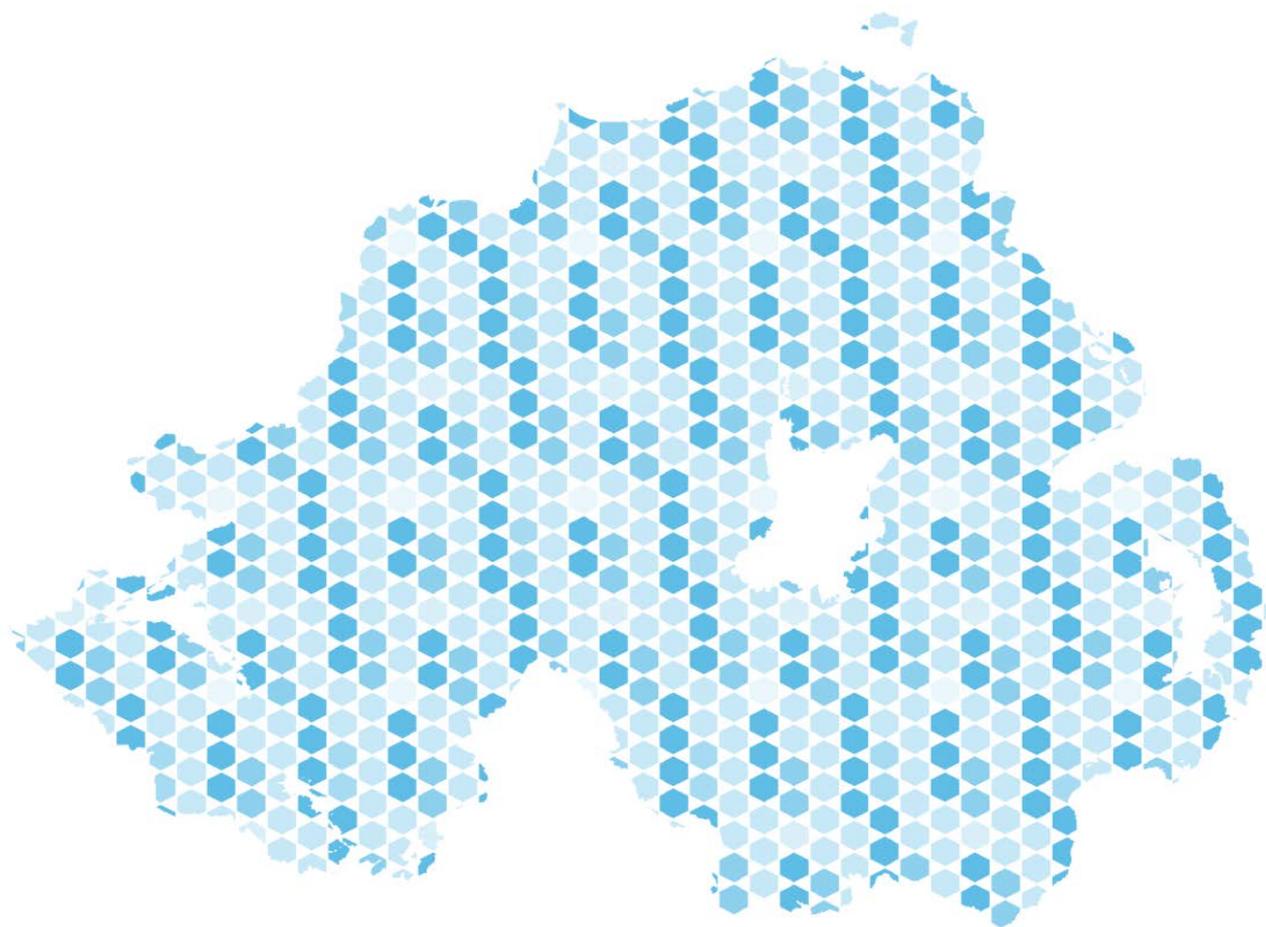


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Conor's Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Omagh,
County Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
February 2016

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

Nine percent of parents and a majority of staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses expressed very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular, parents praised the welcoming, inclusive ethos of the school; the effective communication on all levels and the tireless efforts of the staff to improve continuously the children's learning experiences. All of the staff responses were wholly affirmative highlighting the effective leadership of the principal, the positive working relationships in the school and the high level support and commitment from parents. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors on the questionnaires and the discussions; no significant issues were raised.

