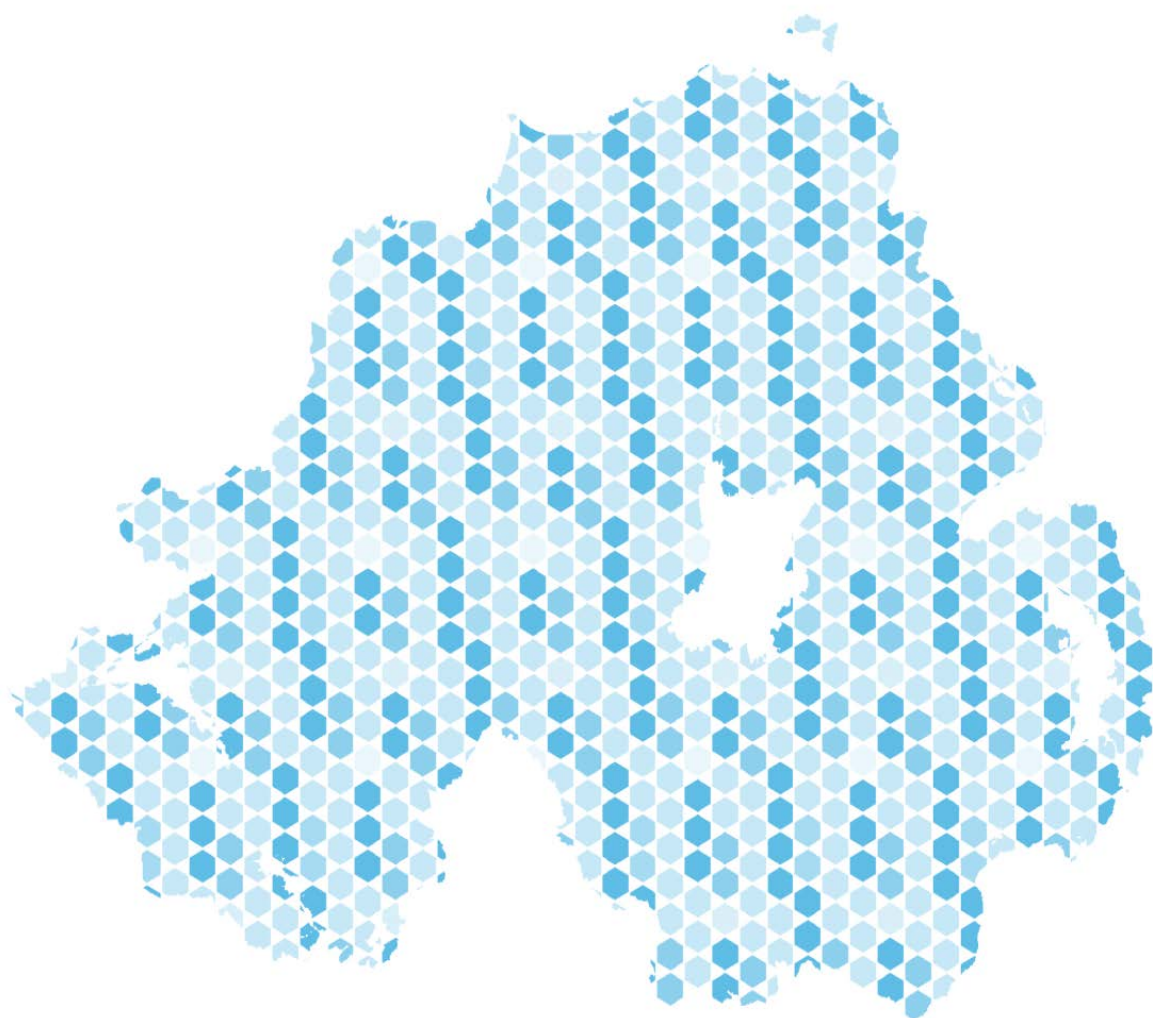


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Nettlefield Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013

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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

Nettlefield Primary School and nursery unit is situated in East Belfast. The enrolment of the primary school has increased steadily over the past four years and now stands at 327 children including 52 children in full-time places in the nursery unit. At the time of the inspection 72% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 34% of the children in the primary school were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning. There have been significant changes in leadership and management in the school in recent years; the Principal is in her second year in post and the acting Vice-principal, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators took up post in the current academic year. During the inspection, the school was successfully providing for the children within a stable and calm environment throughout a period of local community unrest.

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 almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children.

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards Quality of provision Leadership and management Nursery unit	Inadequate Inadequate Satisfactory Good
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and standards

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

- The children are interested in their learning and the majority are keen to engage with the activities provided. When given opportunities, they are generally able to work with independence and in the most effective practice to work together successfully with their peers.

