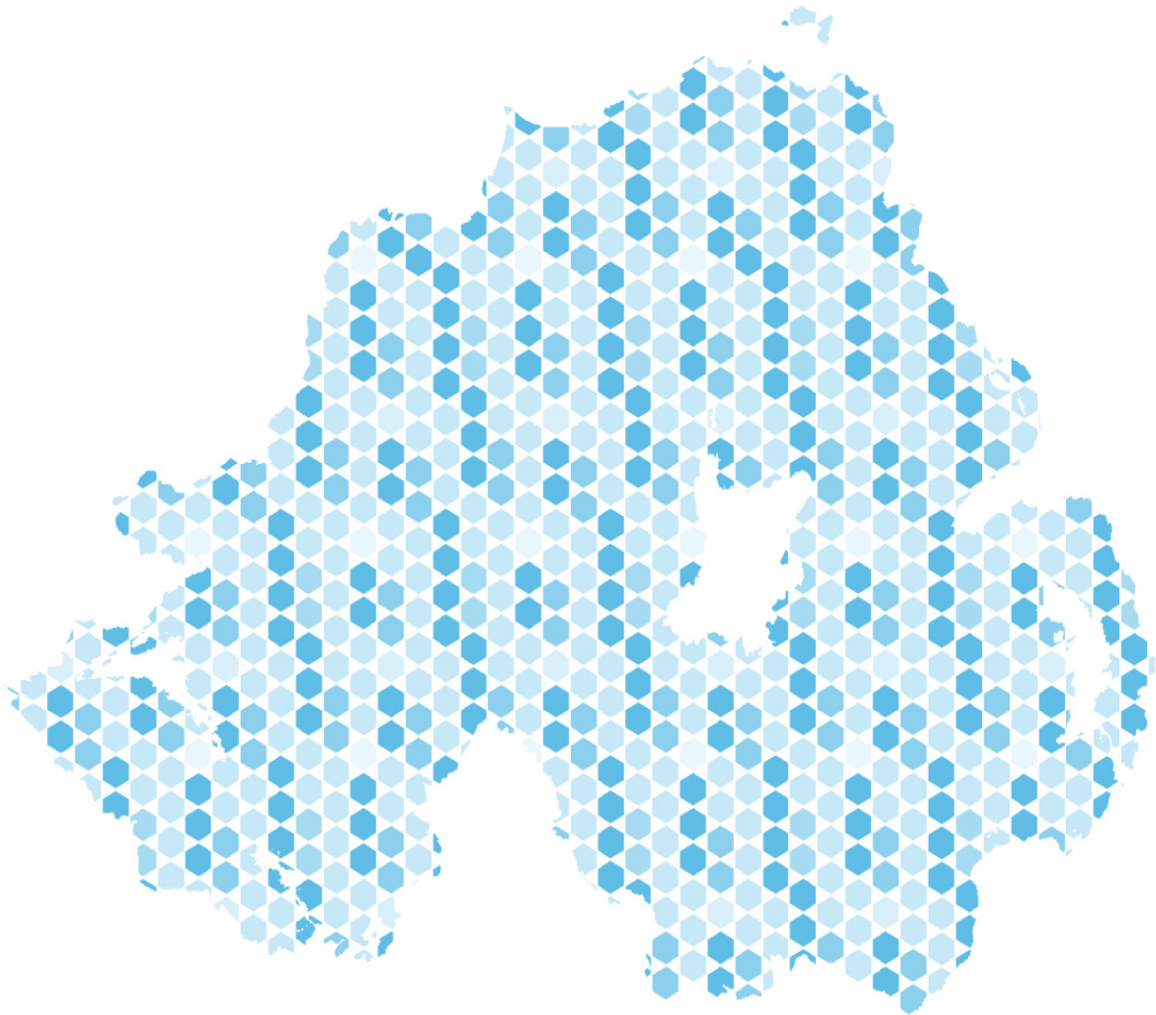


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Grange Park Primary School,
Bangor

