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*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

**Euston Street Primary School
Belfast**

April 2015

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF EUSTON STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT6 8BG (101-0146)

The focused inspection of Euston Street Primary School in November 2013 highlighted strengths in relation to the behaviour of the children, the good or better teaching in half of the lessons observed and the start made to the collection of performance data.

The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to raise the low standards in literacy and numeracy attained by the children;
- to develop further the planning, teaching, and assessment for learning in order to improve the children's learning experiences; and
- for leadership and management at all levels to apply a more strategic approach to self-evaluation and action-planning leading to sustained school improvement.

The inspection conclusion in November 2013 stated:

“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 leadership and management, standards, and learning and teaching which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of the all the children.”

The school entered the formal intervention process on 3 December 2013. The Department of Education (DE) indicated at that time that a follow-up inspection would take place and that, in the interim, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) would evaluate the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements through a follow-up visit. The post-inspection action plans were received by DE in March 2014. The DE acknowledged the positive response that the school had made, and planned to make, regarding the areas for improvement identified in the report.

The action plans were discussed with the school during an initial visit carried out by the ETI on 20 May 2014.

An interim follow-up visit took place on 27 November 2014 and a further district visit was carried out in January 2015.

In the interval since the original inspection, the school received extensive support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Education Authority Belfast Region.

The following information is relevant to the work of the school since the original inspection.

- The school enrolment has continued to increase and currently stands at 302 children, and the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has risen slightly to 66.8%; the percentage of children identified with additional learning needs has decreased slightly and is now 29%.
- Daily timetables have been revised to include a morning break for all children, and now allow for sufficient blocks of time for the children to engage actively in their literacy and numeracy activities.

- The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) suite and library are fully timetabled and a library skills programme has been implemented.
- There were a number of changes in the teaching staff including the appointment of a 'Signature Project'¹ teacher and an additional learning support teacher.
- The format for the teachers' medium term planning for learning and teaching has been revised.
- A wide range of additional withdrawal programmes has been put in place to support the children with additional learning needs and the newcomer children and a mathematics catch-up programme is provided by the numeracy co-ordinator.
- The principal has introduced a distributed leadership approach and built a collegiate ethos among all of the staff.
- The roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators were reviewed, resulting in a number of changes in key personnel.
- The School Development Plan has been reviewed and amended.
- The school has received effective support from the Education Authority Belfast Region CASS officers which reduced appropriately over the time of the follow-up process, due to the teachers developing their capacity to take ownership of the improvements.

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

- The children's talking and listening skills have greatly improved and they are confident in addressing their peers and in engaging with adults.
- In discussions with the most able year 7 children, they could apply confidently their basic literacy and numeracy skills and have a good understanding of mental mathematics strategies. The children read with fluency and understanding and can discuss, with enthusiasm, a range of reading preferences and authors.
- The children make confident use of a wide range of ICT programmes to extend their talking and listening, writing and numeracy skills.
- The children have a clear understanding of the key targets they need to meet in order to improve their writing, and can self- and peer-assess against these targets; they are making good progress in their standards of writing.
- The children's attendance has increased since the time of the inspection, particularly the attendance of those children who are receiving additional learning support.

¹ The 'Signature Project' refers to the OFMdfM Delivering Social Change: Improving Literacy and Numeracy (Signature) Project.

- Throughout the follow-up inspection process, the quality of the teaching has significantly improved; almost all lessons were good or better and over half were very good or better.
- The teachers plan programmes to match the children's learning needs which are informed well by the systematic tracking of the children's progress.
- There is more focused and appropriate differentiation in the teachers' planning, with activities that match the needs and the interests of the children.
- The teachers have high expectations for the quality of the children's work and their behaviour and the children are responding positively.
- There is increased rigour in the teachers' marking for improvement which informs the children well on how to make further progress in their learning.
- The withdrawal support provided for literacy, numeracy and newcomer children is of a good standard.
- The School Development Plan is now underpinned by performance data for more effective target setting and takes account of the views of children, staff, parents and governors; it is now fully compliant with DE regulations and effecting improvement in the quality of achievement and standards, and provision.
- The co-ordinators make very effective use of both qualitative and quantitative data to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to put in place professional development programmes for all staff which support the strategic priorities of the school.
- The school leadership, through the monitoring and evaluation strategies employed by the Quality Assurance Team, are affecting significant improvement which they now have the capacity to sustain.
- The governors have a more robust challenge function, and co-ordinators now report directly to the governors on the work of the school and the improvements brought about in the children's achievements.
- All staff are reflective practitioners and engage in trusted colleague observations to disseminate further the good practice in the school.
- The principal works closely with other principals in the East Belfast Principal Cluster in identifying common priorities and setting up other cluster groups for co-ordinators to share good practice.

Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is now 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 area for improvement is:

- to continue to raise the standards in literacy and numeracy.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

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