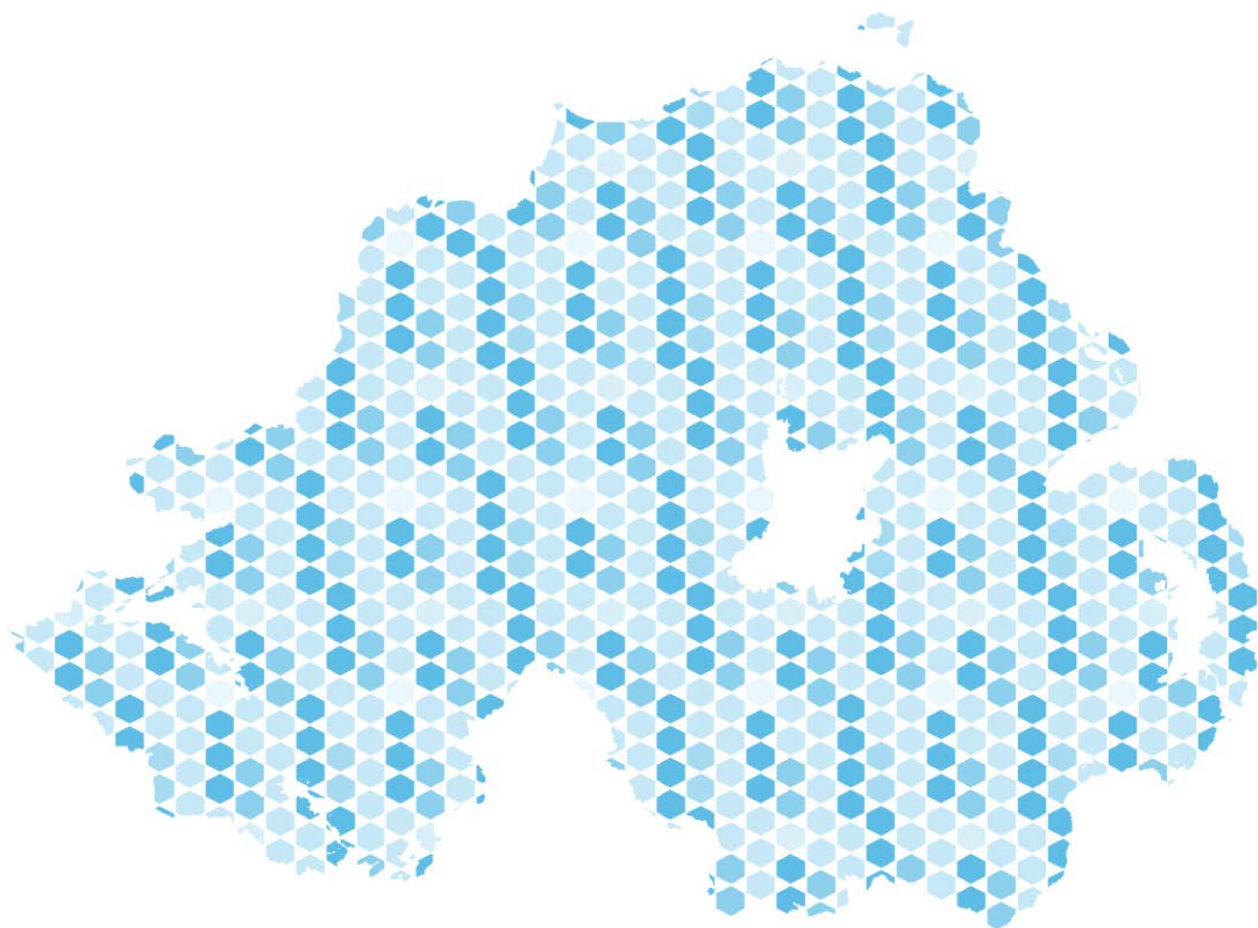


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Paul's Primary School,  
Ahoghill, County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in  
November 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.eti.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 a 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 percent of parents and most of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. Almost all of the parental responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents indicated their appreciation of the staff's commitment and dedication to both the educational and pastoral welfare of their children. A small number of parents highlighted concerns about aspects of homework. The responses of both teaching and non-teaching staff were very positive, and highlighted the inclusive and welcoming pastoral ethos in the school. A small number of staff recorded their concerns about the lack of space and resources for learning and teaching. 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 Paul's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in the outskirts of the village of Ahoghill. Most of the children attending the school come from the village and the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has increased significantly over the last two academic years and there has been an increase in the percentage of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning. At the time of inspection, an acting-principal had been appointed recently. An unannounced safeguarding inspection had taken place approximately five weeks prior to this inspection at which point safeguarding was evaluated as unsatisfactory. The school operates with three composite classes. A classroom within the school is leased to a pre-school playgroup which necessitates a key stage (KS) 2 class using the assembly hall as a classroom.

St Paul's Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	36	41	71	72
% School attendance	94.57	96.59	95.4	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	14%	17%	13%	21%
No. of children on SEN register	11	9	32	35
% of children on SEN register	31%	22%	44%	49%

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

N/A not available

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Requires urgent improvement

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- The children achieve good standards in literacy. They have good talking and listening skills; the children speak with confidence when debating and reading. Across the key stages, the children read to a good standard and, by year 7, the most able talk confidently about their reading preferences and their enjoyment of reading. In the foundation stage, the children are developing their understanding of phonics; they can apply this knowledge well within their reading. Overall, the children's knowledge of the writing types and their opportunities to write across the curriculum, including their use of information and communication technology (ICT), are limited.
- The children are courteous and are respectful of each other, their teachers and visitors and almost all are well behaved. They work well in small groups, engage well in their learning and show enthusiasm in their discussions and interactions with their peers.

