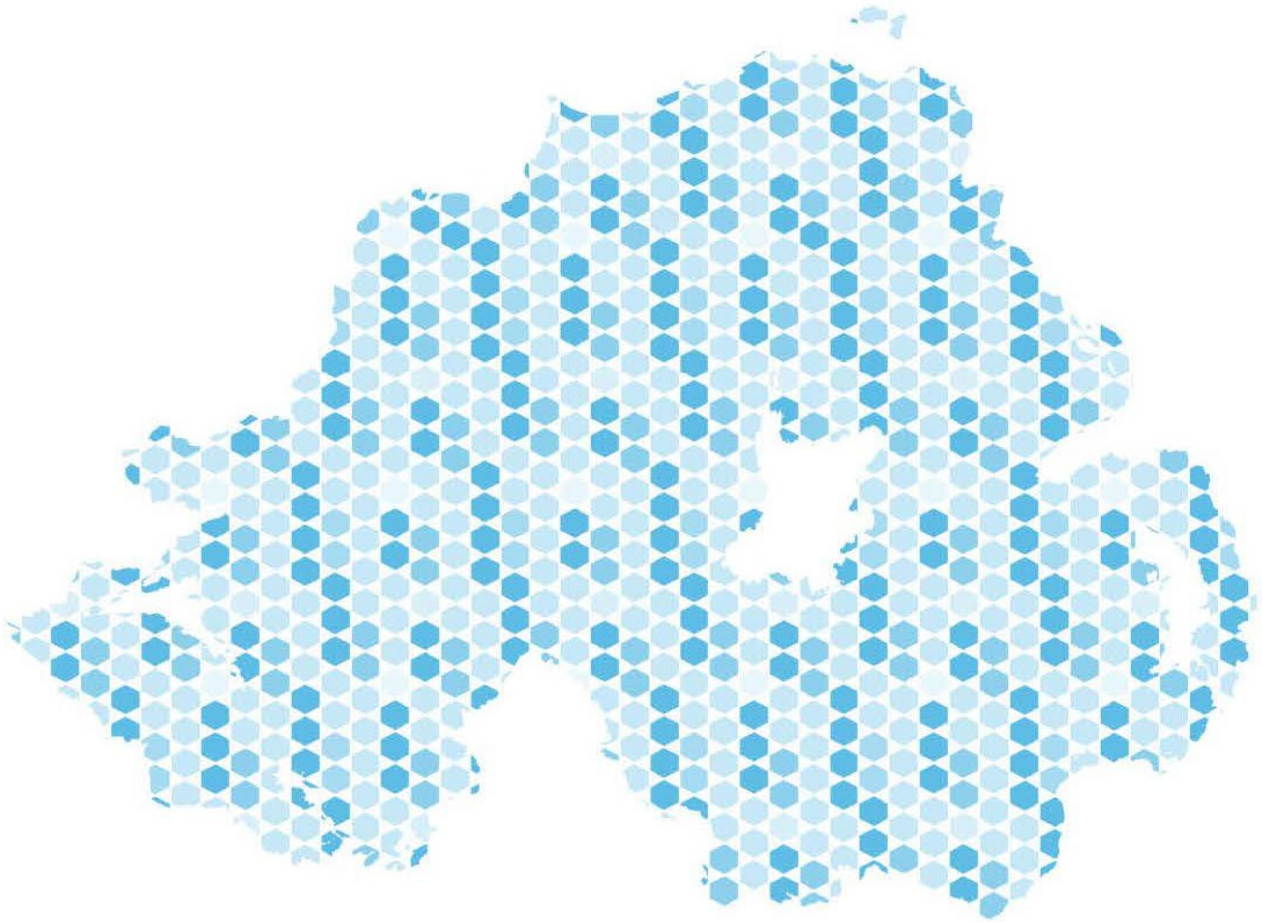


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Woodburn Primary School,
Carrickfergus, County Antrim

Controlled, co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
(Involving Action Short of Strike)
in October 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF WOODBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL, CARRICKFERGUS, BT38 9AB (301-0696)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Woodburn Primary School in [January 2017](#) which concluded that the school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

As a consequence, the Department of Education entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process under the [Every School a Good School](#) policy.

