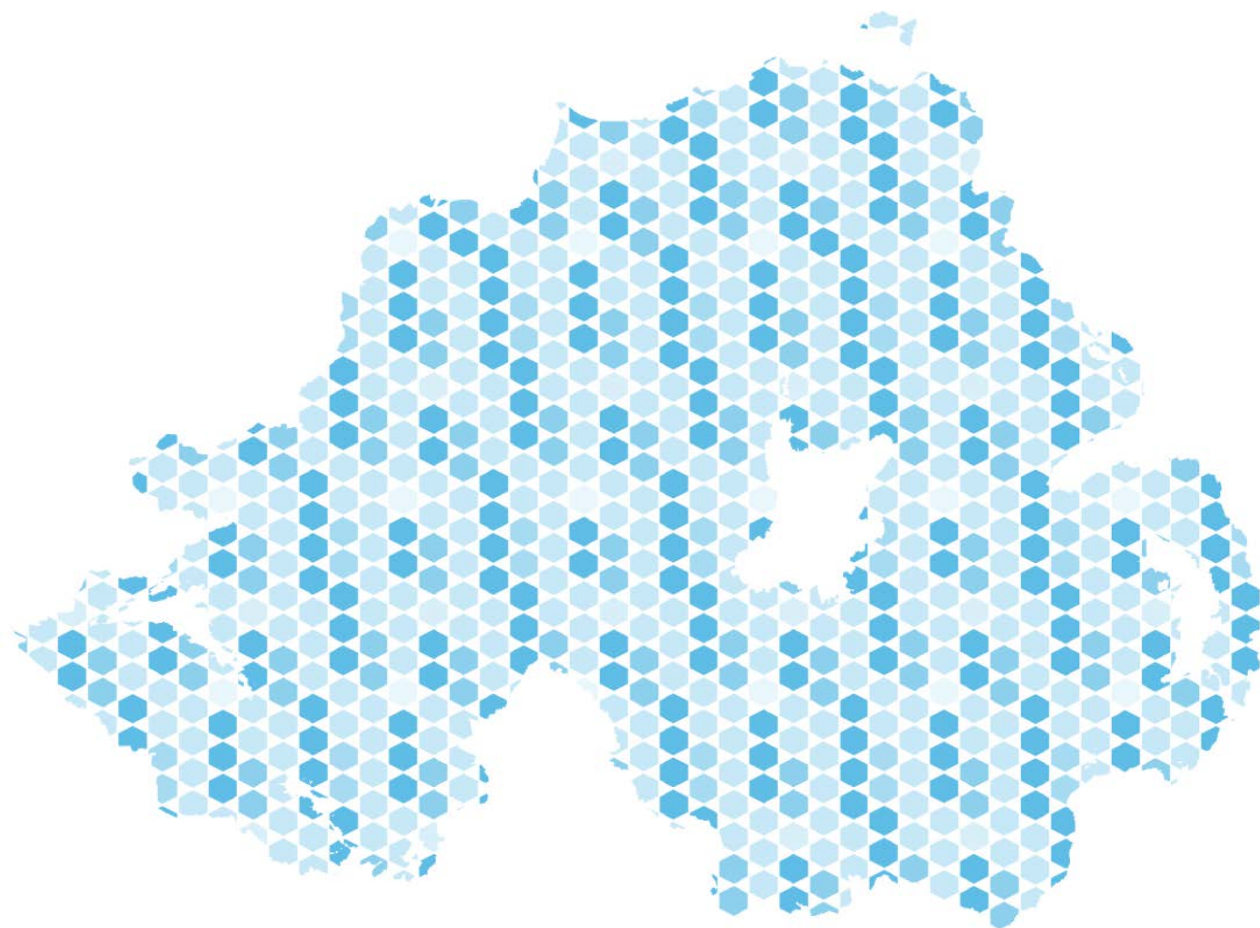


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Holy Trinity Primary School and  
Learning Support Centre,  
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in  
April 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 representatives from the board of governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Eighteen percent of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. Their responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted: their appreciation of the approachable, hard-working and caring staff; the high expectations of the staff for the children's learning; and the strong leadership at all levels. Eighty-four percent of the staff (teaching and non-teaching) completed the confidential questionnaire; their responses were extremely positive. They emphasised: the many opportunities for professional development; the good quality of the working relationships across the school; the supportive, collegial ethos across the year groups; the strong links with the parents and the wider community; and the effectiveness of the senior leadership team. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the nature of all of the views expressed in the parental and staff confidential 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, including the learning support centre (LSC); and
- quality of leadership and management.

