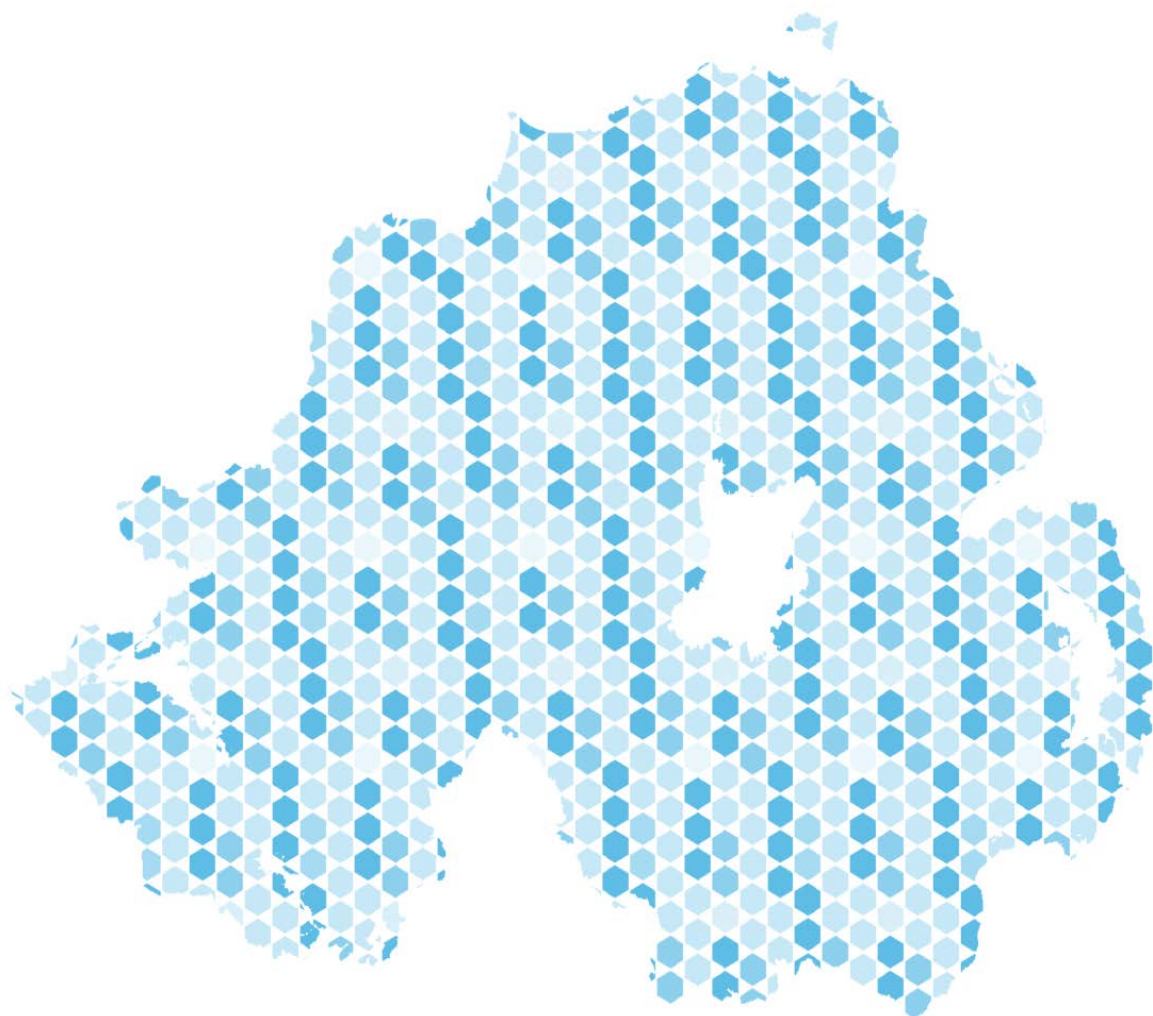


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Edenbrooke Primary School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in March 2013

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Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from lesson observations, from scrutiny of the children's completed written work and from a range of documentation including the school's internal performance data. In addition, the inspection team held discussions with groups of the children, with teaching and non-teaching staff and with representatives from the Board of Governors.

The views of the parents, teaching and non-teaching staff were sought through a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the principal and the governors. A summary of the outcomes from the questionnaires is included in section 6 of the report.

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%

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

1. School context

Edenbrooke Primary School is situated in Tennent Street between the Shankill and Crumlin Roads in north Belfast. The children come from the local area which has suffered from significant civil unrest over a long period of time. The enrolment of the school has increased steadily in recent years and stands currently at 212. At the time of the inspection around 83% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 40% of the children were identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Although the children's attendance is well below the average for primary schools, it is showing signs of improvement. There have been significant changes in leadership and management in the school; the Principal was appointed less than two years ago and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) took up post at the beginning of this school year.

Since September 2011, Edenbrooke Primary School has been participating in the Belfast Education and Library Board's (BELB) Achieving Belfast programme. Achieving Belfast is a long-term, sustained intervention programme the aim of which is to address under-achievement and improve educational outcomes and standards in schools. The school was identified based on a range of factors, including educational attainment that is well below the Belfast area board average at the end of key stage (KS) 2, and the high number of children coming from areas of multiple social disadvantage.

