resulting in missed opportunities to extend the children's language and thinking skills.
- All of the teachers mark the children's work regularly and positively and, in almost all classes, provide appropriate guidance on how to improve; this practice should be more consistent as the children value getting detailed personal feedback.
- The children, who have difficulty with their learning in literacy and mathematics, are supported very well by the special educational needs co-ordinator during highly effective withdrawal sessions and within their classes. The special educational needs team has worked diligently to develop assessment and support procedures that include a wide range of effective interventions, including Reading Partnership and reading workshops. Home-school diaries involve parents and keep them informed regularly of the progress and outcomes for their children. The classroom assistants support the children with sensitivity and skill. Extension activities in English and mathematics provide additional challenge for the more able.
- The progress of the children in literacy is underpinned by rigorous planning and effective monitoring which leads to a wide variety of appropriate and necessary interventions. Literacy is connected well across the curriculum through regular opportunities for the children to develop their literacy skills by participating in initiatives, such as, World Book Day and Poetry in Motion. The school celebrates its connections with the local community through literacy by ensuring that the topics are relevant and inspiring for the children, for example, through its study of Seamus Heaney's work as part of a highly effective writing programme.

- The children use their mathematical language, skills and knowledge in meaningful contexts across the curriculum, including through play-based learning in the foundation stage. Planning for numeracy is thorough, ensuring continuity and progression, including in mental mathematics. The school has identified appropriately, through effective analysis of data and regular monitoring and evaluating, the need to develop problem-solving skills and using mathematics as an area for improvement.
- The quality of pastoral care in the school is outstanding. The school is a welcoming and supportive community where learning takes place in a caring and secure environment. The personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU) programme encourages the children to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem. The children know and accept the standards of behaviour expected of them; they have opportunities to contribute to classroom rules and to take active roles in the school council and eco committee. Playtimes are well-organised and supervised effectively by staff with sporting activities encouraged and facilitated throughout the school.
- 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 senior leadership team is highly effective, has a clear vision and provides outstanding strategic leadership, support and guidance for the staff. A high priority is placed on capacity building and continuous staff development which has created a highly professional team of teachers and classroom assistants. They make a positive contribution to the educational and pastoral provision across the school. The co-ordinators in key areas are highly effective in leading their areas of responsibility.
- School improvement is linked clearly to a school development plan constructed through extensive and genuine consultation with all stakeholders. The key priorities are continually under review and focus appropriately on improving further the quality of the children's learning experiences and attainment. Associated action plans guide effectively development work which is robustly monitored and evaluated. The school uses a wide range of performance data very effectively to monitor and track the progress of the children and to make effective interventions.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of the inspection, there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance inspected. The governors have a clear strategic overview of the school and provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to the work of the senior leadership team. They are involved actively in the life of the school and promote its position in the parish.
- The school plays an integral role in the Parish of Lavey and has developed meaningful links with the church and with the local Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) club. Parents and members of the local community make a valuable contribution to the children's learning, through, for example, by talking to the children about their work. The teachers extend the learning from these visits through well-planned numeracy, literacy and play-based learning sessions.

- The school has a long history of participating in shared education and is currently working with Knockloughrim Primary School. Staff from both schools meet on a regular basis to share planning and for capacity building. Through the Pushkin Project, the children collaborate in learning experiences such as writing books, creating shared writing displays and making and testing A-frame kites.
- 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.

Health and safety/accommodation

1. The school has five classrooms in the main building and six mobile classrooms of which 4/6 are in excess of 20 years old and have issues with damp, humidity and suitable teaching space which can impact on staff and children's health and well-being.

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