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 including the nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

St Conor's Primary School is a co-educational maintained primary school situated on a spacious site on the western outskirts of Omagh. The school has a nursery unit within the school grounds. Most of the children attend from the neighbouring housing developments. The enrolment has risen slightly over the past four years and the school is operating at almost full capacity. In the same period there has been a small increase in the number of children on the special needs register and the number of children entitled to free school meals. The school prides itself on its inclusive ethos evidenced by the award of the Inclusion Quality Mark UK, its International Schools' status and being awarded the Eco-school Green Flag for the second time. The school is currently involved in the Cross Phase Literacy/Numeracy Project and is linked with a local post-primary school.

St Conor's Primary School and Nursery Unit	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	377	372	382	387
Nursery Unit	52	52	52	52
% School attendance	96	96	95	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	29	30	36	34
No. of children on SEN register	83	86	99	104
% of children on SEN register	22	23	26	27
No. of children with statements of educational need	16	18	16	16
No. of newcomer children	5	12	18	22

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	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Nursery Unit	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

- The children in the primary school and in the nursery unit have a positive disposition to their learning and are highly motivated to achieve the highest standards. They co-operate and communicate maturely with their peers and with adults. The children's thinking skills and personal capabilities are developing well; they take increasing levels of responsibility for important aspects of school life as they progress through the key stages. They are proud of their school and their many successes and share their work confidently with visitors. Throughout the school, the children are friendly and helpful and their behaviour is exemplary.
- 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 mathematics in line with their ability or above expectation. Most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in English in line with their ability or above expectation.

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

- By the end of key stage 1 almost all of the children are reading at a level in line with their ability. By the end of key stage 2 the children read with an expressiveness that indicates comprehension of an empathetic nature which extends their reading competence further. In all classes and in the nursery unit, almost all of the children are articulate in their learning interactions; they use a widening range of more complex vocabulary and extended sentences to communicate their ideas and understanding clearly. Almost all of the children respond positively and with enthusiasm to the high quality cross-curricular opportunities to write in extended, creative and well-researched ways. They present their written work neatly in line with the teachers' high expectations.
- From an early stage, the children use mathematical terms accurately and confidently. They demonstrate a deepening understanding of key mathematical concepts and how these apply in various contexts including occupations, for example, in their learning through play. The children in year 7 are flexible in their mathematical thinking. When presented with challenging problem solving activities, they are capable of using a range of mental mathematical strategies flexibly and can explain how they apply their knowledge and understanding of numeracy in other areas of the curriculum.
- The children who require additional help with aspects of their learning, including in the nursery unit, are engaged fully in all aspects of school life to become confident learners who make continuous improvement in their learning and all-round development. The school's internal data and tracking processes show that the number of children who require support in each year group decreases significantly as they progress through the school.
- Almost all of the children in the nursery unit are very well settled and show high levels of curiosity, confidence and independence. They become immersed in purposeful and concentrated play and in the thoughtfully planned activities, often producing representational work of a high standard. The children like browsing through the wide range of available books and listen attentively to individual and group stories. In the imaginative role play area, they engage readily with their peers and act out scenarios linked to the current theme.
- The children demonstrate a very good level of competence in ICT and use a range of programmes and devices effectively to enhance their learning and present their ideas in digital form; for example, in mathematical investigations, desktop publishing and animations. The electronic portfolios of their work show clear progression in their ICT skills as they move up through the school.

