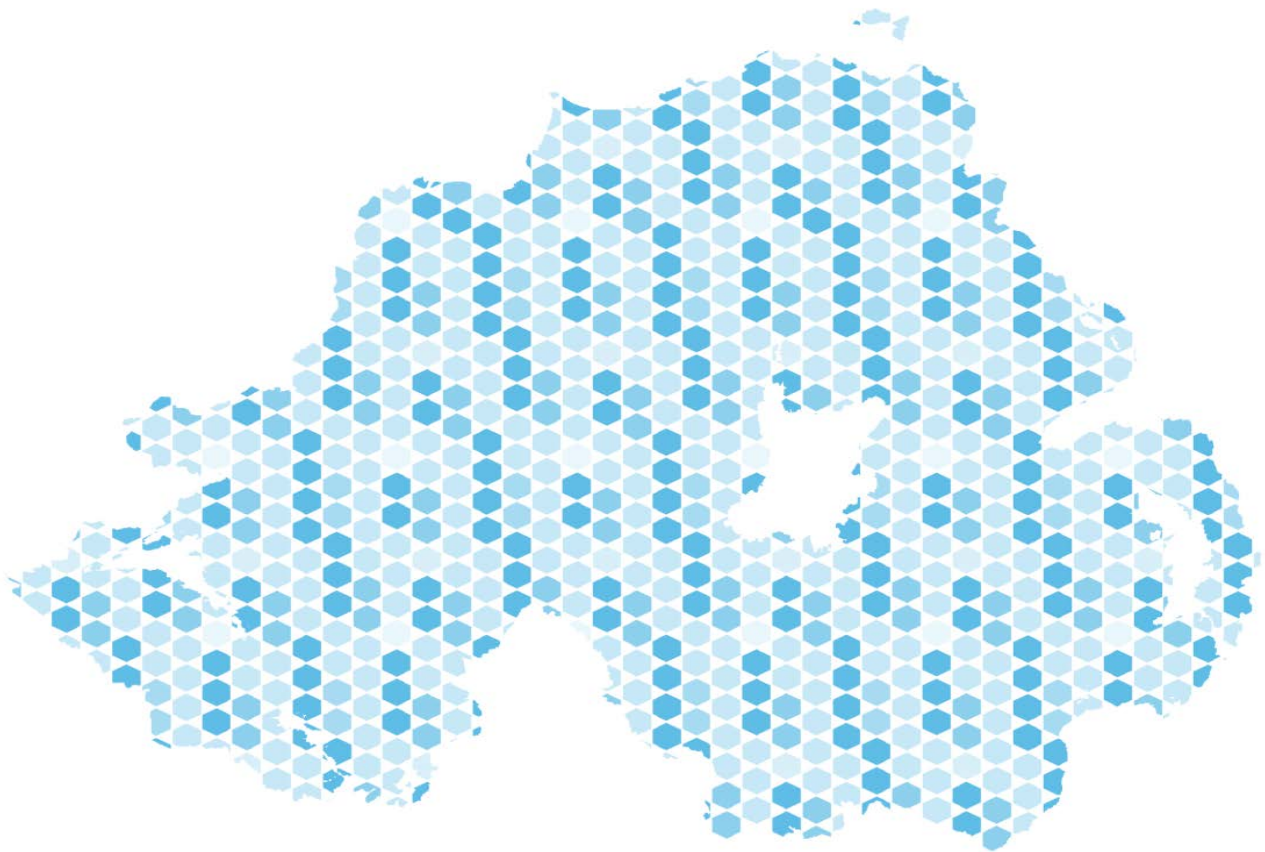


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Dymphna's Primary School,
Dromore, County Tyrone

Catholic Maintained, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in
January 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	4

APPENDICES

- A. Health and safety / accommodation (if required)
- B. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St Dympna's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in the village of Dromore, County Tyrone. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the village and the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has increased steadily over the past four years, consequently, the school operates at its capacity. Over the same period, the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has declined while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has remained stable. The school is designated a centre of excellence for the quality of its inclusion by an external provider.

St Dympna's Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	174	187	204	206
% School attendance	95.9	97.1	96.7	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	40	41	36	31
No. of children on SEN register	38	41	40	44
% of children on SEN register	22	22	20	21
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	9	8	11
No. of newcomer children	7	7	8	10

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

Almost nineteen percent of parents and 43% of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire were positive and the written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The parents indicated their support for the work of the school and how their children were happy and content and enjoyed their experiences in a safe, positive environment for learning. The responses to the confidential staff questionnaire highlighted a positive environment, effective working relationships and a collegial approach to work as key features of the school. The ETI has communicated to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main findings from the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum (and how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable);
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum; and
- quality of leadership and management.

