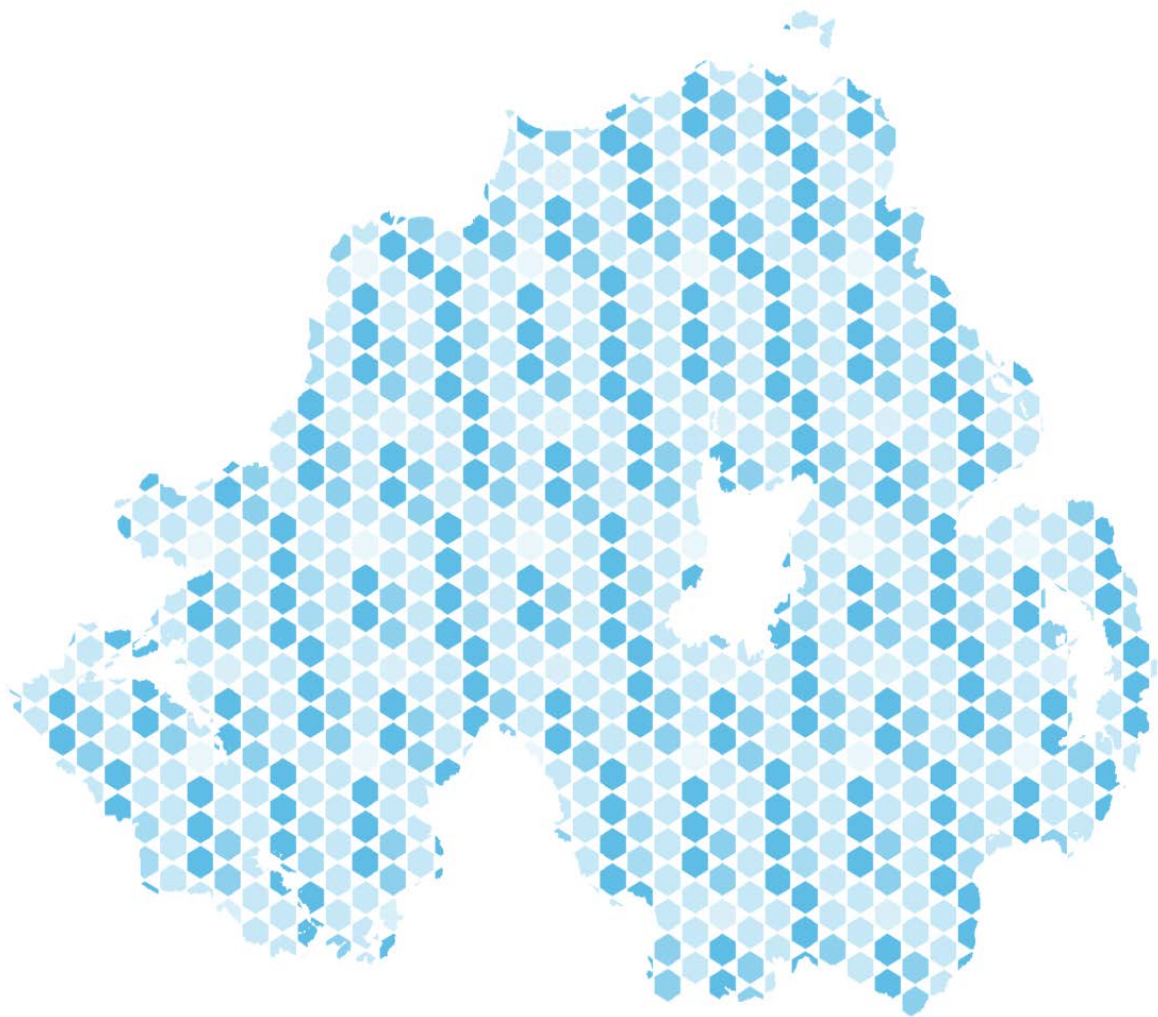


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Knocknagoney Primary School
and Nursery Unit, Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in November 2012



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from lesson observations, from scrutiny of the children's completed written work and from a range of documentation including the school's internal performance data. In addition, the inspection team held discussions with groups of the children, with teaching and non-teaching staff and with representatives from the Board of Governors.

