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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

**Harryville Primary School and Nursery Unit
Ballymena**

June 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF HARRYVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT42 4BY (301-0781)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a focused inspection of Harryville Primary School and Nursery Unit in the week of 6 June 2011 and the school was evaluated as inadequate. The inspection team identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to improve the quality of the provision and raise the children's low levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy;
- to improve the quality of leadership and management which is inadequate at all levels; and
- to agree and implement a whole-school approach for monitoring and evaluating the school's educational provision, and use the outcomes to plan for and effect improvement.

The school entered the formal intervention process on 22 June 2011. The Department of Education (DE) indicated at that time that a follow-up inspection would take place and that, in the interim, follow-up visits would evaluate the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements². Two interim follow-up visits (IFUV) took place on 29 September 2011 and 26 January 2012.

The ETI carried out a follow-up inspection in the week of 24 October 2012³. As a result, the quality of education provided by the school was evaluated as inadequate and the quality of education provided by the Nursery Unit was evaluated as satisfactory. The follow-up inspection identified four areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management:

- to raise the children's low levels of attainment in English and mathematics at key stage (KS)2;
- to continue to improve the quality of the provision by, in particular, improving the children's writing skills and by improving the progression in the children's acquisition of the knowledge, understanding and skills in numeracy across key stage (KS)2;
- for the teachers and the leaders at all levels to use effectively the outcomes of the monitoring activities to plan for and effect sustained improvement; and
- to continue to improve the quality of the strategic leadership of the school at a senior level.

The Department of Education (DE) indicated at that time that the ETI would continue to monitor the school's provision, a further formal follow-up inspection would be conducted within an appropriate timescale and a report would be published. In addition, an interim follow-up visit (IFUV) would monitor the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements. The ETI completed an IFUV on 6 June 2013 and a further monitoring visit on 21 May 2014.

² For further details, see the key strengths and areas for improvement reported originally in the Report of an Inspection of Harryville Primary School and Nursery Unit in June 2011.

³ For further details, see the key strengths and areas for improvement in the Report of a Follow-Up Inspection in Harryville Primary School and Nursery Unit in October 2012.

A second FUI was conducted on 11 and 12 June 2014. The arrangements for this second FUI included: discussions with a representative of the board of governors, the support officer from the Curriculum Advisory Service (CASS) of the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) and the school's principal and co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy and special educational needs.

In the interval since the first FUI, the school received support from the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) in developing action plans to address the key findings of the inspection report from the first FUI. The action plans produced were of good quality.

The following are the most important changes that have taken place since the first FUI:

- three members of staff completed training in nurturing principles; the school established a Nurture Unit and adopted the nurture approaches across the school;
- additional teaching support was provided for 2.5 days per week through the Northern Ireland Signature Project;
- the principal and staff completed work in creating and updating a range of key policies;
- the staff engaged in further professional development across aspects of literacy, numeracy and the use of assessment data;
- the co-ordinators received training in monitoring and evaluating key aspects of the provision;
- the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators led the staff in developing and implementing lines of progression for writing and numeracy;
- the school development plan was reviewed and updated;
- there is a new teacher in charge in the Nursery Unit; and
- the principal completed a leadership mentoring and coaching support programme facilitated through the NEELB.

There have been important improvements since the first FUI.

- The school's implementation of nurturing strategies for all of the children has resulted in an improved learning environment with positive working relationships at all levels; these approaches have benefitted the children's self-esteem and overall disposition to their learning. The children show greater enjoyment and improved confidence in sharing and explaining their thinking with one another and adults; for example, in the ways in which they take greater responsibility for their own learning in their practical mathematics activities.

- Almost all of the children attain standards in line with their ability in English and most achieve standards in line with their ability in mathematics. Most of the children can talk more confidently about their mathematical understanding using the appropriate language and mental mathematics strategies; in building further upon this development, the school has identified appropriately the need to improve the children's problem solving ability, particularly at KS2. The quality and standard of the children's writing in their books has improved, varying from satisfactory to good; overall, the content, accuracy and presentation of their writing still needs to be more consistent across the school.
- The quality of the provision in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The planning for learning is more detailed and systematic and includes better evaluation of the quality and extent of the children's learning. The teachers use a wider range of teaching strategies and approaches including effective questioning enabling the children to provide more extended responses.
- The co-ordinators have improved opportunities to monitor their respective areas of responsibility and to evaluate the impact of the improvement actions on the quality and extent of the children's learning. The strategies include the monitoring of teachers' planning, analysis of the performance data, moderation of the quality of the children's work in literacy and numeracy and evaluating, through classroom observations, the quality of the teaching and learning. As a consequence of these monitoring activities, there is better internal quality assurance of the children's attainments in English and mathematics at class and year group level, including how the school addresses underachievement. The principal and staff acknowledge that this important work needs to be embedded further.
- There is improved challenge and progression in the learning in the Nursery Unit and the quality and extent of the children's learning is good.
- The parents and the local community have greater involvement in the life and work of the school.
- The principal is giving better strategic leadership in key aspects of the provision, for example, through enabling the leadership role of the co-ordinators and sharing more systematically the key information regarding the whole school performance in literacy and numeracy and other aspects of school life with the governors.

The quality of the teaching observed during the second FUJ ranged from good to very good; in most of the lessons, the teaching was good. In the best practice, the teachers have high expectations of what the children can do and match the learning activities to meet their individual needs and interests well.

Conclusion

There have been important improvements in standards, learning and teaching, and the quality of the provision. The quality of education provided by the primary school is satisfactory and the nursery unit is good. The strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision.

There remains a need:

- to continue to raise the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics;
- to continue to use more systematically and effectively the outcomes of the monitoring activities to plan for and effect sustained improvement; and
- to develop further the outdoor learning and play facilities for the Nursery Unit and foundation stage.

It continues to be important that the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

The district inspector will continue to monitor the school's provision and a formal follow-up inspection will be conducted within 12-18 months.

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