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

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- Overall, the standards attained by the children are outstanding. Throughout the school, the children demonstrate very positive attitudes to literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). They engage readily in the challenging activities provided and work collaboratively in discussing strategies and sharing their ideas. Across the curriculum, the children listen to their peers, interact confidently and present their ideas logically and coherently. Their writing is extensive and almost all of the children demonstrate high levels of understanding of different forms of texts. From the foundation stage, the children use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary with increasing accuracy to articulate their thinking. By year seven, the most able children: read with fluency and expression; display excellent inferential understanding of their class novel; demonstrate a high level of mathematical competence; and are highly flexible in their thinking in numeracy. The presentation of all of the children's work is of a consistently high quality. Across the key stages, the children use ICT competently to extend their learning and, as a result, their skills are highly developed.
- The children make consistent progress in their learning, commensurate with or beyond the expected level, including those children requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. They acquire and build progressively a broad range of skills to become reflective learners so that by the end of key stage (KS) 2 they are well prepared for the transition to post-primary education.
- The children are highly motivated, display resilience and engage positively in their learning, consequently, they are able to apply their skills and knowledge when interacting with others. They develop confidence and self-esteem through participation in a comprehensive range of activities during class-work and the programme of after-school activities.

6. Quality of provision

- Opportunities for the children to consolidate and use their skills in mathematics and literacy across the curriculum are highly effective, particularly, through the thematic planning in the World Around Us. The well-informed, balanced curriculum integrates the areas of learning across the key stages and connects well the children's learning. The holistic development of the children is evidenced in, for example, physical education, where the extensive dance programme is linked to social, emotional and academic progress and to developing co-ordination, rhythm, memory, sequencing, and team work. The teachers use resources creatively and imaginatively to engage the children's interests and deepen their understanding.

- All of the teaching observed was good or better; almost two-thirds of the lessons were very good and outstanding. In the most effective practice, the teachers' planning responds to the specific needs of the children. The teachers' effective use of questioning promotes well the higher order thinking skills and the differentiated activities meet the specific needs of the children. The individual education plans, for those children requiring additional support with their learning, guide very well the work of the staff. The children's knowledge and understanding develop because of the very effective strategies to support their learning that is consolidated further by the work of the highly skilled team of classroom assistants.
- The very effective integration of literacy across the curriculum is a key strength of the provision. As they progress through the school, the children experience a broad range of texts and have regular opportunities to read for research, personal interest and pleasure. There is clear progression in literacy from year 1 to year 7 ensuring appropriate balance to the children's work in talking and listening, reading and writing for purpose.
- The holistic development of numeracy throughout the school provides meaningful contexts for the children to acquire mathematical skills and understanding. Activity-based learning is used very effectively to engage the children in challenging opportunities and develops well their mathematical thinking. The appropriate emphasis on mental mathematics, problem solving and investigation extends well the children's flexibility and application of skills.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The children's exemplary behaviour is reinforced with highly inclusive and effective classroom practices that enable the children to attain high quality outcomes.

7. Leadership and management

- The strategic leadership of the school is outstanding. There is a collegial approach to school improvement that is based on a clear, shared and child-centred vision. The senior leadership maintain a focus on high quality learning and teaching and uses a range of innovative approaches to build the capacity of all staff within the school. Leadership at all levels display a pastoral approach to the whole school community and work effectively to surmount challenges.
- The co-ordinators are highly effective in leading and managing their areas of responsibility. They: audit rigorously and systematically the provision; identify relevant priorities focused on raising standards; set clear targets in the action plans; monitor and evaluate improvements; and, provide very detailed feedback at individual and whole staff level.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

- The school improvement process is underpinned by a well-embedded culture of reflection and self-evaluation. The school community are consulted and contribute to the development planning process. The development priorities are very well informed by the thorough analysis of, and skilled use of, data to track, monitor and evaluate the children's progress and the quality of the actions to promote improvement. The development of leadership at all levels and the sharing of effective practice contributes significantly to whole school improvement.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

8. Overall effectiveness

St Dympna's Primary 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.

Health and safety

1. There is a need to review the secure access arrangements to the mobile classroom.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website, [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

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.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management²:

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 in 12 to 18 months.
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 in 18 to 24 months.

² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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