## **3. Context**

Holy Trinity Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in the neighbourhood renewal area of Upper Springfield in West Belfast. In addition to the mainstream classes and nurture unit, the school has an integrated learning support centre (LSC) with five classes, including a class for children with hearing impairments. Approximately one-half of

the children attending the school come from the immediate area and the rest from the surrounding area. The enrolment is steady and the school operates at maximum capacity. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has increased slightly in the past four years while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has remained constant. The school holds two ICT awards, the Eco Schools award and an award in recognition of the school's positive and nurturing ethos and practice. The school is involved in a Shared Education e-learning partnership with a controlled school and has numerous links with local and global education partners; these links have enabled the school to achieve the International School Award.

Holy Trinity Primary School Belfast	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	602	617	596	593
Enrolment in the LSC	34	37	41	43
% School attendance	92	95	94	N/A
% NI Primary school average	94.9	95.6	95.4	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	65.9	69.3	72.8	72
No. of children on SEN register	222	222	228	222
% of children on SEN register	35	34	35.8	34.9
No. of children with statements of educational need including the LSC	46	51	53	62

**Source:** data as held by the school.  
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
<b>Learning Support Centre</b>	Very good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- All of the children, including those in the LSC, develop positive attitudes and dispositions to learning. They are articulate, friendly and mannerly; their behaviour is exemplary. They are motivated and settle quickly to their work. Across all key stages, they respond well to the learning activities which develop effectively and progressively their thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- 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 achieve in line with their ability or above expectation. In mathematics, most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress and achieve in line with their ability or above expectation.

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

- The children achieve very good standards in literacy. When given the opportunity, almost all engage willingly in group and whole-class discussions and speak with confidence about their learning. As they progress through the school, the children write for meaningful purposes across a wide range of genres and they plan, draft and edit their work with increasing competence and accuracy. Almost all of the children present their work to a high standard. Throughout the school, the children develop systematically a range of reading strategies and have a positive attitude to reading. By year 7, the most able read with fluency and talk confidently about the material they are reading and their favourite authors.
- The children achieve very good standards in numeracy. In the foundation stage, most of the children are able to count, sort and match a variety of materials and are developing a sound understanding of number which is consolidated well through games and play-based learning activities. In key stage 2 the children have opportunities to develop positive attitudes towards the STEM<sup>2</sup> subjects which help them gain useful knowledge about careers in these subjects. By year 7, the most able children are able to read and interpret mathematical questions and demonstrate flexibility in their thinking to solve problems. They use and apply a wide range of mental mathematical strategies with confidence.
- The children in the learning support centre (LSC) take pride in their work in literacy and numeracy; the presentation and quality of the work in their books is consistently high. The school's performance data shows that most of the children in the LSC make progress in English in line with their ability or above expectation. In mathematics, a majority attain standards in line with their ability or above expectation. As a result of the well-planned programmes to support the children's physical, emotional and social development, they acquire and develop further their gross and fine motor skills, communication skills and the confidence to work effectively with others.
- The children develop their skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) as they progress through the school so that, by year 7, they achieve very good standards. They are confident and competent in using appropriately a wide range of ICT devices and applications to enhance their learning.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- The teachers collaborate well to prepare detailed long- and medium-term plans to guide the work of the children. In the best practice, the short-term planning is tailored sufficiently to meet the needs of all the children within the class and the teachers' regular evaluations of the planning guide well the next steps in learning and teaching. This best practice should be disseminated more widely across the school to encourage the teachers to focus more clearly their evaluations on the extent to which learning has been successful and to use more consistently the evaluations to inform and improve future planning.

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<sup>2</sup> STEM refers to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