- An analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 assessment data over the past four years shows that the school's performance in English and mathematics has been below both the Northern Ireland average and the average of schools in the same free school meals category.
- The children achieve satisfactory standards in literacy. A majority of the children enter the nursery unit with significant delays in their development, specifically delays in their language and communication skills. By year 7 the most able children are able to read with a good level of fluency and expression and achieve satisfactory standards in writing. The standards achieved by the children in mathematics are inadequate. By the end of KS2 the children are knowledgeable in most of the areas of the mathematics curriculum; however, they are insecure in explaining their strategies and have little flexibility in their mathematical thinking. Throughout the school, a lack of secure understanding of basic number facts hinders significantly the children's progress in other areas of the mathematics curriculum.
- The school has identified a significant minority of children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The majority of the children identified are not making appropriate progress to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The children in the nursery class are making very good progress in their personal and social development and show a good level of interest and enjoyment in their learning. They engage cooperatively in the daily routines, make independent choices and can settle to activities for sustained periods. A majority of the children require further support to develop their oral language and listening skills.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is inadequate.

- The present teaching staff, under the leadership of the Principal, has worked exceptionally hard to try to address some of the pressing whole-school development needs. The evaluation of the provision, as it presents currently as inadequate, is symptomatic, not of work undertaken by staff in the recent past, but of a lack of adequately focused development work undertaken over a number of years. The key findings which follow indicate where the provision is not as good as it should be, as a result of that lack of development work, and what needs to be done to improve it.
- The staff works hard to create a positive climate for learning within their classrooms through fostering positive and caring working relationships with the children. The quality of the teaching observed ranged from good to inadequate with half of the teaching evaluated as good. In the best practice the teachers have a clearer focus on learning, have high expectations for the children and are more effective in developing the children's oral language skills. In the less effective practice, in half of the teaching observed, the teachers' planning and the activities provided were not well-matched to the range of ability of the children in the class and an over-reliance on worksheet activities constrained the children's learning. Throughout the school the children receive insufficient oral and written feedback on how to improve their learning. There are also limited opportunities for the children to apply their learning and to develop and use their

oral communication skills in real life contexts and across all areas of the curriculum. The fragmented nature of the class timetables impacts negatively on the children's learning, leaving them insufficient time and opportunity to reflect on and consolidate their learning and complete their work to a satisfactory standard. The staff needs to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning and teaching and use their assessment of the children's learning to plan and implement a more developmental and coherent approach to the implementation of the curriculum.

- There are no clear lines of progression across the school in the planning for numeracy and literacy. The staff has recently completed an audit on talking and listening provision and standards and has appropriately identified the need to develop effective questioning across the school. The school has invested in resources to raise the profile of reading; it will be important to evaluate the impact of these initiatives on the children's achievements in reading. The teachers have worked hard to produce a range of useful practical resources to support smaller group work in numeracy. The implementation of an active teaching cycle, approach is providing a useful framework within which to organise smaller group work and is allowing the teachers to focus on progressing the learning of specific groups of children. The approach needs to be developed further to focus on and assess the level of learning taking place.
- The pastoral care in the school is of a good quality. During the inspection the children were very well-behaved, polite and respectful to one another and to the adults and visitors to the school. There is a friendly, welcoming and inclusive ethos in the school and the nursery unit. All children, including those from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, are welcomed, valued and integrated effectively into the school community. The staff in the school and the nursery unit promote positive behaviour through effective strategies and reward systems. A number of support staff and governors facilitate additional activities and clubs for the children. The school has identified appropriately the need to give the children a forum in which to express their views on the school and be more involved in decision making at an appropriate level.
- The quality of the provision for special educational needs is inadequate. Whilst the Individual Education Plans (IEP) are focused on attainable, clear and measurable targets for improvement, the school currently has insufficient systems in place to track the children's progress in their learning. There is a need for the special educational needs teacher, in collaboration with the class teachers, to plan for a detailed programme of support which is more closely linked to addressing the IEP targets. The staff in the nursery unit has benefited from the training and guidance provided through the Early Years Intervention Project. The effective use by the staff of visual cues and other strategies supports very well the children's behaviour and social development.
- The broad and balanced range of interesting activities provided in the nursery unit presents satisfactory to good opportunities for learning in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. The well-resourced play areas in the playrooms are used to encourage most of the children to engage collaboratively and sustain their play. This good practice needs to be built on more progressively and

consistently within the Foundation Stage classes. The good quality of the adult interactions with the children is helping to develop their learning. This could be improved further through involving the children more consistently in the daily routines and providing more opportunities to interact with smaller groups of children.

- The school and the nursery unit give 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 satisfactory.

