

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**



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Wheatfield Primary School
Belfast**

October 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF WHEATFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELFAST, CO ANTRIM, BT14 7JE (101-6532)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection of Wheatfield Primary School on 12 March 2013 when the quality of the education was evaluated as inadequate. The inspection team identified the need to:

- raise the children's standards of achievement in literacy and numeracy;
- improve the quality of the learning and teaching; and
- review the school's approaches to the teaching of reading to ensure that the children acquire the requisite reading skills to equip them to progress successfully to the next stage of their education.

The school entered the formal intervention process on 16 April 2013. The post-inspection action plan was received by the Department of Education (DE) in September 2013. The DE acknowledged the positive response that the school had made, and planned to make, regarding the areas for improvement identified in the follow-up report. The action plan for literacy was adjusted following advice from the ETI.

In the interval since the follow-up inspection, the school received support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) in developing aspects of the school's provision for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs, and leadership and management. The principal and chair of governors reported that they were very content with the support provided by the BELB.

The ETI carried out two interim follow-up visits in January 2014 and June 2014, and a follow-up inspection on 16 and 17 October 2014. At this time, enrolment remains steady at 147, with 72% of children entitled to free schools meals and 36% of children identified with special, and often complex, educational needs.

Since the first follow-up inspection, there have been changes to staffing, namely, the appointment of three new teachers and the enhancement of the roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators within the school.

There have been important improvements since the first follow-up inspection.

- The teachers have higher expectations of what the children can achieve, evidenced by the increased level of challenge, the higher standards of presentation and content in the children's books, and the increased confidence and motivation of the children.
- Standards of achievement in literacy and numeracy have improved significantly; the school's internal data shows that most of the children now achieve in line with their ability in both numeracy and literacy. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the most able children have competence in number and shape and space, and demonstrated flexibility in their mathematical thinking. They can read competently, fluently and with accuracy, demonstrating good understanding.

- The quality of the learning and teaching has improved significantly; with over four-fifths of the lessons observed being good or better and almost one-half being very good or outstanding. In the most effective practice: the children are involved in setting their own short-term targets and reflect on the extent of their learning through the use of learning logs; and, a wide range of teaching strategies are used well to engage and motivate children of all ability, and to enable all children to experience success across all areas of learning.
- The whole school's focus on developing better practice in planning, teaching and assessment of reading has led to steady progression in the development of the children's enjoyment of, and competence in, reading. Through a wide range of teaching approaches and reading initiatives, with significant parental involvement, the children access a richer literacy environment. Furthermore, there is high quality intervention when a child presents with difficulties in literacy and numeracy. As a result, most of the children are prepared well for the next stage of their learning.
- Under the effective leadership of the principal, the curriculum co-ordinators monitor and evaluate regularly and robustly the quality of the provision in their respective areas of responsibility. They can now identify best practice within the school and appropriate priorities for future development. Planning in the curriculum areas has improved significantly, with the needs of individual children being addressed more effectively in the classroom. The teachers' detailed, insightful evaluations of their planning and, in particular, the extent to which learning has taken place, informs well the subsequent planning and teaching.
- The board of governors provide appropriate support and challenge to the improvement agenda, with the development of more open lines of communication with all staff and a robust process of self-evaluation for effective governance.

Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address which is to sustain, and build on, the improvements in both the quality of the children's learning experiences and their outcomes across the wide range of ability. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress in addressing the area for improvement.

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