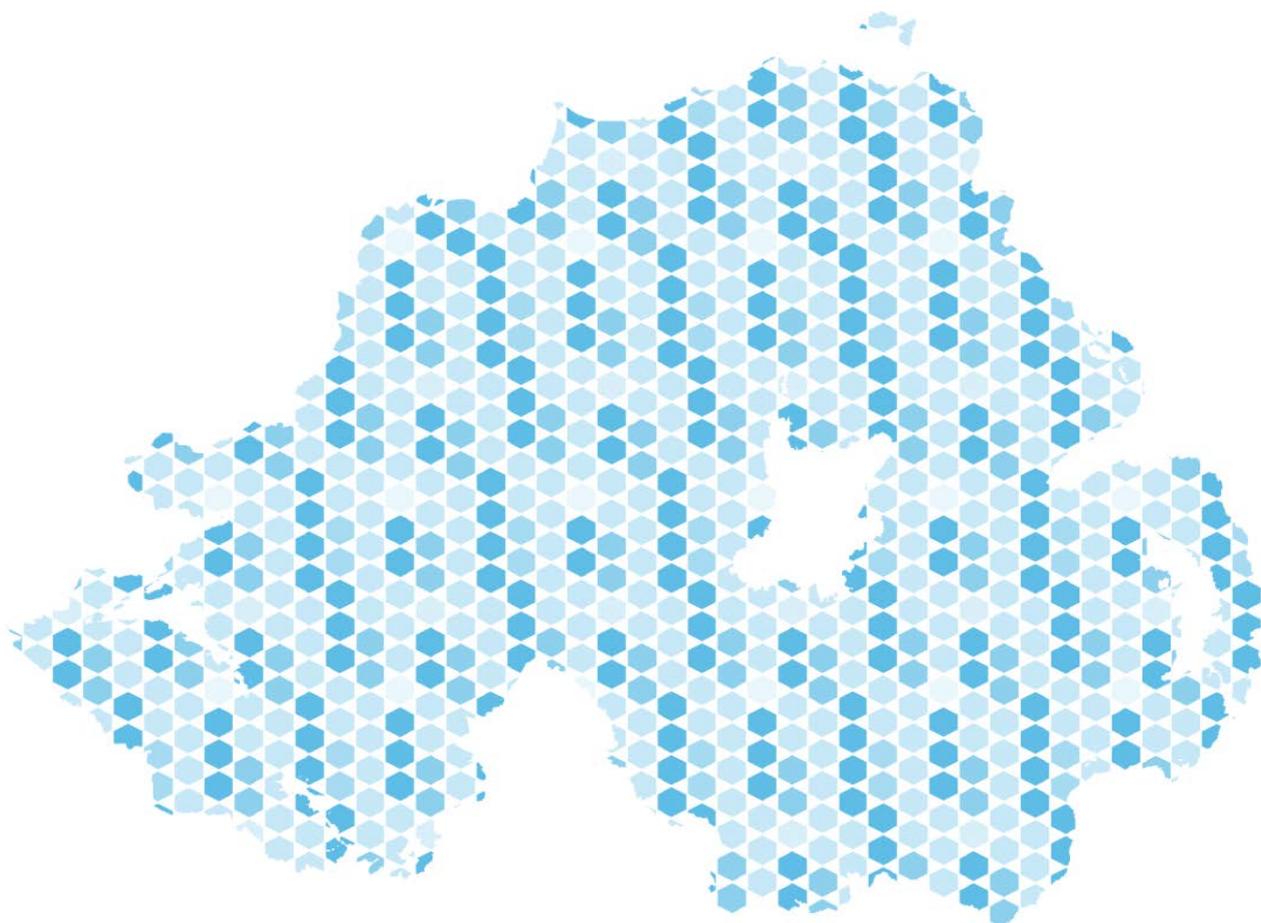


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Derrychrin Primary School,  
Cookstown, County Tyrone

Maintained, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in  
September 2016

## 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 a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Forty-three percent of parents responded to the questionnaire; these responses revealed extremely high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the effective leadership of the principal, the dedication and enthusiasm of all the staff and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. The parents emphasised how happy their children are at school. All of the teaching and non-teaching staff completed the questionnaire and were highly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the school. They emphasised the supportive and happy atmosphere in which they work and the sense of collegiality and community within the school. The ETI has reported to the principal and the chair of the board of governors the views of the parents and staff and the small number of issues 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 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**

Derrychrin Primary School is a maintained primary school situated near Coagh in County Tyrone. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the immediate area. The enrolment has risen in recent years, while the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has remained steady over the past four years and the proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has increased slightly. There have been significant changes in the staffing arrangements; in the 2015-2016 academic year, half of the teaching staff joined the school and a number of staff were appointed to key leadership roles.

