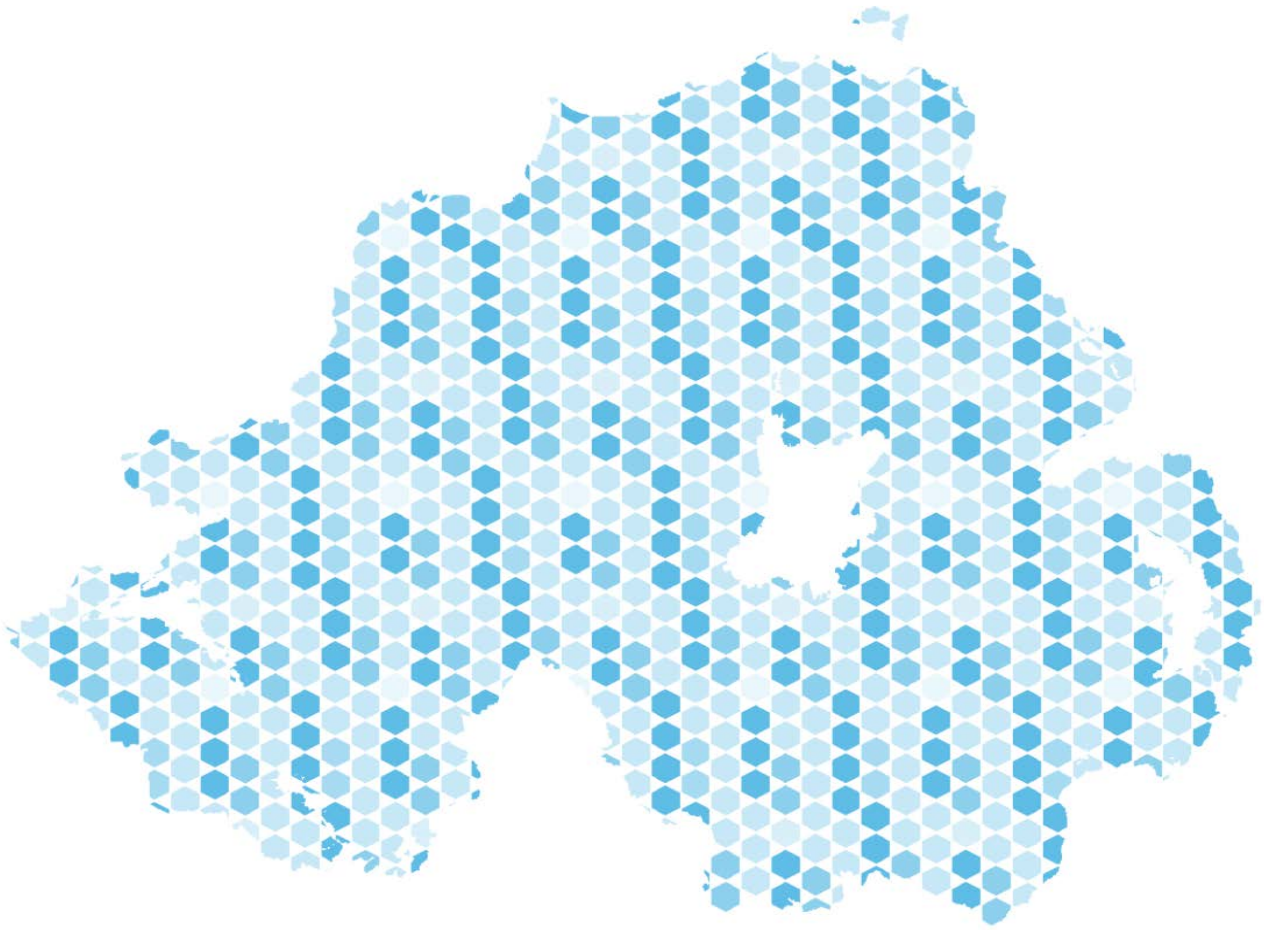


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School,
Strangford, County Down

Maintained, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in
December 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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 Achievements 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: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/together-towards-improvement-primary>.

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.