Report of an Inspection
in January 2012

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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

BASIC INFORMATION SHEET (BIS) - PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A. i. **School: Grange Park Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 23/01/12**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-3045** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	48	51	50	43	53
Enrolments					
Primary	364	362	357	363	363
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Nursery Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Special Unit	0	0	0	0	0
Irish Medium Unit	0	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): 96% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**

Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 96%

Primary & Reception	Nursery Unit	Special Unit	Irish Medium Unit
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- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 17 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 23.1 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 26
- iv. Class Size (Range): 21 to 29
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | | | |
|---|--|-----|--|
| i. Clerical support: | | 36 | |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | | 30 | |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | | 105 | |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 15%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age: 0
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 15%
- 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 | Mathematics | Irish |
| | 98.08% | 98.08% | N/A |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Grange Park Primary School is situated on the west side of Bangor. The enrolment of the school has remained steady over the last five years and currently stands at 363 children. The majority of the children come from the immediate and greater Bangor area. At the time of the inspection approximately 15% of the children within the school were entitled to free school meals (FSM). The school has identified 15% of the children as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 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.

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.

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

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives of the Board of Governors (governors) and a group of the children from year 6.

One hundred and twenty-one questionnaires were issued to the parents in the primary school; approximately 60% of the parental questionnaires were returned to the Inspection Services Branch (ISB) and 40 contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that almost all of the parents are very supportive of the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents acknowledge the very positive changes that have been made within the school by the new Principal; the good standing of, and respect for, the school within the community; the good communication and links with the parents; the academic success of the children; and the hard-working and dedicated teachers.

Twelve teachers and five support staff completed the confidential online questionnaire. Almost all of the teachers and support staff were very positive about all aspects of the life and work of the school; in particular they acknowledged the warm friendly atmosphere of the school and the excellent working relationships between all of the staff with everyone working together in the best interests of the children.

The governors expressed very strong support for the school; they stated that they were informed very well about the work of the school and that they had a good understanding of the priorities outlined in the school development plan (SDP). They expressed their strong support for, and confidence in, the Principal and the staff, and the quality of the education they provide for the children.

In discussions held with the year 6 children they talked with enthusiasm about their experiences in the school. They value the help and support of their teachers, and enjoy the wide range of after-school activities. The children indicated that they know what to do and who to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their work or their safety and well-being.

An analysis of the questionnaires and the written comments was shared with the Principal and the governors.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good.

The newly appointed pastoral care co-ordinator has worked very hard and has introduced several new initiatives into the school including, for example, the newly formed School Council which provides the children with real and meaningful opportunities to express their views and contribute to the decision making process. The playground 'Buddy System' encourages the older children to support and take care of the younger children and 'Talk Time' is a service through which the co-ordinator offers counselling for the children and parents. The children are very friendly and courteous; the Principal and the staff are committed to the well-being of the children and place very significant emphasis on developing their self-esteem, and confidence. There are good opportunities, within the school's Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) programme, to develop the children's self-awareness and appreciation of others in the school and the wider community. The school also provides a popular 'Breakfast Club' to facilitate the parents. In the best practice the strengths include: the high expectations of all of the staff for the children's behaviour which aims to ensure that they feel valued, encouraged and motivated to learn. The staff make good use of the children's work and displays to celebrate their successes in all aspects of school life.

1.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

1.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school promotes healthy breaks and provides regular opportunities for the children to engage in energetic outdoor play and physical activities, which encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.7 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Principal has worked very hard to establish effective communication and links with the parents and others in the community. Good working relationships have been established with the neighbouring nursery school to ensure a smooth transition at the foundation stage (FS). More recent links include the regular provision of information about school events through the monthly newsletter, the school website, and the regular opportunities for the parents to meet both formally and informally with teachers to discuss their children's progress.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 LEARNING

Almost all the children are highly motivated and demonstrate very good levels of engagement in their learning. When provided with appropriately challenging work, they settle quickly into effective routines which support progress in their learning. By the end of key stage (KS) 2 the level of their oral communication is outstanding. Almost all of the teachers have very high expectations of what the children can achieve which is evident in the very good progress they make in their learning in literacy and numeracy. The teachers have identified the need to provide further challenge for the more able children.