The views of the parents, teaching and non-teaching staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the principal and the governors. A summary of the outcomes from the questionnaires is included in section 6 of the report.

Quantitative terms

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%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

1. School context

Knocknagoney Primary School is situated on the outskirts of East Belfast. The enrolment of the primary school has remained steady for the past 4 years however the enrolment has increased significantly in the current academic year due primarily to the closure of a nearby primary school. The enrolment has risen from 86 children to the current total of 133 children in the primary school with an additional 26 children in the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection 61% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 33% of the children in the primary school were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. There have been significant changes in staffing during the current academic year and during the inspection, five of the eight teaching staff were employed in a temporary capacity.

2. Focus of inspection and overall finding

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school and nursery unit; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection, were evaluated.

OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of all of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards Quality of provision Leadership and management Nursery Unit	Good Very Good Outstanding Outstanding
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and Standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards is good.

- The majority of the children engage positively and enthusiastically with the planned activities and are beginning to develop a greater level of independence and take responsibility for aspects of their learning. The children enjoy the opportunities to work in pairs and small groups and with the focused support

provided for the small number of children who have difficulties with aspects of their social skills or behaviour, they are beginning to resolve minor disputes and conflicts more amicably.

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 assessment data* over the past four years shows that, in three of the four years, the school's performance in English and mathematics has been below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared to schools in the same free school meals category, the school's performance has been above the average in three of the last four years in mathematics and above the average in two of the last four years in English.
- By year 7, most of the children attain good standards in talking and listening and in reading. They write to a satisfactory standard for an increasing range of audiences and purposes. The children require more opportunities to develop further their individual writing styles using a wider range of expressive vocabulary, in order to raise the standard of writing for all of the children and especially those who are most able. The majority of the children are secure in their knowledge and understanding of most aspects of the mathematics curriculum and are able to apply their mathematical knowledge in meaningful contexts. By the end of key stage 2, the most able children, have a very good understanding of a wide range of mathematical concepts and demonstrate a high level of flexibility in their mathematical thinking and computation.
- An analysis of the school's own performance data and of the standards of the work in the children's books indicates that the majority of the children make good progress, and many overcome significant barriers to learning, to attain the standards of which they are capable.
- The children in the school who have been identified with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Those children provided with additional withdrawal support in literacy and numeracy make good progress and a minority achieve higher than expected progress.
- The children in the nursery class are very well settled; their behaviour is excellent and they co-operate very well with one another. Almost all of the children are involved in their play for sustained periods of time; most of the children talked with confidence about their play and showed an interest in browsing through books. The children respond well to the adults, and to the high expectations for their learning.
- The children in years 4 and 7 have participated in the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessments (CCEA) ICT Accreditation Scheme, and have attained standards which are above the average of those achieved in all schools across Northern Ireland.

* The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

4. Provision for Learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

- Throughout the school and nursery unit, the teachers are very hard-working and committed to the education and care of the children. They plan conscientiously to take account of the wide range of abilities and needs in each class and make comprehensive and honest evaluations of the children's learning which they use well to inform future practice. During the inspection, the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding; most of the teaching observed was good or better and in almost half of the lessons it was very good or outstanding. In the best practice the teachers have high expectations and manage well the diverse educational and behavioural needs of the children. There was a very good structure to the lessons with priority given to providing practical, meaningful learning situations to engage the children actively and promote enjoyment in learning
- In the Foundation Stage, well-planned play-based learning sessions provide valuable opportunities to develop the children's literacy and numeracy skills and observations of the children are used very effectively to help each child progress to the next stage of his or her learning. Throughout the school the teachers provide an appropriate range of literacy and numeracy activities with the effective use of task boards to develop further the children's independence and self-management skills. The teachers make good use of assessment for learning strategies and individual profile booklets to record the children's progress across all areas of numeracy and literacy. The children have opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy to meaningful contexts across the curriculum which the teachers need to continue to provide at every opportunity. Information and communication technology is effectively integrated into classroom activities to support, enrich and extend the children's learning.
- The pastoral care in the school and nursery unit is of a very high quality. The pastoral and academic provision is intrinsically linked reflecting the core values of the school in developing the all round needs of the child. The excellent working relationships at all levels develop a strong sense of community and interdependence underlining for the children the importance of listening to, respecting and understanding others. The well-resourced environment both indoors and outdoors allows the children to work and explore together developing skills for living in, and making a positive contribution to, the school and wider community.
- The quality of the provision for special educational needs is very good. The school provides additional differentiated support for those children who are having difficulties with reading and numeracy. The collaborative and well-planned working practices between all of the teachers, the classroom assistants, the child and parent support teacher and the Principal is largely successful in meeting the needs of the children and helping them overcome their barriers to learning.
- The nursery unit provides excellent opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The adult interactions with the children are of a consistently high quality and promote well the children's oral language and listening skills, their understanding of early mathematical language and their