- Since her appointment in 2011, the Principal has worked very effectively to develop a strong team spirit amongst the staff. She has established good working relationships with the staff, parents and children, to ensure a positive ethos and a strong commitment to the pastoral care of the children. Within a short period of time, the Principal has brought about a number of key improvements including the establishment of a senior management team, the successful developments to improve the quality of provision within the nursery unit and the greater involvement of the parents in their children's learning.
- An effective start has been made to the collection of performance data and samples of the children's writing which is providing useful basis in developing a culture of self-evaluation at whole school level. The action-planning for improvement is at an early stage of development at co-ordinator level. The current action plans are not sufficiently focused on improving the learning and teaching and raising the standards for the children.
- The school has received intensive support over the last four years from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), through the Achieving Belfast Initiative. There is a need for the BELB and the school to evaluate more effectively the impact of the developments put in place on raising the children's standards in literacy and numeracy.
- The school has established and continues to develop effective links with the parents and the local community. The children benefit from a range of visitors to the school and a variety of educational trips both within the local environment and further afield. The school has strong links with a local church which supports music activities and operates a homework club. The parents benefit from the provision of a parent room and value the work of a parent support worker who provides social and pastoral advice. A growing number of the parents are taking part in training in essential skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT through a partnership with a local further education institute.
- The governors are highly supportive of the Principal and staff and are committed to the improvement of the school. A number of new governors have been appointed in the current academic year and are availing of training in the role of governance. In assisting the governors further in carrying out their challenge function, the staff needs to update them with the information they collate and analyse relating to the pattern of the achievements and standards of the children.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school and 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 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 almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the quality of the learning and teaching;
- raise the standards in literacy and numeracy; and
- ensure the leadership and management at all levels are supported effectively in developing their roles to bring about the necessary improvement.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Number of Questionnaires Issued (Based on 09/10 Enrolment)	150
Number of Questionnaires Returned	55
Percentage of Returns (Based on Actual Issue)	36.66%
Number of Comments	9
NURSERY UNIT	
Number of Questionnaires Issued	52
Number of Questionnaires Returned	10
Percentage of Returns	19.2%
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 highlighted the very supportive staff and Principal. 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 Principal and staff in bringing forward the recent changes in the school.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	13
Number of Comments	0

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	7
Number of Comments	0

Almost all of the staff who responded indicated their support for the work of the school.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Nettlefield Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 14/01/13**
ii. **School Reference Number: 101-0267** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	32	39	38	42	47
Enrolments					
Primary	205	218	243	248	275
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	52	52	52	52	52
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium Unit	0	0	0	0	0

The enrolment for the current year is the figure on the day of notification of inspection. For previous years it is the figure in the annual return to the Department of Education.

The calculations at C and D should be based on the total of the primary and reception enrolments only.

- C. Average Attendance for the Previous School Year (expressed as a percentage): 90.7% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 88.72%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
<p>1. Mathematics</p> <p>2. English</p> <p>3. Science</p> <p>4. History</p> <p>5. Geography</p> <p>6. Art</p> <p>7. Music</p> <p>8. Physical Education</p> <p>9. Religious Education</p> <p>10. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)</p>	<p>1. Mathematics</p> <p>2. English</p> <p>3. Science</p> <p>4. History</p> <p>5. Geography</p> <p>6. Art</p> <p>7. Music</p> <p>8. Physical Education</p> <p>9. Religious Education</p> <p>10. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)</p>	<p>1. Mathematics</p> <p>2. English</p> <p>3. Science</p> <p>4. History</p> <p>5. Geography</p> <p>6. Art</p> <p>7. Music</p> <p>8. Physical Education</p> <p>9. Religious Education</p> <p>10. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)</p>	<p>1. Mathematics</p> <p>2. English</p> <p>3. Science</p> <p>4. History</p> <p>5. Geography</p> <p>6. Art</p> <p>7. Music</p> <p>8. Physical Education</p> <p>9. Religious Education</p> <p>10. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)</p>

- | | | | | | | |
|----|-------|--|----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| D. | i. | Number of Teachers
(including the principal and part-time teachers):
(Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours) | 13.4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | ii. | PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 22.9 | NI PTR: 20.2 | | |
| | iii. | Average Class Size: | 22.9 | | | |
| | iv. | Class Size (Range): | 17 to 26 | | | |
| | v. | Ancillary Support:
Number of Hours Per Week : | | | | |
| | | i. Clerical support: | | | 57 | |
| | | ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | | 80 | |
| | | iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | | 180 | |
| | vi. | Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: | | | 1.8% | |
| | vii. | Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: | | | 34.18% | |
| | viii. | Number of children who are not of statutory school age: | | | 0 | |
| | ix. | Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: | | | 72% | |
| | x. | Percentage of children at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2010/11 who attained level 4 and above in English and mathematics, and Irish (in Irish-medium schools): | | English
51.73% | Mathematics
48.28% | Irish |

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON NETTLEFIELD NURSERY SCHOOL

1. Details of Children

Number of children:	Class 1	Class 2
Attending full-time	26	26
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	9	9
At CoP stages 3 or 4**	1	3
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	13	6
With English as an additional language	5	4

* 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.	25%
Average attendance for the previous year.	90.3%

2. Duration of Sessions

Full-time	Part-time: am	Part-time: pm
4 hours 35 mins	-	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-Time	Part-Time
Teachers	2	0
Nursery Assistants (qualified)	2	00
Nursery Assistants (non-qualified)	0	

Number of: ***	
Students	5
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued	
Percentage returned	%
Number of written comments	

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