#### 6. Provision for learning

- The quality of the planning, learning, teaching and assessment for learning is an important area for improvement. The quality of the lessons ranged from good to important areas for improvement; just over half of the lessons had important areas for improvement. In the less effective practice, the learning lacked challenge and, on occasion, the children became disengaged with the activities. The teachers' questions did not encourage the children to extend their answers and deepen their learning. In the minority of lessons evaluated as good, the learning was well planned and linked across the curriculum and, there were good opportunities for collaborative group work including peer evaluation of their work.

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

- The quality of the literacy and numeracy withdrawal support for the small groups of children is good and the children are guided effectively by the skilled classroom assistants. The classroom-based support, however, is not effective; there is inadequate differentiation for the wide and complex range of children's needs in these large groups. The current individual education plans do not ensure that the key areas of need are prioritised or that succinct targets and strategies are identified. Furthermore, the teaching areas used for the additional support groups are overcrowded resulting in distraction from, and disengagement in, learning for both mainstream children and those with additional learning needs.
- The provision for literacy includes a structured programme for the teaching of phonics from the foundation stage which is linked closely to the development of joined handwriting. Across the school, the teachers place a high priority on fostering an enjoyment of reading and there are well planned opportunities for developing the children's talking and listening skills through a good range of activities which are well-linked across the curriculum. There are insufficient opportunities for the children to develop a full range of writing types and produce more extended pieces of work. The development of independent writing skills in the foundation stage and KS1 is an important area for improvement.
- The school has a welcoming, caring ethos and there are positive working relationships amongst staff and between staff and the children. The year 7 children have good opportunities to take on roles of responsibility on the school council and in 'buddy' and mentoring roles.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The quality of the leadership and management requires urgent improvement. There is a lack of strategic planning and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the educational provision to ensure continuous improvement in the children's learning experiences and attainment.
- The school development plan, which is in the first year of the three-year cycle, has not been informed by evaluation of the previous plan or by consultation with relevant stakeholders. The associated action plans do not outline clearly the baseline position of the children's attainment, including the use of qualitative and quantitative data, and are not focused sufficiently on the children's learning outcomes.
- The management of the use of accommodation is not meeting the needs of all of the children enrolled in the school. The current accommodation arrangement for teaching the years 6 and 7 composite class in the assembly hall is impacting negatively on the quality of learning for the children. There is an urgent need for the leadership and management to resolve the current accommodation difficulties.
- The governors, whilst being committed to the school, need urgent guidance, and ongoing support in relation to their statutory responsibilities and how they should carry these out effectively. This includes:
  - developing clear lines of purposeful communication between the principal and governors;

- exercising an informed and constructive challenge function in relation to all aspects of school leadership and management; and
  - engaging actively in the identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the school's priorities for development and improvement.
- Based on the evidence at the time of this inspection, and the recent unannounced safeguarding inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. St Paul's Primary School is failing to provide its children with an acceptable standard of education due, in part, to the management of the school by the board of governors. In order to assist the governors to address the issues raised in this report, the ETI recommends that the Department of Education exercise its power under Article 14 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 to appoint additional voting members, with appropriate experience and expertise, to the board of governors.
  - There are shortcomings in the school's policy and practice relating to charges and remissions; there is a need to develop the policy and procedures for due diligence in the handling of all monies regarding school funds.
  - While most of the arrangements for safeguarding children have been reviewed in response to the recent unannounced safeguarding inspection; there are aspects of the school's arrangements that remain unsatisfactory and do not reflect adequately the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In particular there is a need:
    - to develop policies and safeguarding procedures for activities held outside of school hours;
    - for governors to complete safeguarding training for recruitment and selection; and
    - the designated and deputy designated teachers need to attend updated child protection training.

In discussions with the inspectors, the children in years 5, 6 and 7 reported that they are happy and secure in school, and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

- It will be important that the employing authority, the school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and staff.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

St Paul's Primary School needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

The areas for improvement are to:

- review the roles, responsibilities and practice of strategic leadership at all levels;
- address the unsatisfactory safeguarding arrangements outlined in the report;
- develop robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of planning, learning and teaching and assessment to improve further the progression and outcomes for the children; and
- address urgently the deficits in, and the poor management and use of, the accommodation to meet effectively the needs of the children.

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.

The ETI will return again to the school within six weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the remaining safeguarding issues.



**Health and Safety / Accommodation**

1. There are significant deficits in the school's accommodation which is having a negative impact on the learning opportunities of the children, including the children's ICT skills.

## **ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF ST PAUL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, FEBRUARY 2017**

### **SAFEGUARDING**

In line with the child protection/safeguarding procedures of the Education and Training Inspectorate, the ETI returned to the school on 1 February 2017.

The purpose of the visit was to ensure that the safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory at the time of the inspection, had been addressed.

On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements now reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

During the interim period, the school had received support from the Child Protection School Support Service and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

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