personal, social and emotional development. The nursery co-ordinator is particularly skilful in providing a welcoming, stimulating and exciting learning environment. She has set clear boundaries for behaviour which the children understand and respect.

- The school gives very good attention to healthy eating and physical activity through the provision of healthy breaks and an appropriate range of physical activities within and beyond the curriculum.

5. Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- Since her appointment in 2010, the Principal has worked very effectively to develop important links with the parents and the local community. She has developed a clear and strategic vision for the school and has implemented rigorous processes for self-evaluation to effect improvement in the quality of learning and teaching. She has developed a strong team spirit amongst staff and promotes a collegiate approach to decision-making within the school.
- The co-ordinators and special educational needs co-ordinator are working well together to develop a consistent and coherent approach to curriculum development. They are well informed about their area of learning through a thorough analysis of data and effective monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice. There is excellent liaison between the teacher in the nursery unit and the Foundation Stage which helps to ensure a smooth transition for the children and to enable effective progression and continuity in the children's learning.
- The school has established and continues to maintain and strengthen very good links with the parents and with the local community. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school through a number of community services including the 'Incredible Years Parenting Programme', the 'Welcome Club' for newcomer parents and the lending library facilities both in the nursery unit and the primary school. These links should be built upon to involve more parents in their child's learning and development at the earliest stage.
- The governors are fully involved in the life and work of the school and support effectively the Principal and the staff in raising the profile of the school, raising further the attainment levels of the children and developing effective links with the parents and the local community.
- 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 year 6 children they indicated that they feel happy in school and that they know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their well-being.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of all of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

6. **Summary of questionnaire responses**

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Number of Questionnaires Issued (Based on 09/10 Enrolment)	113
Number of Families in School (Actual Number of Questionnaires Issued to Parents)	98
Number of Questionnaires Returned	26
Percentage of Returns (Based on Actual Issue)	26.5%
Number of Comments	17
NURSERY UNIT	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	26
Number of Questionnaires Returned	9
Percentage of Returns	34.6%
Number of Comments	5

Almost all of the responses from the parental questionnaires in both the primary school and nursery unit indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents in the primary school highlighted the very friendly staff and Principal, their dedication to the children and their achievements and the strong community spirit. In addition, they expressed their appreciation for how well the school managed the integration of a large group of additional children across all classes this term. The very small number of concerns raised in the written comments has been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

In discussions with the governors, they expressed their appreciation of the work of the whole staff and, in particular, the work of the Principal in raising the profile of the school within the community and the improving standards achieved by the children.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	6
Number of Comments	3

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	12
Number of Comments	4

Six of the teachers and twelve of the support staff completed the questionnaire. Almost all of the staff who responded indicated their support for the work of the school.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON KNOCKNAGONEY PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, BELFAST

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	0
Attending part-time	0	0
Under 3 years of age*	0	0
With statement of special educational needs	0	0
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	0
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	1	0
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	0	0
With English as an additional language	2	0

* On 1 July.

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	35%
Average attendance for the previous year.	93.9%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4½ hours	-	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	1	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	1	0
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	1	0

Number of: ***	
Students	2
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	26
Percentage returned	%
Number of written comments	

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