

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Brooklands Primary School,
Dundonald, Belfast

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection in
January 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Brooklands Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in Dundonald. The school has experienced an increase in the enrolment over the past four years. In addition, there is one full-time class and two part-time classes in the nursery unit. The children attending the school come from the Brooklands and Ballybeen estates and the wider surrounding area. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has increased slightly in the past four years while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has remained steady. The principal has been in post from September 2016; he has appointed a learning support teacher and a foundation stage co-ordinator and, created a pastoral care team.

Brooklands Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment in the Primary	433	442	459	480
Enrolment in the Nursery Unit	78	78	78	75
% School attendance	93.5	93.9	94.4	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	37	41	41.5	40.5
No. of children on SEN register	91	97	112	96
% of children on SEN register	21	22	24.5	20
No. of children with statements of educational need	18	29	23	17
No. of newcomer children	9	15	17	18

Source: data as held by the school.

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of parents and 39% of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire were positive and the written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The responses to the staff questionnaire endorsed the effective working relationships within the school and the support of the parents and community. The ETI has communicated to the principal and the chair of the board of governors the main findings, and any individual issues arising, from the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum (and how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable);
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum and the nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Important areas for improvement
Quality of provision	Requires significant improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement
Nursery Unit	Important areas for improvement

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The standards achieved by the children in literacy, as evidenced by the children's books and their responses in class, have important areas for improvement. Where effective questioning by the teacher was used, in a minority of lessons observed, most of children supplied reasoned responses. By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the most able children read competently but with limited expression. The children identify appropriate information from online sources as part of their research activities and create simple presentations adding animations and transitions.
- Overall, the standards in numeracy have important areas for improvement. Across the key stages, there is limited evidence of differentiated learning activities in children's books that are matched closely to individual needs and abilities. By year 7, the most able children are secure in their knowledge and understanding of key concepts across the mathematics curriculum; however, they are inconsistent in demonstrating flexibility in their thinking when applying the most effective and efficient mental mathematics strategies. The children are beginning to develop their directional language through early coding skills.
- In the nursery unit, the children's levels of independence are underdeveloped for their age and stage of development as they lack opportunities to: label their own work; contribute meaningfully to snack, dinner or tidy-up routines; and, access independently a range of resources to extend their play. Most of the children are, however, well behaved and engage in collaborative play. They are developing an understanding of turn taking and an awareness of their own and others' feelings. Most of the children use the mathematical language of weight and length with confidence and engage well in matching, counting and sorting activities.
- There is insufficient use of the school's internal and external data to assess diagnostically the children's learning needs in order to monitor and evaluate accurately their progression across the key stages.
- The children are well-behaved and respectful of each other, their teachers and visitors. They engage willingly in their learning and complete the tasks their teachers set for them. The children do not have enough opportunities to interact with their peers through, for example, planned group and paired work. The children's thinking skills and independence are underdeveloped.

6. Quality of provision

- The quality of the planning, teaching and assessment requires significant improvement. The long- and medium-term planning focuses on tasks to be completed by the children rather than the learning outcomes. During the inspection, over one-half of the lessons observed had important areas for improvement. Overall, the teachers need to give a higher priority to developing more fully the children's thinking skills through more open-ended and challenging activities and providing structured opportunities for the children to reflect on their learning.
- The teachers neither plan for nor provide sufficient opportunities for the children to develop extended writing across the curriculum. In order to improve the children's writing skills and improve the standards of literacy, the children need a more expansive range of vocabulary to call upon in order to enrich the quality of the writing across the areas of learning.
- In the numeracy lessons observed, there: was limited use of differentiated learning activities to account for individual needs; and, were too few opportunities for the children to extend their learning experiences in order to achieve high standards during open-ended research, investigation and problem solving activities.
- The nursery unit has important areas for improvement, particularly the provision for language and literacy, the arts and the World Around Us. The organisation of the day and the processes of observation, assessment and planning do not meet effectively the needs of all the children. The quality of the staff interactions is, however, mostly good; the staff respond effectively to the children's individual interests; and, use open-ended questions to extend the children's language and thinking skills in early mathematics.
- The staff use effective strategies to address the children's mental health and well-being and to promote good attendance and behaviour of the children. As a direct result of these practices, the children overcome barriers in order to access learning. Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's approaches to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership and management of the school is an important area for improvement. The senior leadership team and co-ordinators' approaches to self-evaluation lack rigour. The monitoring and evaluating role of co-ordinators needs developed further to ensure their review of learning and teaching raises standards throughout the school.
- There is no school development plan covering the current academic year but work on the new plan is at an early stage. The interim action plans, created by the co-ordinators for the year, do not include clear, strategic directions and specific targets to effect improvement in the children's outcomes. There is a need to place a greater emphasis on learning and teaching strategies to be employed, supported by well-planned staff development opportunities, in order to effect improvements. In light of the inspection findings, it will be essential to refine the strategic areas for improvement to ensure there is a clear focus on effective learning and teaching in order to raise the outcomes for the children.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. In particular, there is a need for the governors to:
 - be fully engaged in the school development planning process; and
 - monitor the quality of learning and teaching through engagement with the learning co-ordinators.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education.

However, the school needs to:

- develop a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy in consultation with the school community; and
- formalise the annual child protection report to governors.

The children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

8. Overall effectiveness

Brooklands Primary School and Nursery Unit needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

The areas for improvement are for:

- teachers to adopt a more rigorous and collaborative approach to planning, learning and teaching, and assessment in order to meet the needs of individual children and improve the outcomes for all of the children;
- the senior leadership team and learning co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the impact of the actions to promote improvement within their areas of responsibility; and
- governors to ensure a school development plan is in place to guide strategically the work of the school.

In the nursery unit, the areas for improvement are:

- to review the organisation of the day to ensure the children have opportunity to develop their independence, attention and concentration and engage in sustained, purposeful play; and
- to review the processes of observation, assessment and planning to ensure appropriate progression across all areas of learning in order to meet the needs of all the children.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection of the school and nursery unit in 18 to 24 months.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website www.etini.gov.uk.

Inspectors observed learning and teaching, scrutinised documentation and the children's written work and held formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

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%

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

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