The areas for improvement were:

- to develop a clear, shared understanding of the requirements of the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum and of high quality learning and teaching;
- to improve the quality of the children's learning experiences and outcomes in literacy and numeracy by planning effectively for a coherent integrated curriculum which supports effectively progression in learning;
- to review roles and responsibilities and to develop leadership at all levels; and
- for leadership at all levels to develop an effective cycle of self-evaluation leading to improvement in the children's learning experiences and on raising standards.

The school's action plans were of a good quality and were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2017 and a follow-up inspection in October 2018.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that almost all of the teachers would not be engaging with the inspection. The principal co-operated regarding her leadership role and the vice-principal as a class teacher. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the school has received relevant external support provided by the Education Authority in relation to: numeracy; literacy; and, developing the role of the co-ordinator. In addition, the teachers, leadership and management have accessed additional training and support from C2k, through their participation in a shared education partnership and by linking and sharing practice with other schools. Consequently, there has been improvement in aspects of the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- a new vice-principal was appointed and took up post in August 2017;
- significant changes have been made to both the classroom and co-ordinator roles and responsibilities of staff;
- the school has gained a Silver Eco-Award and is working towards its Green Flag Status; and
- the leadership and management have been involved in planning a relocation to a new school building due to open in September 2019.

Key findings

- By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the children discuss and work very confidently and maturely in groups and pairs and when working independently. They are very well focused on their learning tasks and contribute meaningfully to their own assessment of learning. The children write using a wide range of genre and for different purposes as they progress through the school. The ETI cannot evaluate fully the quality of the outcomes for children due to the limited access to first-hand evidence of learning and teaching within almost all classrooms.
- A group of children, representing years 5 to 7, spoke enthusiastically to the inspectors about their enjoyment of both literacy and numeracy. They were efficient in describing and using a wide range of mathematical strategies to solve problems and make accurate calculations; in a small number of cases of miscalculation, they reflected on and self-corrected their answers independently. A group of children from years 6 and 7, spoke enthusiastically and articulately about a wide range of authors they enjoy and why they enjoyed them. Almost all read with fluency and expression and were able to explain well features within the texts. They described a range of writing styles.

- Based on the documentation made available, the emphasis being placed on handwriting and the presentation of children's work are having a positive impact. There is also evidence of connections being made across the curriculum in both literacy and numeracy. There are increased opportunities to widen the children's learning experiences outdoors and build working relationships with others through their participation in the shared education partnership. Photographic evidence indicates a wide range of appropriate practical resources and approaches being used to explore number, pattern, shape and measures by the children in the foundation stage. The planning and subsequent evaluations provide clear guidance for the delivery of a coherent and integrated curriculum to support progression in learning. The ETI cannot evaluate fully the quality of the provision due to the limited access to first-hand evidence of learning and teaching within almost all classrooms.
- The quality of leadership and management is now good. There is now a senior leadership team in place, a school improvement team is also operational and the roles and responsibilities of class teachers and co-ordinators have been reviewed and updated effectively. The leadership and management team implement a robust and rigorous cycle of self-evaluation leading to improvement. The documentation shows feedback to staff on the quality of their planning, learning and teaching, sampling the children's work, talking to focus groups of children about their work and the detailed analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data.
- There is a high priority given to staff development focusing on building the staff's capacity regarding their classroom practice and their roles as co-ordinators. A collegial approach is promoted by which staff are encouraged to learn from one another and develop a shared understanding of learning and teaching. A robust system is being used to moderate progression in learning. The school's priorities for improvement and the progress being made are communicated clearly to governors and parents. The governors continue to develop effectively their skills and knowledge of governance through self-reflection and meetings with a range of staff within the school; their contribution is an integral part of the school's improvement programme.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact of actions taken and the extent to which the following areas for improvement have been addressed:

- the staff's shared understanding of the requirements of the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum and of high quality learning and teaching;
- the improved quality of the children's learning experiences and outcomes in literacy and numeracy;
- the effective development of leadership within the classroom; and
- the impact of the cycle of self-evaluation leading to improvement in the children's learning experiences and raising standards.

Consequently, there remains a need for Woodburn Primary School to address urgently significant areas for improvement (the Department of Education will seek assurance from the education Authority (and/or employing authority) that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report).

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by almost all of the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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