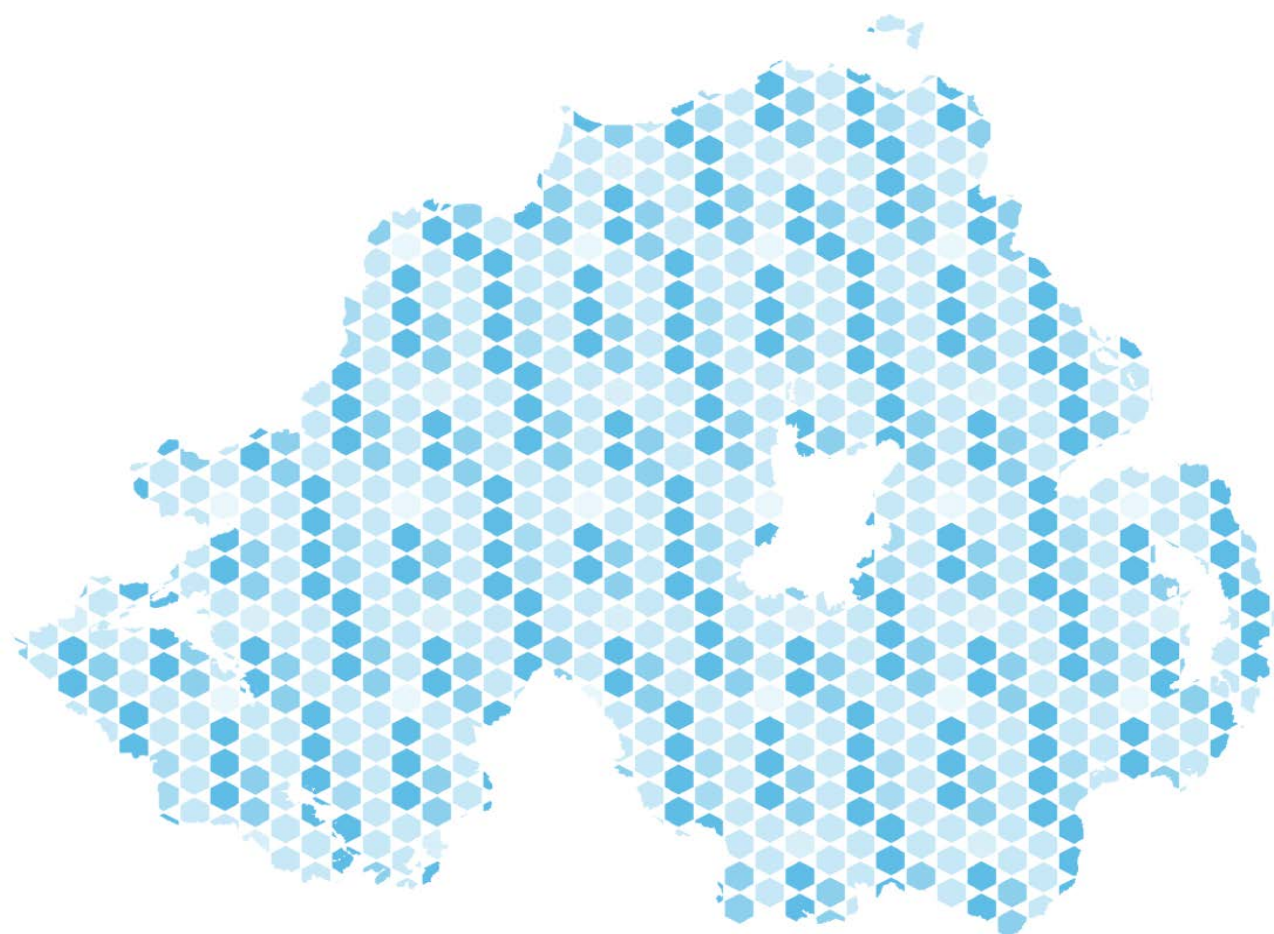


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Colman's Primary School,
Dromore, County Down

Report of an Inspection in
March 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
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 teaching and learning, 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.