2. Focus of inspection and overall finding

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, how the school is addressing low attainment and under-achievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

In addition, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, and the school's arrangements for pastoral care, including child protection, were evaluated.

OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

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

Summary of key findings

Achievements and standards Quality of provision Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory Satisfactory Satisfactory
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KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

3. Achievements and standards

The quality of the children's achievements and standards is unsatisfactory

- The children respond well in class and participate willingly in the group and paired activities. They show an interest in their learning and the majority are keen to engage with the tasks set for them. When given the opportunity, they are generally able to work with a degree of independence but they need to become more competent in managing their own learning.
- An analysis of the KS2 assessment data for the past four years indicates that in both English and mathematics, the school's performance is well below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When compared with schools in the same free school meals category, the school's performance was below the average in mathematics in three of the past four years, rising last year to be in line with the average: in English the school's performance was well below the average in each of the four years, rising significantly last year to below the average.
- The standards in mathematics achieved by the majority of the children are unsatisfactory. Whilst the most able children have a sound understanding across a range of mathematical concepts, flexibility in their mathematical thinking is under-developed. The children rely on a limited range of strategies and are insecure when explaining the processes they use to solve problems.
- The standards achieved in literacy by the majority of the children are unsatisfactory. Across the curriculum the children's talking and listening skills are under-developed with most of the children lacking confidence when voicing their ideas and opinions. By the end of year 7, a majority of the children are not reading commensurate with their chronological age and have inconsistent levels of interest in reading for enjoyment. There is variation in the quality and accuracy of the children's written work across the school, reflecting the need to raise teacher expectations in order to enhance the standard of writing for all the children, and particularly those who are most able.
- A majority of the children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning and behaviour attain standards in line with their abilities. A minority of the children make sufficient progress to be discontinued from the special educational needs (SEN) register. To improve further the attainment levels of the children with SEN, it will be important for the staff to ensure that expectations are high and that they build on the children's prior attainments, beginning in the foundation stage. Although a good start to this process has commenced, it is still in the early stages.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory

- The quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. Most of the teaching was good or better; in over one-fifth of the teaching, however, there is a need for improvement. In the best practice, the teachers set high expectations of what the children can achieve and build effectively on their prior learning experiences. They use open-ended questions effectively to extend

the children's responses, and match activities closely to the varying abilities of the children. In the least effective practice, the work lacks appropriate challenge for the more able children and there is an over-reliance on low-level activities. In addition, the pace and progression of the teaching activities does not hold the attention of all of the children and there are missed opportunities to develop the children's writing. On occasions, the learning covered in class is not consolidated sufficiently or exploited for the maximum benefit of the children.

- The teachers have developed detailed, short and medium-term documentation to guide their work. There is, however, variation in the quality of the teachers' planning. Approaches to assessment across the school are inconsistent. A minority of teachers have introduced aspects of self-assessment and peer assessment which provide the children with good opportunities to reflect on their work. Overall, the teachers provide constructive feedback to the children and respond thoughtfully to their written work. A clear link is beginning to be established between planning, evaluation and assessment; this needs to be developed further to meet fully the learning needs of all of the children. A good start has been made to monitoring the progress of the children.
- The staff have worked hard to draft and implement a scheme for literacy: this now needs to be evaluated thoroughly to ensure it guides the line of progression in writing and reading in all classes and reflects realistically high expectations for all of the children. Throughout the school, and across curriculum areas, the children need more planned opportunities to develop their communication skills to underpin learning and the development of thinking skills. In the foundation stage, the younger children use the well-resourced role play areas to write within a context. These opportunities need to be extended to provide more focused and challenging opportunities for the children to write independently and to apply their phonic knowledge. The school has invested recently in new resources to raise the profile of and increase the children's interest in reading. It will be important to evaluate this provision carefully in order to measure the impact of these initiatives on the children's achievements and standards in reading, and to enhance further the provision with clear strategies for developing higher order reading and comprehension skills. The staff have undertaken appropriately a commendable amount of work in implementing a coherent approach to writing in different genres: this needs to be integrated further across the curriculum using a greater variety of real contexts and audiences to develop the children's creativity and awareness of writing style.
- The school's programme for mathematics is suitably broad and provides the children with a good range of experiences over the seven years. In order to improve the provision further, the school has identified appropriately, through an analysis of performance data, that mathematical investigations and the development of mathematical language, are areas for further development. The inspection endorses this finding. As they implement their agreed scheme of work, there is a need for the teachers to include opportunities to connect mathematical learning to real life contexts which make the mathematics lessons a more meaningful experience for the children. This needs to be developed on a more consistent basis across all classes in order to improve the quality of the mathematics provision.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good. A supportive ethos characterised by high levels of mutual respect between the children and the staff permeates the life and work of the school. The children are increasingly given a greater voice in the life and work of the school through the recently established school council. The children's behaviour observed throughout the period of the inspection was exemplary.
- The quality of the provision for children with special educational needs is good. It is characterised by a rich, pastoral approach and a supportive environment. The children present with a diverse range of additional educational needs which are identified early by the SENCO, support teachers and class teachers. A large number of children access support from the Belfast Education and Library Board's (BELB) Outreach Services. Individual education plans show evidence of good collaboration between the children, their parents and staff.
- The quality of the provision in the year 4-5 'Nurture' setting is very good. Careful consideration will need to be given to plans to reintegrate these children into the mainstream class setting, especially as they move through KS2 and prepare to transfer to the next phase of their education. The programmes offered by the learning support teacher are very good and provide a range of well-paced, learning opportunities which meet effectively the needs of this significant group of children.
- The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, the healthy break-time routines and the range of sporting activities which encourage the children to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory

- The Principal has been in post for less than two years. In this short period of time he has worked tirelessly to move the school forward and address the legacy and cycle of low and underachievement. His focus is rightly on the core business of learning and teaching and he has established effective processes for robust self-evaluation. The school development planning process is rigorous; it is informed by appropriate consultation with the parents, governors, teachers and children. It has led to the production of a series of associated action plans that inform well future development work.
- The teaching staff have worked hard to address most of the pressing whole-school, curricular development needs. Collectively they have shown a most commendable effort in this regard. However, there has been a lack of suitable curriculum development work and an absence of self-evaluation over a number of years. Standards in both literacy and numeracy are unsatisfactory and there is a need to improve the quality of learning and teaching.
- A strong team spirit has been developed among the staff and there are increased levels of staff morale. The deployment of staff has been both creative and effective, in particular, in relation to the Achieving Belfast programme. In addition, a high priority has been afforded to the development of the classroom assistants, their involvement in the planning process and in recognising the valuable contribution they make to the life and work of the school.

- There is now a cohesive leadership team in place which works very well together and is beginning to effect improvements in the children's learning. The quality of learning, teaching and standards is monitored through a systematic programme of lesson observations and the scrutiny of the children's written work. In addition, effective use is made of performance data to monitor the children's progress, to identify children in need of additional support with their learning and to set realistic targets, in particular, in literacy.
- The SEN team, led by the very recently appointed SENCO, has identified appropriately the need to build staff capacity in the area of special needs, recognising the crucial and primary role that each class teacher and classroom assistant has in providing constant, appropriate support that builds on the work of external partners. A strategy for staff development in this area is currently being devised and is identified appropriately as a medium term priority. It will be important that the leadership establishes a robust mechanism to monitor more thoroughly the progress of the children with special educational needs. The collegiality of this team approach is a particular strength of this school.
- A thorough evaluation of the current needs of the children has been carried out; this has been supported by an intensive programme of staff professional development over a short period of time, undertaken by the Curriculum and Advisory Support Team (CASS) of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). It is now crucial that the leadership team consolidates and refines the many areas that it is addressing currently, with the expressed aim of closing the gap in the children's attainment more swiftly and ensuring that high quality experiences are provided for all the children. Continuous support and well-targeted whole-school staff development are required to ensure that the children's standards of attainment reach an acceptable level.
- The governors are involved fully in the work of the school and the school development process. They are well-informed about the challenges facing the school. They exercise effectively their challenge function providing good leadership in order to bring about improvements in the children's standards of achievement. In the recent past, they have been obliged to make courageous decisions in relation to a range of important matters affecting the life and the work of the school.
- The school has established effective links with the parents and the local community. The parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through regular news bulletins and leaflets and annual reports.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the year 6 children they indicated that they feel happy in school and that they know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their well-being.

CONCLUSION

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- for leadership and management at all levels to work to raise the standards that the children attain in literacy and numeracy;
- to implement a coherent programme of continuous professional development sharply focused on expanding the expertise of the teachers and enhancing their skills for the teaching of reading and writing; and
- to monitor more effectively the progress made by the children who receive additional support.

6. Summary of questionnaire responses

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Issued to the school and nursery unit	101
Number of Questionnaires Returned	32
Percentage of Returns	31.68%
Number of Comments	16

Most of the responses from the parental questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the school. In particular, the parents appreciate the helpful teachers and the opportunities they have to meet in the Parents' Room. They are pleased with the progress made by their children and the information they receive from the school via news bulletins and leaflets. The very small number of concerns raised in the written comments has been discussed with the governors and the Principal.

In discussions with the governors, they expressed their appreciation of the Principal for his vision and his drive to raise the standards of achievement of the children and for the improved staff morale. They emphasised the high level of quality information they receive from the senior management team and they praised the hard-work and commitment of staff. In addition, they mentioned the success of initiatives that encourage the parents to engage with the school in support of their children's learning.

The inspectors also met with a group of the year 6 children. They spoke positively about school life; most of them expressed their enjoyment of reading in their lessons, of the extra-curricular activities available, and of being involved in the school council.

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	10
Number of Comments	0

SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES	
Number of Questionnaires Returned	6
Number of Comments	*

**Denotes fewer than five*

Ten of the teachers and six support staff completed the questionnaire. All of the staff who responded indicated their support for the work of the school.

Health and safety

- There is a need to carry out a risk assessment of the portable goal-posts at the community soccer pitch which the children have access to at break times.

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