



*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

**Woodlawn Primary School
Carrickfergus**

May 2015

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF WOODLAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL, CARRICKFERGUS, CO ANTRIM, BT38 8EZ (301-6225)

The original inspection of Woodlawn Primary School in October 2013 highlighted strengths in the children's good levels of motivation, the effective links with the parents and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided for the children.

It also highlighted the following areas for improvement:

- for the leadership and management at all levels to develop a more strategic and rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning to inform whole school improvement;
- to improve the quality of differentiation in teaching to meet the needs of the full ability range of the children; and
- to improve the standards attained by the children in literacy and numeracy.

The inspection conclusion in October 2013 stated:

"In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is satisfactory. The strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, teaching and learning and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all of the children are to be met more effectively."

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

- The staff have received extensive curricular and pastoral support provided by the Education Authority (EA), North-Eastern Region.
- A new member of the teaching staff took up post in January 2015.
- A new literacy co-ordinator has been appointed.
- The school has introduced the 'Ready To Learn' programme for younger children, facilitated by Barnardos.
- A parents' group, 'Branches of Woodlawn', has been established to involve families in supporting the work of the school.
- Additional extra-curricular activities have been introduced through extended schools' funding.
- The chair of the board of governors has provided close support throughout the follow-up process.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a total of two monitoring visits and a follow-up inspection on 6 May 2015.

The action plan received by the Department of Education following the inspection was of a good quality.

The following are the most important improvements since the original inspection.

- The higher quality of the teaching was demonstrated in the consistently good or better lessons observed during the follow-up inspection.
- The teachers use more effective questioning which encourages the children to think and justify their answers, and which promotes well the children's use of mathematical language.
- The updated planning identifies clearly the differentiation in the learning and teaching, and incorporates more detailed guidance on mental mathematics, guided and shared reading and investigative work.
- The well-focused evaluations of the children's learning are used more effectively to inform future planning for individual and group needs, ensuring a more consistent approach to providing both challenge and support when required.
- The key co-ordinators use effectively a broader evidence base for monitoring and evaluating the learning and teaching, including feedback to teachers on their planning and the quality of work in the children's books.
- The teachers are beginning to use data more purposefully to identify and plan for groups of children in the classroom who require support and to provide challenge for the more able.
- The children write more competently for a wider range of purposes across the curriculum and are increasingly confident in using mathematical vocabulary and explaining their mental strategies.
- The intensive staff development from the Education Authority, North-Eastern Region has led to increased skills, confidence and capacity of staff in key aspects of learning and teaching including mental mathematics and shared and guided reading.
- The opportunities for open discussion among the staff about high quality learning and teaching, and about the levels of attainment have helped develop a greater consistency in understanding and practice.

While many improvements have been made in the provision, the significant amount of staff absence, strained working relationships and changes in key curricular roles and responsibilities during a two-year period have all contributed to a slower than expected rate of improvement during the follow-up inspection process.

Overall, the quality of the education provided by this school remains satisfactory. The follow-up inspection has identified continuing areas for improvement in standards and in leadership and management which need to be addressed if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- to continue to develop the capacity and effectiveness of the leadership and management, in particular the role of the principal, in leading whole school improvement;

- to develop the role of a special educational needs co-ordinator; and
- to develop a more collegial and collaborative approach to whole-school improvement among the whole staff team in order to embed and build on the improvements and continue to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will carry out a further follow-up inspection within 12 months and a report will be published.

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