The children need more opportunities to develop their thinking skills and personal capabilities. The teachers, across the three key stages need to develop a more collegial approach to developing the children's skills and capabilities systematically through agreed whole-school teaching strategies. All of the teachers require further training and development to support their implementation and delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC).

Throughout the school the children make effective use of ICT, use a range of applications and their ICT skills are very good. Their work in KS2 is accredited through the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment ICT Accreditation Scheme.

An analysis of the KS2 assessment data, over the past four years, shows that the standards in English and mathematics, when compared with both the Northern Ireland (NI) average and with schools in the same FSM band, have risen from above the average to well above the average. An analysis of the school's internal performance data indicates that almost all of the children achieve standards in line with their ability.

An analysis of the information provided at the time of the inspection for special educational needs (SEN) indicates that most of the children identified as requiring additional support with their learning are making good progress and are achieving in line with their ability.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

The overall quality and effectiveness of provision for English and literacy is very good.

The literacy co-ordinator provides clear purpose to and effective management and planning for the teaching of English and literacy across the school. The teachers work effectively as a team and have engaged in an open and honest whole-school approach to the further development of the literacy provision. Through more formal monitoring and evaluation of the children's learning and the standards they achieve, the teachers need to be able to draw out the implications of this self-evaluation process for their teaching, and ensure that all of the children achieve to their full potential.

The children demonstrate outstanding talking and listening skills. A variety of well-planned opportunities for the children to engage and interact with others develops excellent talking and listening skills. Almost all of the teachers encourage the children to give extended answers and develop their language through effective questioning, paired, group and whole-class discussion. When given the opportunity, the children engage confidently and enthusiastically in class discussions and activities. Almost all of the children listen respectfully, co-operate well with each other and talk about their play and their work. In the best practice, highly effective questioning by the teachers encourages the children to extend their vocabulary, take active roles in their learning, and respond with confidence and enthusiasm. This very good work needs to be applied consistently across the school.

Reading is taught through a whole-school phonics programme and the effective use of appropriately levelled reading schemes. As the children progress through the school they are introduced to a broad range of texts including poetry, fiction and non-fiction. In response the children read with fluency and understanding of the variety of texts they use. The teachers encourage an enjoyment of reading and the children speak with enthusiasm of their favourite books and authors. The school monitors and tracks the children's standards in reading through the regular analysis of standardised test results, which indicate that most of the children, by the end of KS2, are reading at a level at least equivalent to their age. The standards of reading are very good and there is evidence of year on year improvements.

The standards of the children's writing are good. In the FS, the children are introduced to different forms of print and experiment with letter and word formation the children are able to express ideas in simple sentences and they are encouraged to try their best. Through good opportunities for emergent and for increasingly independent writing the children master a growing variety of written styles for different purposes and audiences. As they progress through the school the children develop their skills through narrative, recount, report, persuasive, procedural and explanatory writing. An appropriate focus is placed upon the children's correct use of punctuation and grammar in their writing. The teachers have identified the need for greater consistency in the children's experiences of writing extended, creative and imaginative prose and poetry.

Nineteen children receive very effective support with aspects of literacy in small withdrawal groups with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

The overall quality of the provision for mathematics and numeracy is very good.

The recently-appointed numeracy co-ordinator monitors well the children's mathematical learning through, for example, scrutiny of the teachers' planning and sampling of the children's work. The whole-school programme for mathematics is suitably broad and provides for clear progression in the children's learning of mathematical concepts, skills and language. Numeracy is prioritised within the SDP; an action plan is in place which identifies a number of appropriate areas for development, including the need to develop further the differentiation strategies used by the class teachers to ensure appropriate support and challenge for all of the children.

