

PRIMARY INSPECTION 2014-15



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Cygnnet House, Glenlola
Collegiate Preparatory
Department, Bangor

Report of an Inspection in
February 2015

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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

CUSTOMER
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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 in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-primary.htm>.

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

Almost twenty-five percent of the parents responded to the questionnaires and most indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and the work of the preparatory department. A majority of the teaching and the support staff completed questionnaires and all of their responses were positive. A number of issues raised in the parental questionnaires concerning communication and information on progression was shared with the principal, head of the preparatory department and representatives of the governors.

2. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards, in particular, how the preparatory department is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- the quality of provision for numeracy in the preparatory department; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Context

Cygnets House is the preparatory department of Glenlola Collegiate, Bangor. The department is located in a separate part of the main building of Glenlola Collegiate, and the children have access to the main school's facilities for information and communication technology (ICT). In the past, Cygnets House was traditionally for girls only and is now in the third year of taking boys; currently 10 boys are enrolled. Over the past four years, the enrolment has increased steadily and currently stands at 65 children. Over the past two years, the percentage of children on the special needs register has increased significantly to almost 17%. Approximately 6% of the children are entitled to free school meals.

In the past two years, there have been significant changes in staffing due to retirements and the appointment of a new head of department. At the time of the inspection, there were three full-time teachers including the head of department and two temporary teachers.

Cygnnet House Preparatory School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Enrolment	54	62	67	65
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.1	96.3	96.2	96.3
FSME Percentage ¹	3.7	4.8	6.0	6.1
% (No) of children on SEN register	1.9	4.8	4.5	16.9
No. of children with statements of educational needs	1	1	1	1
No. of newcomers	2	1	0	0

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Performance Level	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

5. Achievements and standards

- The children are respectful of their teachers and each other. Throughout the department, almost all of the children listen well in class, settle quickly to their lessons and are keen to learn. When given the opportunity, the children work well in pairs and small groups, where they self-manage and can take on different roles to build their confidence and self-esteem.
- By year 7, the highest achieving children can apply a range of strategies and explain their thinking using the correct mathematical language; however, they are inconsistent in demonstrating flexibility in their thinking when attempting challenging and unfamiliar problems.
- The department's internal and external data indicates that almost all of the children achieve good standards with scores above the average in standardised tests; however, the department has identified the need to make more effective use of its qualitative and quantitative data to track the children's progress and ensure they are achieving in line with their ability. The department has reviewed appropriately the effectiveness of the targets in the individual education plans and is setting out to improve this aspect of the special educational needs provision.
- The children enjoy and make use of ICT to research information for topic work and to make digital presentations.

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

6. Provision

- The quality of the planning, teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Most of the lessons observed were effective in promoting learning. The department has prioritised, and is developing further the planning and whole-school guidance for numeracy to incorporate a sharper emphasis on the interconnection of mathematical processes across the curriculum.
- All of the numeracy lessons are well structured and, when appropriate, they incorporate planned mental mathematics activities. In the most effective practice, the teaching is well paced and builds on the children's prior knowledge. The learning is set in meaningful contexts, and practical resources, group work and active learning approaches are used to good effect by the teachers to engage and motivate the children. There are good opportunities for high quality talking and listening activities to enable the children to explain the mathematical reasoning behind their answers. The plenary sessions are well planned to assess the children's learning and inform future planning. In the less effective practice, the lessons lack pace and challenge and insufficient account is taken of the range of the children's individual learning needs; too often there is an over reliance on worksheets.
- To improve further the provision in numeracy, the teachers need to: plan for numeracy across the curriculum, particularly in science; place a greater emphasis on the interconnections between mathematical concepts; and devise well-planned investigations for the children to apply their mathematical knowledge, understanding and ICT skills.
- The pastoral care of the children is given a high priority. There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos throughout the department. The teachers and support staff know the children very well and provide a secure and caring environment which is conducive to learning. The children make a positive contribution to the life and work of the department through the school council, the Buddy scheme and the Eco-club. These roles and responsibilities along with the opportunities to participate in a wide range of enriching extra-curricular activities develop well the children's confidence and leadership skills.
- Given the significant increase in the percentage of children presenting with special educational needs over the past two years, the staff and management have acknowledged appropriately the need to: review the identification of, and the support for, those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning; and plan how best to involve parents in the review process.
- The individual education plans need to set out precise and measurable targets, along with well-chosen intervention strategies to enable the class teachers to provide more focused in-class support. It will be important that the recently appointed special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has access to sufficient training and time to be able to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement are at an early stage of development. The recently appointed head of department is highly committed to the well-being of the children and staff, and to the ongoing improvement of provision within the department. In her relatively short time in post, she has identified a number of key areas to be improved and is developing a culture of self-evaluation which the inspection team endorses.
- The school development plan (SDP), together with the associated action plans, will require adjustment in light of the inspection findings: to take account of the increase in the number of children presenting with special educational needs and to ensure the internal and external data is used more effectively to monitor the children's progress and achievements.
- The head of department has identified and started to update the department's policies and the information for parents to ensure that the communications are up-to-date and reflect the current roles and responsibilities of the staff.
- The governors, while sufficiently aware of the life and work of the preparatory department, need to focus their expertise more closely on the learning and teaching, and exercise their challenge function in order to support the principal and the head of department in improving further the outcomes for all children. The parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- The principal needs to work more closely with the head of department to monitor and evaluate the provision for learning and the standards the children achieve within the preparatory department.
- On the basis of the evidence at the time of the inspection, the department has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The board of governors and teachers with specific responsibility are aware of the need to update their training for child protection and safeguarding, however, the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has not yet been able to provide them with the necessary training. In discussions with the year 6 children, they reported that they feel safe and cared for in school and are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

8. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this department is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the department's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

The main areas for improvement include the need to:

- review the procedures for the identification of, and support for, children with special educational needs, and ensure there are sufficient opportunities for the teachers, parents and the children to be more involved in the review process; and
- develop a more rigorous approach to school improvement planning that takes account of the department's available data to effect improvements in the learning and teaching.

Health and safety/Accommodation

1. There are limited toilet facilities for the boys.
2. The locking and buzzer system for the front door entrance is inadequate.
3. There is open access to the playground from the Valentine Road.

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