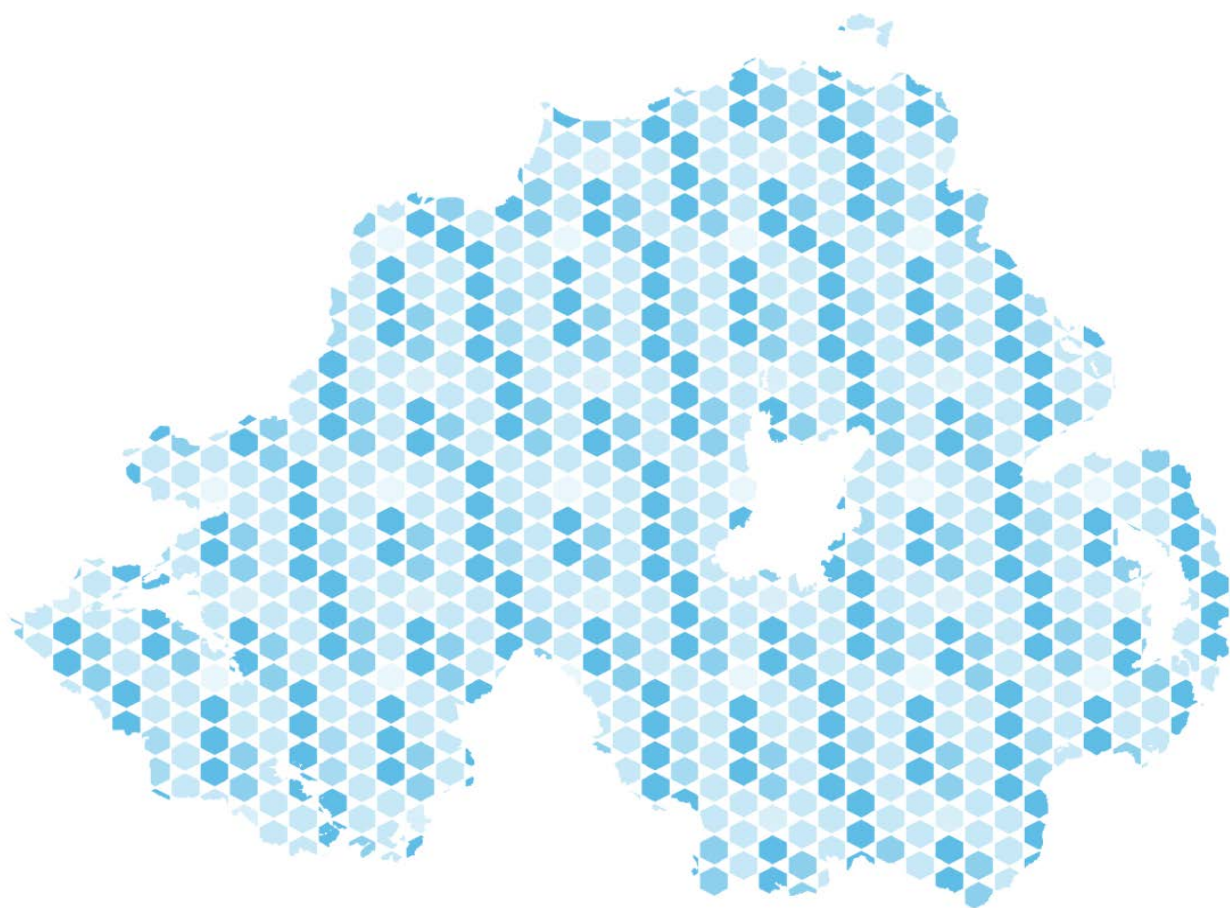


# PRIMARY INSPECTION 2015-16



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Primary School,  
Holywood, County Down

Report of an Inspection in  
October 2015

*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  
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## 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 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.

Sixteen percent of parents and 52% of staff (teaching and non-teaching) responded to the questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with most aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of, the hard working, committed and friendly staff, and the welcoming, caring ethos in the school. While there is evidence that the school regularly communicates with the parents and offers opportunities to support them in their work with their children on aspects of the curriculum, a small number of the parents indicated that they would welcome more information on how to help their children with their learning. Most of the teaching staff completed questionnaires and were mostly positive about their involvement in the life and work of the school; in particular, they highlighted their work with the children and their positive links with the parents. The ETI has reported to the acting-principal and representatives of the board of governors the main 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

St Patrick's Primary School is a maintained school situated on Church View in Holywood, County Down. The children attending the school come mainly from the town and surrounding area. The enrolment has increased steadily over the last four years. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals and the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning have both remained consistent over the same period.

St Patrick's Primary School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	256	263	278	287
% School attendance	94.7	95.3	96	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	10	11	16	12
No. of children on SEN register	62	60	61	57
% of children on SEN register	24.2	22.8	21.9	19.9
No. of children with statements of educational need	11	9	13	10
No. of newcomer children	19	26	26	26

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Very good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Important areas for improvement

### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children are confident, well-motivated learners and their behaviour is exemplary; they engage readily with their peers and are respectful towards the staff and visitors to the school. They settle quickly to their learning and respond positively to the activities provided by their teachers. Their work is presented to a high standard and is celebrated in attractive displays around the school. In a significant minority of the lessons observed, the children took on a variety of roles and responsibilities with confidence.
- The school's performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English and mathematics in line with or above expectation. The school recognises the need to use the assessment data available to provide additional challenge for the most able children to reach even higher standards.