- Almost all of the lessons observed were good or better and were effective at promoting successful learning, with just over one-half being very good or outstanding. In the most effective practice, the lessons were set within meaningful real life contexts and resources were used well to support the children's understanding. The teachers make skilful use of effective questioning to extend the children's thinking, consolidate the learning and develop their oral skills. The classroom assistants provide effective support for the children's learning and social skills. In the less effective practice, the lessons lacked pace and the activities did not provide sufficient challenge.
- The school's performance data, including pastoral information, is used well, particularly at class and year group level, to inform the provision and to tailor provision to address the social, emotional and educational needs of the children. Learning targets are being identified for each child by the class teachers; more work is needed to engage the children meaningfully, including those who require additional support with their learning, and their parents in this process. The children's work is marked regularly and supportively and, in the best practice, gives them useful guidance on what they can do to improve their work.
- The planning for literacy is comprehensive and guides well the progressive development of the children's skills in reading, writing, talking and listening. The opportunities for writing are varied, well-planned and integrated meaningfully across other areas of the curriculum through a range of topics of interest to the children. The teachers, in most of the classes, develop well the children's talking and listening skills through group and paired work and through their skilful questioning, which encourages the children to give extended responses and explain their thinking. It will be important to review the planning for literacy in the foundation stage to provide more effective opportunities for the children to develop their talking and listening skills across a range of situations. The school's reading programme is systematic and is used well, in conjunction with a wide range of stimulating reading materials and digital resources, to extend the children's skills and enjoyment of reading.
- The long-term planning for numeracy outlines clearly appropriate progression in knowledge and skills across each year group and provides useful guidance for the class teachers to create medium and short-term plans. In the most effective numeracy provision, in a majority of lessons observed, the work was matched well to the ability of each child, with active, suitably structured, fun activities. The teachers assess skilfully the children's understanding and challenge their thinking. There are well-planned learning activities, which include engaging introductions to lessons and opportunities to review prior learning and to develop the children's problem-solving and reasoning skills. The children have regular opportunities to use and apply their numeracy facts, and to make meaningful connections with other areas of the curriculum.
- There are well-established processes for the early identification of the learning needs of the children. The sound knowledge of the teachers of the social, emotional and educational needs of the children informs the effective intervention programme of withdrawal and in-class support, complemented by liaison with relevant external agencies, for those who require additional help with aspects of their learning. The detailed individual education plans include practical information, not only on the nature of the children's needs, but also on their interests and abilities. Almost all of the targets are realistic and clear, enabling progress to be measured and celebrated.

- The quality of provision in the learning support centre is very good. All of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective, with a majority being highly effective in promoting the children's learning. In these lessons, the classroom assistants work skilfully in co-operation with the teachers to engage the children and help them overcome barriers to their learning. The ethos in all of the classes is calm and supportive. The children's impeccable behaviour is underpinned by the consistent use of positive behaviour strategies by the teachers based on an ethos of mutual respect. The arrangements for the children's integration with other learning support and mainstream classes are well-conceived and sensitive; they take into account the needs and abilities of individuals and enable the children to play, learn and perform alongside their peers.
- The pastoral care provision is highly effective in supporting the children, meeting their personal, social and emotional needs and promoting the well-being of staff and parents. The members of the school community work together harmoniously to create a very caring, nurturing and inclusive learning environment which is clearly child-centred and characterised by mutually respectful and supportive working relationships. The children are given frequent opportunities to express their views and ideas; they do so confidently in class and through the very effective eco- and pupil- councils, which play an important role in developing school policies and practices and bringing about improvements to aspects of the school's provision, such as the reward systems and lunchtime arrangements. There is a clear focus on holistic and preventative education through programmes which promote personal and e-safety, develop the children's resilience and raise their aspirations. The children benefit from access to a very wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities including STEM activities and those provided by business and university partners; these activities develop very well the children's skills, interests and confidence.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity by encouraging the children to eat healthily through, for example, the promotion of healthy snacks.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The senior leadership has developed a supportive ethos throughout the school for the children and the staff, adopting a collaborative approach to the co-ordination of all areas of learning. This team-working, including with external agencies, ensures the wide range of significant and complex needs of some of the children are met well, with appropriate cognisance also being taken of the pastoral needs of the staff. Continuing professional development is a key priority within the school; the teaching and support staff engage in numerous development opportunities which are aligned closely to the priorities identified in the school development plan (SDP). The leadership at all levels are committed fully to enhancing provision to ensure the children progress in their learning; there is clear evidence that this work is improving the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards they attain.



- A comprehensive SDP<sup>3</sup> and associated curricular and pastoral action plans are informed by the needs of the children, detailed analysis of a range of internal performance data, and highly effective consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors. The key co-ordinators are effective in leading and managing their areas of responsibility and are developing well a range of monitoring and evaluation practices to support ongoing development work and to continue to improve further the standards attained by all of the children. They have identified appropriately the need to develop further the action planning process to ensure that the targets in the action plans are specific and measurable.
- The school has developed a very comprehensive range of links with the local and wider community which enrich and extend the children's learning. There are 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 the children's learning. The school is involved in a number of cluster groups of local primary and post-primary schools which meet regularly to share good practice.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are involved actively in the school development planning process and provide an appropriate support and challenge function in relation to the areas of achievements and standards, finance and provision for learning.
- 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, the children reported that they feel safe at school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. The children spoke confidently about their involvement in all aspects of school life.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Holy Trinity Primary School and Learning Support Centre 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>3</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010 but needs to be published on the school website so as it is accessible to parents and other stakeholders

**Health and Safety**

1. The governors and principal need to review the procedures for securing the gate accesses to the school grounds immediately after the start of the school day.
2. Some of the doors in the classrooms do not have visibility panels.

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