6. Provision for learning

- In the nursery unit and in the primary school, the planning is highly detailed and progressive and guides effectively the work of the staff with the children. The planning is well-informed through observing and assessing closely the progress the children make in their learning. The systematic and thorough analysis of data and the teachers' and classroom assistants' detailed evaluations build well on the children's prior progress to extend their learning further.

- All of the lessons observed were good or better; almost three-quarters were very good or outstanding. Teachers communicate their high expectations to motivate the children and use thoughtfully a complementary blend of strategies including skilful open questioning to meet the children's needs and to connect the learning with everyday life contexts. The teachers use the plenary sessions well to assess the children's understanding of the concepts covered and provide age-appropriate opportunities for the children to self and peer-assess aspects of their knowledge and understanding.
- Reading, including for information, is taught as an explicit skill which transfers naturally and effectively across the curriculum; this includes purposeful opportunities for the year 7 children to help the younger children with their reading skills. Throughout the school the children experience an effective blend of teaching approaches to reading, writing, talking and listening and have regular opportunities to read for research, personal interest and pleasure.
- The children progress systematically in their understanding of numeracy concepts. Effective questioning supports the focus on the practical application of mathematics; the children are invited to investigate and explore possible solutions to appropriately-challenging, realistic problems. There are regular, planned activities for practising mental mathematics strategies and meaningful incidental opportunities to apply these skills in wider aspects of school life.
- The children who require additional support with their learning benefit from high quality interventions in literacy and numeracy which meet effectively their individual needs. The skilled classroom assistants are involved purposefully in monitoring and reviewing the impact of the planned support strategies on the children's learning. The ongoing improvement and evaluation of the provision, enhances the children's outcomes and enables them to progress successfully to the next stage in their learning.
- The nursery staff promote learning very effectively across all areas of the pre-school curriculum in the thoughtfully presented learning environment. The staff interactions with the children are of a consistently high quality; the staff build continually on the children's responses to extend their thinking and observation skills. The promotion of the children's personal, social, emotional and language development and the World Around Us are particular strengths.
- The quality of the provision for pastoral care is outstanding. This is planned for very effectively and is evident in the inclusive, child-centred and respectful ethos which permeates the entire school's provision. The consistent, whole school approach to promoting and rewarding positive behaviour supports the children in developing their resilience as well as raising their confidence and self-esteem. In discussions with the inspection team, the children highlighted their contribution to making constructive changes to the school through their participation in the school council, the Eco council and being playground buddies and mentors for the younger children.
- The school and the nursery unit promote healthy eating and physical activity very well thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

7. Leadership and management

- The inspiring and highly effective senior leadership team leads by example in setting high expectations for the work of the school, and the nursery unit, in meeting the needs of the children. The leadership is well supported by governors, staff and parents in developing a clear strategic vision for continuous improvement through the well-embedded culture of self-evaluation. The middle leadership is highly skilled in ensuring their curricular areas are delivered to a high standard by all staff.
- The school development plan² and the school's rigorous consultative and communication processes with all stakeholders are highly effective. The staff make adept use of detailed internal and external data to determine and inform well-focused action plans. Staff development needs are identified through the careful analysis of the teachers' self-evaluation of teaching and learning.
- The school has comprehensive and effective links and partnerships with the parents and the wider community which enrich and extend the children's learning experiences. For example, the school's approaches to literacy and numeracy are enhanced further through the important links with a local post-primary school. The staff value the parents as partners in developing their children's learning and encourage their participation in all school events and programmes. There are appropriate procedures in place to keep parents informed about their child's progress and all aspects of school life.
- The governors collaborate effectively with the principal and staff in developing school improvement; they support and challenge thoroughly and thoughtfully the progress of the action plans and the information about the standards which the children achieve. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and the nursery unit have comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 reported that they feel very happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

St Conor's Primary School and Nursery Unit 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.

² The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

Health and Safety

1. There is a need to complete a risk assessment of the access points to the school grounds.

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