Derrychrin Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	112	122	148	159
% School attendance	96	96.5	96.2	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	24	21	23	23
No. of children on SEN register	12	13	17	18
% of children on SEN register	10.4	10.0	11.5	11.3
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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Very good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Very good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Very good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- Across all key stages, the standards in literacy are very good. The children display very good skills in talking and listening, interacting confidently with their peers in small groups, pairs and whole class to share ideas, feelings and opinions. In the foundation stage, the children talk enthusiastically about their activities and their books. As they progress through the school, the children use their talking, listening and thinking skills very effectively to improve their learning and written work. During the inspection, children from years 6 and 7 read with expression and fluency; they demonstrated a very good understanding of books, talking with enthusiasm about the material they are reading and their favourite authors. As they move through the key stages, the children exhibit an increasing awareness and understanding of the particular features of various forms of writing, including poetry. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively by the children in the planning and development of their written work.
- The children's attitudes and dispositions towards learning are outstanding; they reveal very high levels of motivation, perseverance and self-management and their behaviour is excellent. The children's interactions with one another, staff and visitors demonstrate very high levels of courtesy, kindness and respect.

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

## **6. Provision for learning**

- All of the lessons observed during the inspection were of a good quality or better and were effective in developing the children's skills, deepening their knowledge and progressing their understanding; one third of the lessons observed were outstanding. The highly effective practice was characterised by detailed planning, active learning tasks which promoted thinking and problem-solving and connected learning opportunities which resulted in meaningful, relevant and highly enjoyable learning for the children. The teachers' classroom observations and the thorough analysis of the school's internal assessment data are used very effectively to inform the provision for learning and track each child's progress.
- The quality of the provision for literacy, including the use of ICT, is very good. The planning for literacy guides well the development of reading, writing, talking and listening and is enabling the children to progress well through the key stages. In particular, thematic planning is providing purposeful and meaningful opportunities for the development of the children's literacy skills; literacy experiences set in the context of the local environment are particularly enriching. A high priority is placed on the development of the children's reading and, through an emphasis on inferential comprehension and well developed opportunities for talking and listening, higher level thinking skills. The children are provided with very good opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences across the curriculum, including creative and poetic writing. The provision for children with special education needs is very good. The individual education plans guide well the additional support required. The additional support provided within the classroom by the teachers and the classroom assistants is very effective and this enables the children to progress well with their learning.
- The quality of the pastoral care of the children is outstanding; there is a very strong sense of community and a very caring, inclusive and supportive ethos throughout the school. There are excellent working relationships across the wider school community and the staff team work energetically and tirelessly to support the individual needs of the children in their care.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership at all levels is characterised by a strong sense of collegiality and teamwork and is focused clearly on creating a school community where improving further the well-being, learning experiences and outcomes for every child, is paramount. The principal leads by example; he inspires the confidence and respect of the staff, children, parents and governors. The senior leadership team and staff have been highly effective in managing significant change whilst ensuring that the provision for learning and the standards achieved by the children remain consistently high. Continuous professional development is afforded a high priority by the school leadership and the staff benefit from access to a range of internal and external development opportunities which enhance their professional expertise and impact positively on the children's learning experiences.

- The co-ordinators for literacy and special needs, in the relatively short time they have been in post, have made good progress in bringing about improvement in their respective areas of responsibility. Using a range of first-hand evidence, they are developing well their capacity to monitor and evaluate the provision for learning and the children's standards and are well-supported by their colleagues in this work.
- The school development plan<sup>2</sup> is well-informed by effective self-evaluation processes and good levels of consultation; it highlights clearly a range of appropriate priorities for development and the associated action plans guide well the improvement work across the school; there are very good, collaborative processes in place to monitor and evaluate the outworking of the action plans.
- The school has developed comprehensive links with the local and wider community which extend and enrich the children's learning. There are very effective arrangements in place for consulting with parents, involving them in the work and life of the school and developing further their skills to support their child's learning. The well-established links with local primary and post-primary schools and businesses have benefited the children's learning and development.
- 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 are very well informed about the work and life of the school, they have established effective working partnerships with the staff and the parents and play an integral role in the school improvement process.
- 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 key stage 2 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**

Derrychrin 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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<sup>2</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

**Accommodation**

1. While the school is using well the available accommodation, the space in the mobile classrooms is limited and insufficient for meeting effectively the learning needs of the children and the current arrangement, whereby some children access outdoor toilet facilities, is unacceptable.

**Health and Safety**

1. While the principal and staff are active in overseeing the access arrangements to the school, the increasing volume of cars turning in the playground, particularly at the end of the day, could potentially compromise the safety of the children; this situation needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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