



*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

**Springhill Primary School
Belfast**

September 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF SPRINGHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT13 3NH (101-0307)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a focused inspection of Springhill Primary School in the week of 7 March 2011 and the school was evaluated as inadequate. The inspection team identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to raise the inadequate standards reached by a significant minority of the children in literacy and numeracy;
- for stronger curricular leadership by the Principal, supported by the Board of Governors, to provide better strategic direction and an improvement in the teaching and learning across the key stages; and
- to disseminate more widely the elements of good practice already existing within the school.

The school entered the formal intervention process on 23 March 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. In the interval since the original 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, foundation stage (FS), special educational needs, and leadership and management.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out three interim follow-up visits (IFUV), and a follow-up inspection on 17-18 September 2012³. As a result, the quality of education provided by the school was evaluated as satisfactory. The follow-up inspection identified the following area for improvement:

- for the principal and senior leadership team to focus whole-school development on actions designed to bring about consistent and sustained improvement in the standards which the children achieve and to monitor and evaluate the impact of the improvement actions on the quality and extent of their learning experiences.

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, interim follow-up visits (IFUV) would monitor the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements. The ETI completed two interim follow-up visits (IFUV) on 7 January 2014 and 30 May 2014.

A second FUI was conducted on 22-23 September 2014. The arrangements for this second FUI included: discussions with the school's principal, vice-principal, the co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs and foundation stage (FS), a representative of the board of governors and the support officer from the Curriculum Advisory Service (CASS) of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB).

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

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

In the interval since the first FUI, the school received support from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) 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:

- the action plans were adjusted to take account of the inspection findings;
- three teachers were deployed in different year groups and a foundation stage teacher took on the role of SENCO;
- the staff engaged in further professional development training across aspects of literacy, numeracy, special educational needs 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 literacy and numeracy and in reviewing the format and content for the planning for learning;
- the vice-principal and senior leadership team led the staff in making more effective use of the available performance data to identify and respond appropriately to the needs of individual children in all classes;
- arrangements were agreed and put in place to facilitate the children's transitions across the key stages;
- the school implemented a range of initiatives to engage and involve the parents more fully in the life and work of the school, and in particular, to support the children's learning; and
- the school accommodation was upgraded and improved.

There have been important improvements since the first FUI.

- The children's self-esteem and overall disposition to their learning have improved. The children show greater confidence and enjoyment in sharing their reasoning and ideas with one another and adults.
- Most of the children attain standards in line with their ability in English and in mathematics. In all classes, the children explain their learning more confidently using the appropriate language to express their thinking. By year seven, the most able children read fluently and with high levels of interest and can articulate the processes and strategies they are using to solve a range of mathematical challenges. Across the school, the quality and standard of the children's work in their books have improved and are mostly good.

- The teachers use a wider range of teaching strategies and approaches, including well-focused questioning, enabling the children to provide more extended responses. The planning for learning is developing well and guides more effectively the teachers' work with the children. The inspection findings endorse the continuing development work within this area. The quality of the provision in literacy and numeracy is good.
- The teachers, led by the vice-principal and co-ordinators, analyse and use the first-hand evidence and other available information, including the performance data, to evaluate the progress being made by all of the children and where further intervention is required.
- The teachers demonstrate a greater shared accountability for what the children achieve.
- The senior leadership team, which includes the core curriculum co-ordinators, have improved their capacity to lead and develop further their respective areas of responsibility; the principal and staff acknowledge the need for this good work to be sustained in order that the needs of all the children continue to be met well.
- The governors have increased their role in supporting and challenging key aspects of the school's provision.
- The staff show continuing commitment to their ongoing professional development and sharing good practice in teaching and learning.
- There are improved processes in place to monitor and evaluate the quality and extent of the children's learning, including how the school identifies and addresses underachievement.
- The parents and the local community have greater involvement in the life and work of the school.
- The quality of the teaching observed during the second FUI ranged from good to very good; in most of the lessons, the teaching was very 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

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the 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.

There remains a need:

- to continue to raise further the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics;

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress in the area for improvement.

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