Across all key stages, mental mathematics skills are promoted and developed systematically. The children use appropriate mathematical language to discuss their work, and the standards of numeracy presentation are excellent. The children are competent in their use of ICT to support their learning. They use programmable devices and a range of age-appropriate software to consolidate and extend their understanding of key mathematical concepts.

In the FS, the children develop well their mathematical knowledge and language through a combination of oral and practical work, including play-based learning activities. In the majority of the lessons observed, the teachers build effectively on the children's prior learning, and set the work in meaningful contexts to foster the children's enjoyment of mathematics. It will be important to disseminate and build upon the good practice across all of the FS.

In the best practice, in KS1 and 2, the children consolidate and extend their learning through an appropriate range of teaching activities, such as paired and group work, practical work and discussion. The children respond well to the range of activities, taking pride and interest in their work and valuing the contribution of others. In the majority of the lessons observed, where the practice was most effective, the teachers build on the children's prior learning; they focus appropriately on the development of processes, engage in purposeful discussion with the children about their chosen strategies, and extend the children's mathematical thinking by engaging the children in open-ended, investigative work.

In discussions with the children in year 4, they have a very good knowledge of basic number, data handling and measures. The children in year 7 have a very good understanding of all areas of the mathematics curriculum. The children were articulate in their explanations of the strategies they used to solve the mathematical problems posed. They also deployed a range of mental mathematics strategies to tackle the questions, having speed and accuracy in their calculations. By the end of KS2, almost all of the children attain very good standards.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The teachers' long- and medium-term planning is detailed and provides an overview of the children's learning experiences. As the teachers develop the planning further more emphasis needs to be placed on developing the short-term plans to focus more clearly on the children's acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the development of their thinking and problem solving skills. The planning needs to highlight the intended learning outcomes to be shared with the children across all areas of the curriculum. The teachers should reflect regularly on, and evaluate the children's progress and use this information to inform future learning. Greater emphasis should be placed on differentiated learning activities particularly to challenge the more able children and to facilitate a more consistent approach to developing the children's learning, enabling coherence, differentiation and progression. Overall the teachers' planning needs to reflect more fully the strategies outlined the NIC.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed in the school ranged from outstanding to inadequate.

Most of the teaching was good or better, with one-third being very good or outstanding; one-fifth of the teaching had areas for improvement.

In the most effective practice, the teachers built effectively upon their prior knowledge of the children's needs, abilities and interests. The lessons were well-paced and had an appropriate emphasis on meaningful real-life experiences with very good learning support for the range of abilities and needs. The teachers made skilful and effective use of a wide range of approaches including open-ended questions and the children had opportunities to work in pairs and in groups. Excellent working relationships formed the foundation of the most effective practice observed during the inspection.

The less effective practice was characterised by whole-class teaching, lack of differentiation, and lessons lacking in pace and challenge. The learning outcomes were not shared with the children and as a result they quickly lost interest in their work. There is a need to improve the organisation of lessons and management of classroom routines to reflect more fully the underlying principles of the NIC.

Where the classroom assistants were deployed effectively, they enhanced the quality of the teaching and provided good support for children requiring assistance with their learning.

The school provides good in-class and withdrawal support in literacy for those children identified as having additional learning needs.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The teachers use classroom observation and a range of standardised and non-standardised tests to assess the children's levels of achievement in English and mathematics. The recently-appointed assessment co-ordinator uses effectively the assessment outcomes to identify trends at whole-school and at class level. She has identified the need to introduce a wider range of testing to support the teachers in both the identification of underachievement and in the early identification of the children's learning needs. The teachers have begun to track individual children's progress and have undertaken staff training on how this data can be used effectively to inform their planning.

Provision for children who have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning, and who do not receive withdrawal, have support provided in-class through differentiated tasks planned by the class teacher. The quality of differentiated class teaching is variable and there is a need to monitor the provision more effectively to ensure that the tasks provided are sufficiently matched to the individual needs of each child.

