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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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**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

**Avoniel Primary School and Nursery Unit
Belfast**

June 2013

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF AVONIEL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT, BELFAST (101-0232)

The inspection of Avoniel Primary School in March 2011 highlighted strengths in: the good provision for pastoral care; the quality of the majority of the teaching observed; the effective leadership of the Principal and the SENCO; and, the very good links established with the parents and outside agencies.

The inspection also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- raising further the standards achieved by the children in English and mathematics;
- developing the role of the co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating effectively the quality of the children's experiences and their achievements; and
- identifying and disseminating effectively the best practice in learning and teaching, in order to better meet the differing needs of all the children.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- the principal left the school to take up a new post in August 2012, and two senior teachers have since then shared the role of acting principal alongside their teaching commitments;
- two new teachers and a new chair of the Board of Governors have been appointed, and through its inclusion in the Achieving Belfast programme the school has an additional part-time teacher;
- the roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators in the school and nursery unit have been developed, and a greater focus has been placed on monitoring and evaluating the provision for literacy and numeracy;
- a range of continuing professional development opportunities for staff in the school and the nursery unit has been supported by the Belfast Education and Library Board's (BELB) Curriculum Advisory and Support Service;
- the teachers in the nursery unit and a number of teachers in the school have visited a range of other settings to observe good practice;
- the school has introduced a reading partnership programme to aid children who would benefit from a short-term boost in reading support;
- more formalised opportunities have been provided for professional discussion, collaboration and the dissemination of good practice among the staff in both the school and the nursery unit;

- the assessment co-ordinator has effectively developed the analysis and use of performance data, in particular enabling the school to identify areas for improvement at class and whole-school level and target groups of children for additional support; and
- the school and nursery unit have reviewed their planning formats and processes to focus more clearly on planning to meet the needs of individuals.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out two interim follow-up visits in October 2011 and October 2012 and a follow-up inspection on 12 June 2013.

The action plan produced by the school in response to the inspection findings was of a good quality.

The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The following are the most important improvements since the inspection:

- the quality of the majority of teaching observed during the follow-up process was good or very good: in the most successful lessons, the teachers have high expectations and employ effective classroom management strategies;
- the targeted intervention programmes in literacy have led to good improvements in the standards attained by the children;
- the co-ordinators have begun to monitor and evaluate more systematically the quality of the provision in their respective curricular areas;
- the school makes effective use of data to track the children's progress, identify trends and raise expectations of the children's achievement;
- a culture of openness and self-evaluation has been established in the school and nursery unit under the effective and strategic leadership of the acting principals;
- the revised planning formats and processes in the school and nursery unit provide a good guide to the staff and ensure that the activities provided are more closely matched to the wide range of abilities in each class; and
- the acting principals and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have benefitted significantly from the support provided by the BELB Curriculum Advisory Support Service and they provide effective leadership.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school and nursery unit is now good. The school and nursery unit have important strengths in most of their educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school and nursery unit have demonstrated the capacity to address.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- to increase the pace of development in numeracy and, in particular, to complete the written school scheme for all areas of mathematics, in order to support the staff in ensuring progression in the children's learning in mathematics and raising further the standards they achieve; and
- for the staff in the nursery unit to develop further their assessment methods, in order to ensure that adequate and accurate information is recorded on each child's progress in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and that this is used effectively to inform future individual planning.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

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