Almost thirty eight percent of parents responded to the questionnaire. Nearly all of the responses, including the written comments, were positive and affirmative of the work of the school. In particular, the parents high-lighted the hard-working and dedicated staff and the family atmosphere that permeates the school. Similarly the staff, who completed the questionnaires, were wholly affirmative of the work of the school. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main 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

St Colman's Primary School is a maintained school located in the town of Dromore. The children come from the town and the surrounding rural district and the enrolment has risen steadily over the last 3 years with the school operating at three-quarters of its full capacity. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has fluctuated slightly over the past 3 years, while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has in the main remained steady. The school maintains a purposeful link with a neighbouring controlled primary school.

St. Colman's Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	85	101	93	107
% Attendance	96.7	97.4	97.4	97.3
% Attendance for those children on the SEN Register	96.1	96.2	95.9	96.8
Percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	11	20	19	23
% of children on SEN register	12	15	12	15
No. of children with statements of educational needs	3	4	2	5
No. of newcomers	8	7	1	3

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The children, who are confident and supportive of one another, have positive dispositions to learning. They engage readily with their peers and are respectful towards the staff and visitors to the school. The children's proficient use of information and communication technology allows them to improve their learning by managing information and presenting it in a range of appropriate formats.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics, in line with their ability or above expectation.
- In foundation stage the children develop well their communication and self-management skills and are quickly settled. Throughout the school the quality of the children's written work in the samples viewed is of a good quality. However, the teachers need to provide wider and more imaginative opportunities for extended writing in order to improve further the children's writing and research skills. The year 7 children are given the opportunity to help the younger children with their reading skills. By the end of key stage 2 the children read with expression, accuracy and confidence. When given the opportunity in class, through, for example, the effective questioning from the teacher, the children are well able to supply reasoned and extended responses.
- The children requiring additional support with their learning make very good progress.

6. Provision for learning

- The teachers' planning is well informed by the evaluation of the children's previous learning and knowledge and there is appropriate breadth and progression. The effective practice, observed in a majority of the lessons visited, included well-planned opportunities for the children to work together and to learn from one another. The teachers used skilful questioning which elicited extended responses from the children and promoted their thinking skills. While the teachers correct the children's work regularly they need to adopt a more consistent approach to supplying supportive feedback which includes suggestions as to how the children can improve further the quality of the work they produce.
- The children requiring additional support with their learning are identified at an early stage through teacher observation and assessment. The children's progress and the positive impact of the school based interventions are monitored and evaluated thoroughly. The special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers liaise and plan well together to ensure that the sensory and social skills support sessions focus sharply on the needs of the children. During the inspection, the children were enthusiastic about their work and engaged well with their learning.
- The literacy co-ordinator and the teachers have researched effectively and invested in useful and appropriate schemes and resources to ensure that the programme for the development of the children's reading is thorough. While the school prioritises the improvement of the children's spelling through homework and regular tests, this important area must also be developed through their written work.
- The planning for play-based learning needs to focus on providing more purposeful opportunities to develop and apply the children's learning in numeracy, language and early writing skills.
- The quality of pastoral care in the school is very good. There is a friendly, welcoming ethos with high levels of respect within the school community. The children increase their self-confidence and self-esteem, and benefit from opportunities to hold positions of responsibility through the Eco-team and school council. The children's personal and academic achievements are recognised through regular school assemblies and merit reward systems.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the children to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The management and teachers work collaboratively and effectively to lead well their various areas of responsibility. While there is clear communication, ongoing professional discussion and a strong sense of collegiality amongst the staff within the school, there is a need for more regular monitoring and evaluation of provision to ensure, for example, more purposeful opportunities in play based learning.

- School improvement is guided well by a reflective, consultative and evaluative school development plan. The school development plan permeates the day-to-day work of the school and is structured around the Department of Education's policy document, *Every School a Good School*. Improvements in the quality of the children's learning experiences and in raising standards are appropriately prioritised.
- The teachers have become increasingly adept at and confident in analysing the school's internal data and this informs well the school's self-evaluation as well as underpinning actions to promote improvement such as identifying and addressing underachievement.
- The governors play a very active role in the life and work of the school, including inviting co-ordinators to give presentations about their action plans and areas of responsibility. 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.
- 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, a group of year 6 and 7 children reported that they feel happy and secure in school knowing who to go to, both in school and on the board of governors, if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

St Colman's Primary 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, in particular how the teachers address the need to provide wider and more imaginative opportunities for extended writing in order to improve further the children's writing and research skills.

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