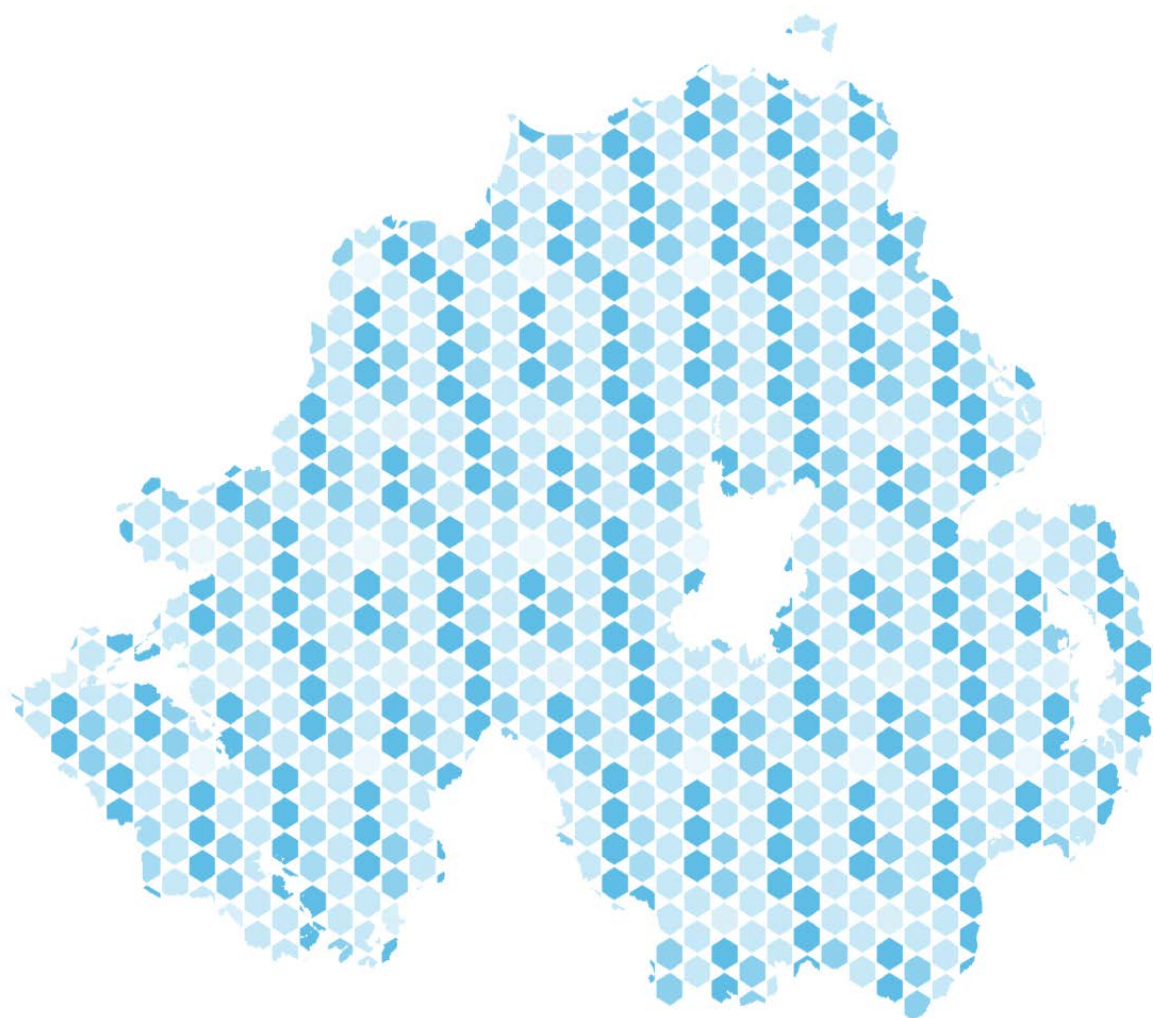


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Regent House Grammar School
Preparatory Department,
Newtownards

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013

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

SCHOOL CONTEXT

The Preparatory Department of Regent House Grammar School is located in the main building of the senior school, in Newtownards. It is a non-denominational day school enrolling both boys and girls. The enrolment has fluctuated slightly over the last four years and currently stands at 116. The school has identified almost 20.6% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. This inspection completes the work that began in February 2012. The inspection was incomplete at that stage due to industrial action being taken by the staff not to co-operate with the Education and Training Inspectorate on advice from their teaching union.

FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management, including the processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this Preparatory Department is very good. The Preparatory Department is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Achievements and Standards

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

- Almost all of the **children** are well motivated, enthusiastic, and engage actively in their own learning. They are articulate, fluent and confident and display a positive attitude to their work. During the inspection the behaviour of the children was exemplary.
- In both literacy and numeracy lessons, the children express themselves with clarity and increasing fluency, participating well in group work and class discussion. In class, the children were observed reading in line with their abilities. The work in the samples of children's literacy books provided was very well presented; however, the teachers need to provide more opportunities for them to engage in extended and creative writing.
- Most of the children demonstrate an ability to think mathematically and are able to apply the knowledge and understanding in real-life and meaningful contexts.
- The children who require **additional support** with aspects of their learning make steady progress in reaching the identified targets in their individual education plans.

Provision for learning

The provision for learning is very good.

- The quality of the **teaching** observed ranged from outstanding to good with the majority being very good. The lessons were well structured, appropriately paced and built on previous learning. In the best practice the teachers used effective questions to promote the children's oracy and thinking skills and responded appropriately to opportunities that arose to develop learning.
- The department has recently reviewed its marking policy in line with the school's School Development Plan. As a result, the children's books are marked regularly and there is greater consistency in the quality of marking across most of the year groups.
- Currently the experiences and activities for play based learning are too narrowly focused on a theme and provide insufficient variety and challenge for the children.
- The provision for **special educational needs** is good. There is evidence to show that the needs of individual children are identified at an early stage and that appropriate advice is sought and additional support provided. The individual education plans (IEPs) are focused on the learning needs of each child with clearly defined targets and strategies. Literacy is supported through both in class and withdrawal sessions by a learning support teacher and a classroom assistant who is trained in Reading Partnership. There are currently no withdrawal sessions for numeracy. In a small number of classes the work is not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs and abilities of all of the children.
- The quality of the arrangements for **pastoral care** is very good. The key strengths of the pastoral provision include: the attention given to celebrating the children's work and achievements both in and outside of school and the wide range of activities, events and educational visits which enhance the quality of the learning experiences. Of particular note is the importance given to developing the children's musical, creative and sporting abilities as a means to develop further their personal and social development.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the Preparatory Department has comprehensive arrangements in place for **safeguarding children**. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- The Preparatory Department gives very good attention to promoting **healthy eating and physical activity**, through, for example, the encouragement for the children to eat a healthy diet and the extensive whole-school physical education and extra-curricular programmes.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The acting head of department has been in post for approximately five months and has a clear vision for the future development of the department; she liaises closely and on a regular basis with the Principal in regard to key aspects of the provision. She has identified appropriate areas for development, sought advice from relevant support agencies and provided guidance to her colleagues to ensure a high quality of professional practice in the Preparatory Department.
- The school development plan (SDP) meets the DE requirements and has been reviewed and updated appropriately to reflect the inspection findings from the previous visit. The formal process of self-evaluation is at an early stage.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this Preparatory Department is very good. The Preparatory Department is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Regent House Preparatory Department** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 08/01/13**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 461-0063** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Short**

B.

School Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 1 Intake	18	21	16	18	13
Enrolments					
Primary	134	132	121	125	116
Reception	0	0	0	0	
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	
Irish Medium Unit	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): 95.5% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the
 Special Educational Needs Register: 96.3%

Primary & Reception Nursery Unit Special Unit Irish Medium Unit

- D. i. Number of Teachers
 (including the principal and part-time teachers): 8.8 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 16.57 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 16.6
- iv. Class Size (Range): 12 to 22
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week:**
- i. Clerical support:
- ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: 25
- iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: 30
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 0.08%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 20.6%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 0.08%
- 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 88% Mathematics 100% Irish N/A**

THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as a meeting with a group of year 6 children.

Of the 96 questionnaires issued to the parents, 32 (approximately 33%) were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 18 contained additional written comments. In these responses a majority of the parents made very positive comments and highlighted in particular the positive ethos in the school, the very good methods of communication between the school and home, the hard working and approachable staff and the good range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. A significant minority raised concerns about specific aspects of the provision and behaviour management issues.

All of the teachers and a majority of the support staff completed questionnaires and indicated high levels of satisfaction for the work of the Preparatory Department.

The year 6 children spoke enthusiastically about their experiences and the support they receive from the staff. They feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have worries about their well-being.

The Inspectors discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the acting head of department, the Principal and the representative from the Board of Governors.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2013

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