Parents are kept well-informed of their child's progress through the annual written reports and the two parental consultations throughout the year. The annual written reports are prepared to a high standard by the class teachers and provide the parents with a comprehensive evaluation of their child's progress; the Principal also provides a supportive comment for each child. The parents of children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) should be invited to attend the review meetings and be more involved in setting SMART¹ targets for the children's progress and development.

Across all key stages, the teachers mark the children's work regularly; they add supportive, appreciative comments. In the best practice, the teachers annotate the work and indicate how the children can improve on their efforts. A draft policy on marking has been agreed in an effort to promote consistency across the school. As the marking policy is implemented it will be important that the children are involved more fully in setting individual targets to develop their knowledge and skills and given the opportunity to articulate their thoughts and understanding of their learning experiences and how they can improve.

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of the provision for special educational needs is good.

The SENCO is committed to improving the school's provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. There is evidence that recent changes, implemented as a result of the visionary leadership of the principal and the SENCO's dedication and ongoing professional development, are impacting positively on the SEN provision in the school.

¹ Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timebound

The school places an emphasis on identifying, at an early stage, the children who would benefit from additional support with aspects of their learning and IEPs are drawn up. The quality of the IEPs is variable and the school needs to ensure that there is consistency throughout the school in the setting and monitoring of personalised, meaningful and realistic targets for each child. The teachers have identified appropriately a more consistent approach as an area for development and plans have been put in place to address this.

Provision for the children who have been identified as requiring additional support with other aspects of their learning, for example, numeracy, do not receive withdrawal support.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The quality of leadership and management within the school is good.

The Principal provides outstanding strategic leadership and has a clear vision for the future development of all aspects of the work of the school. Her leadership is underpinned by a commitment to meeting the needs of, and raising the standards for, all of the children, as well as to the continued development of the school in the community. She knows the children well and has high ambitions for their individual achievements. Since her appointment, one and a half years ago, the Principal has been instrumental in beginning to develop a collaborative approach to the school improvement process and has ensured that the pace of change within the school has been managed well. As a result, she has overseen significant improvements in the quality of the provision in the school.

Since taking up her post the Principal has worked with the co-ordinators to support them in the development of their leadership and management skills. There is a need for a small number of the co-ordinators to provide stronger curricular leadership. The Principal, together with the governors, needs to refocus on developing effective communications throughout the school and to review the roles and responsibilities of the staff and co-ordinators in order to promote a broader range of teaching strategies and enrich the learning experiences for all of the children.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed school development plan (SDP). The Principal is developing effective processes for consultation about the SDP within the school community. The consultations along with the start made to using the outcomes from data, target-setting and benchmarking have led to the development of well-constructed action plans which are appropriately focused on raising further the standards of learning and teaching.

The school gives very good attention to and meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

4.3 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The governors are fully involved in the life and work of the school and support effectively the Principal, and the staff in raising the profile of the school and maintaining links with the parents and the local community.

4.4 ACCOMMODATION

The school building and grounds are very well maintained. The standard of caretaking is excellent.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the very good standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy;
- the quality of most of the teaching which was good or better, with one-third being very good or outstanding;
- the very good pastoral care provision which underpins the children's learning;
- the courteous, articulate and mannerly children and their willingness to engage in their learning;
- the good quality of the provision for those children requiring additional support with aspects of their literacy skills; and
- the outstanding quality of the management of the Principal and the improvements she has brought about through her clear strategic vision and effective management of change.

5.2 The inspection identified the following area for improvement:

- review the roles and responsibilities to develop more effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the provision to ensure more consistency in the children's learning and the implementation of a wider range of teaching strategies across all aspects of the curriculum.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The doors in the extension to the school are not secured therefore open to access by unauthorised personnel.
- The mobile classroom is open to access by unauthorised personnel.
- The teacher in the mobile classroom is isolated; there is no means of communication with the main building should an emergency arise.
- At the time of the inspection some of the classrooms and corridors were particularly cold; the heating system is inadequate to maintain an appropriate temperature throughout the school.

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