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

- In the foundation stage, the younger children engage well in discussions about their learning and are willing 'to have a go' at early writing. In key stage (KS) 1, the children write across a range of styles; throughout KS2, their writing progresses steadily resulting in extended pieces of writing of a high standard.
- The children are articulate and communicate their ideas and opinions with increasing independence and extended vocabulary. By year 7, the children's acquisition of spoken and written English is of a very good standard. During the inspection, the year 7 children read with fluency and understanding and shared their knowledge of their favourite authors.
- The children have a positive attitude to mathematics. In the foundation stage, the children are developing a good knowledge and understanding of number, shape, time and measures. They use an appropriate range of mathematical games and resources to demonstrate and consolidate their learning. As the children progress through the school, their understanding is built upon effectively. By year 7, they use mathematical language confidently, are secure in their understanding of mathematical concepts and are able to demonstrate competently their application of a range of mathematical skills.
- The children use information and communication technology with a high level of confidence and competence using a range of resources, including hand-held devices, to support and enhance effectively their learning.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- Most of the learning and teaching observed was good or better. In the best practice, the teachers developed the children's suggestions and ideas, the lessons had good pace and challenge and the plenary was used well to evaluate the quality of the children's learning.
- The teachers have developed comprehensive planning which they use well to guide their day-to-day teaching. The planning includes a varied range of interesting activities and current topics that engage the children well in their learning. In the best practice, lessons build effectively upon the children's prior learning; they are well-structured and the learning is supported through the use of appropriate resources. In addition, learning is made more meaningful to the children through the use of real-life contexts. The children's language and understanding is developed well through the teachers' open-ended questioning. There is a need to develop further more purposeful evaluation of the planning and to ensure that the learning in each class is differentiated appropriately to meet more closely the abilities of all the children. While in a significant minority of lessons there are opportunities for the children to develop their thinking skills, this is inconsistent across the school: the effective practice needs to be disseminated and developed further in all classes.
- The children have regular opportunities for play-based learning in the foundation stage and KS1. The planning for the play programme indicates a range of topics and activities which the children enjoy. As the staff continue to develop further the play-based programme, it will be important to take greater account of the children's previous learning and ensure that there is appropriate progression in their learning across the curriculum.

- The small number of children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are supported well by staff who work diligently to provide appropriate interventions for the children within their classes. The targets on the individual education plans are reviewed regularly and shared with the children and their parents. In a significant minority of individual education plans, the targets are specific, measurable and are matched closely with well-considered strategies. The school has identified the need to appoint a co-ordinator for special educational needs in order to manage, monitor and track the progress and provision for the children with additional needs and, in consultation with the staff, use the data available to inform future support.
- At the time of the inspection, the whole-school programmes for literacy and numeracy were under review. The work undertaken to develop the provision has enabled the children to experience a good breadth and balance of learning activities. As the staff continue to develop the programmes, it will be important to ensure that there is a clear line of progression for all aspects of learning. In literacy, this includes progression in talking and listening and the further development of creative writing; and, in numeracy, it involves more challenging mental mathematics, investigative work and problem-solving activities.
- There is a strong sense of community with mutually respectful working relationships between the children and the staff evident throughout the school. The children benefit from involvement in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting, musical and other activities which encourage them to develop their talents as well as raising their confidence and self-esteem. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop the children's voice by putting in place a school council.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through the effective implementation of a healthy-eating policy, a healthy snack routine for the younger children, and additional physical activities which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- Since the beginning of the current academic year, the vice-principal has been acting as principal and will continue in this role until a newly-appointed principal takes up post.
- It will be important for the school to address shortcomings in the school development plan (SDP) and ensure that associated action plans have appropriate targets that are time-bound and link more effectively to the areas identified for further development. The school should consider adjusting the current SDP in light of the findings of the inspection.
- While there are a few examples of monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the co-ordinators, there is a need to distribute their responsibilities and develop further their roles to include more systematic and rigorous self-evaluation of each area of responsibility. As new co-ordinators take up post, it will be important that a programme of professional development supports them in their work.



- The school values and encourages the positive contribution that the parents make to support their children's education. There are effective arrangements for communicating with parents and involving them in the life and work of the school through initiatives, courses and social events. The school has effective working links with other local pre-school settings, primary and post-primary schools. In addition, links with businesses and external support agencies enhance further the range and quality of the children's learning.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The aspects of governance to review are to:
  - record more formally how the governors exercise their challenge function through gaining a greater understanding of all aspects of the life and work of the school; and
  - liaise with the co-ordinators to get a fuller understanding of their work and, in particular, how it contributes to improving the children's attainments.
- On the basis of the evidence, available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. However, the school's pastoral care policies require further review and updating to reflect more accurately the practices and the positive ethos in the school. ETI will revisit the school to undertake a review of child protection and safeguarding arrangements before the end of this academic year.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

The school needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are to:

- review the roles and responsibilities in the management structure to ensure there are sufficient co-ordinators to take forward the necessary improvements and to heighten their involvement in the school development planning process;
- to develop further the play-based curriculum to take more account of the children's previous learning and to ensure appropriate progression in the children's learning; and
- address the safeguarding arrangements outlined in the report.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a follow-up inspection in 12-18 months.

### Health and Safety / Accommodation

The senior management, the board of governors and the employing authority carried out an internal and external health and safety risk assessment of the school and the following areas that have been identified for improvement need to be addressed:

- inadequate provision for safe play within the staff parking areas;
- unsafe access to the playground from the roadside;
- an inadequate number of classrooms resulting in the library being used as a classroom; and
- insufficient space in classrooms since the recent development of class libraries.

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