Forty-eight percent of parents responded to the questionnaire; these responses were wholly positive and revealed extremely high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their confidence in the principal, their appreciation of the commitment and enthusiasm of all the staff, the sense of community and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to the children. All of the teaching and non-teaching staff completed the questionnaire and were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the school. The staff emphasised the high level of support provided by the principal and the sense of collegiality, teamwork and community within the school. The ETI has discussed with the principal and the representatives of governors the views of the parents and staff and the very positive messages emerging from the written comments.

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; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St Joseph's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in the village of Strangford in County Down. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the immediate area. There has been a significant increase in enrolment in the school over the past four years, while the percentage of children entitled to free school meals and the proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has decreased over the same period. There have been significant changes in the staffing arrangements within the last two years; at the time of the inspection, the principal had been in post for just over one year and new teachers had been appointed to the foundation stage and key stage (KS) 2.

St Joseph's Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	40	43	49	58
% School attendance	97.6	97.2	96.6	97.2
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ^[1]	25	16.3	12.2	14.3
No. of children on SEN register	13	10	12	15
% of children on SEN register	32.5	23.3	24.5	23.2
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*

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	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- Across all key stages, the standards in numeracy are very good. The children display very high levels of engagement and enjoyment in their numeracy lessons. From the foundation stage, the children know and use mathematical language accurately and show flexibility in their mathematical thinking. By the time they reach KS2, the children use very well a wide range of mental mathematical strategies to find answers to problems and are able to articulate well their thinking and reasoning. The children across the school interact well with digital technology including programmable devices and tablets to support their learning; they are very competent in the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- The children's attitudes and dispositions towards learning are outstanding; they are highly motivated, work very effectively independently and with one another in pairs and small groups. The children's interactions with other children and with adults reveal very high levels of respect, kindness and consideration; their behaviour is excellent.

6. Provision for learning

- All of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective in promoting learning; most were very good or outstanding. These lessons were characterised by highly effective questioning, skilful differentiation and multi-sensory, active approaches which encouraged in-depth thinking and collaborative learning. The teachers' knowledge of the needs of individual children and the thorough analysis of the school's wide range of data are used

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

very effectively to inform the provision for learning, provide tailored support for individual children and track each child's progress. The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning benefit from excellent support including that provided by the highly skilled classroom assistants.

- The provision for numeracy is highly effective. The teachers model well for the children the effective use of mathematical language and through well-planned and challenging learning tasks, they develop well the children's abilities to clarify and articulate their thinking. The development of mental mathematics strategies are a prominent feature of numeracy lessons and are infused very well through the taught programme. Numeracy is developed well through connected learning experiences and the children benefit from frequent opportunities to consolidate their mathematical learning in the outdoor learning environment. Information and communication technology is integrated effectively to support and enrich the learning experiences, particularly in the area of handling-data.
- The provision for pastoral care is outstanding; it is highly effective in promoting the well-being of every child and in creating a very close-knit school community. The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy lifestyles; this is realised effectively through the curriculum, the wide range of sporting activities and effective engagement in initiatives with external partners. This work has been recognised by accredited awards over a sustained period of time.

7. Leadership and management

- The school leadership at all levels is underpinned by a strong sense of collegiality and a clear focus on meeting the needs of the children, enhancing their learning experiences and improving further their standards and achievements. The leadership is diligent, highly reflective and works tirelessly to promote further improvement. The staff have benefitted from a very good range of professional development opportunities which have enhanced their professional expertise and are impacting positively on learning and teaching. There is extensive evidence that the school is living out its vision statement, 'A school at the heart of the community, community at the heart of the school.' There are excellent levels of consultation and communication with the children and the parents and the leadership inspires the confidence of the wider school community.
- The school development plan¹ is well-informed by highly effective self-evaluation processes and excellent levels of consultation; it highlights clearly a range of appropriate priorities for further development and the associated action plans guide well the improvement work across the school. There are highly effective collaborative processes in place to monitor and evaluate regularly the outworking of the action plans.
- 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 governors bring a range of skills and expertise to their roles and play a key role in the school improvement process. They are very well informed about the work and life of the school, have established very effective working partnerships with the staff and are proactive in bringing about school improvement.

¹ The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- 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, children in KS2 reported that they are very happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

St Joseph'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.

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