

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
INSPECTORATE

PRIMARY INSPECTION

Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore
Community Nursery Unit, Newbuildings,
County Londonderry

DE Ref No 201-2261

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in June 2024



Providing Inspection services for:
Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Follow-up to the of Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore Community Nursery Unit, Newbuildings, BT47 2RL (201-2261)

Introduction

Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore Community Nursery Unit is situated in Newbuildings, on the outskirts of Londonderry; the children attending the school and nursery unit come from the local and surrounding area. The overall enrolment has remained steady and currently stands at 182 children, including 24 children in the nursery unit. There is an increase in the number of children in the school and nursery unit on the special education needs (SEN) register, currently 23% of all pupils. A range of externally accredited awards have been achieved by the school since June 2021, including the 'Investors in Mental Health' award and the 'Eco-Schools Green Flag' award as part of the school's participation in a shared education programme with another local primary school.

This follow-up inspection was carried out in June 2024 and provided the school with the opportunity to demonstrate its progress in addressing the areas for action from the time of the last follow-up inspection in March 2023 and the monitoring visit in June 2021.

At the time of the inspection, an associate principal and an acting-principal share the role of principal and currently five members of teaching staff are in temporary posts. A new principal has now been appointed and is due to take up post in September 2024.

Views of parents, staff and pupils

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) issued online confidential questionnaires to parents, staff and children in year 7 in advance of the follow-up inspection.

Most of the children in year 7 (21) responded to the online questionnaire with nine of them providing additional written comments. The inspectors also met with children from year 1 to year 7. Through the questionnaires and discussions, the children reported that they were very happy and safe in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their safety or well-being. They reported that in school, everyone is welcomed, valued and respected and that they can ask the staff for help with their learning. They commented on how they enjoy learning through the use of online resources and the numerous opportunities for school trips.

Thirty-one per cent (40) of the parents responded to the questionnaire, with just over one-half (23) of them provided additional written comments. Most of the responses were very positive. The parents commented on: the dedicated staff who work well together to support their child; the helpful weekly newsletters which keep parents informed of the learning activities; and that their child is happy in the school and making good progress.

Almost all of the teaching staff (12) responded positively to the questionnaire, with one-half of them providing additional written comments. The staff reported that: they contribute well to achieving the school's vision; their views are sought and acted upon; and the school has community links which impact positively on the children's learning experiences.

A summary of the questionnaire responses, including any issues raised, were shared with the principal and the chair of governors.

Key actions

The key actions which affect the work of the school are set out below.

- The school has received external support provided by the Education Authority (EA), in relation to school leadership, including governance, and literacy and numeracy curriculum support.
- The school has reviewed middle and senior leadership roles and appointed temporary numeracy and SEN co-ordinators.
- An associate principal and an acting-principal have been appointed by the EA to support and maintain continuity and stability in the leadership of the school.
- Staff (teaching and non-teaching) have had access to a wide range of relevant training relating to: the teaching of the World Around Us; 'Forest Schools NI' initiatives; support for children with autism; the 'Solihull Approach' to enhance the school's nurture provision; positive behaviour training, including support for children with challenging behavioural needs; and leadership programmes.

Key findings

- The children who met with the inspectors spoke very positively about their welcoming school, their learning experiences and the good friendships they have established. They are proud of their achievements and value how the school has celebrated their successes across the curriculum through daily praise, feedback, displays of their work, 'pupil of the week' awards, memory books and during weekly assemblies. The members of the school council explained clearly how they were elected to their roles by their peers and spoke about the positive changes they have brought about to aspects of school life that impact on them through consultation and the work of the council.

- The children engaged well in their learning in all of the lessons observed. They have good levels of independence, confidence and understanding in their responses to activities and to questioning by the teachers. The staff use well a range of strategies to promote positive behaviour. In the highly effective practice observed, the children were engaged actively in problem-solving and there were opportunities for the children to connect meaningfully their learning across the curriculum and to real life. The staff have identified appropriately the need to improve the numeracy outcomes attained by the children through reviewing and developing the curriculum planning to ensure appropriate progression across all classes.
- The leadership at all levels work alongside teachers to monitor closely the progress made by the children who have SEN. Staff use well the information on the children's progress to set appropriate targets and the individual education plans are of a very high quality. There is effective collaboration with the parents and a range of outside agencies to support the children in their learning and with their wellbeing.
- There are clear strategic priorities within the current school action plans which are informed appropriately by consultations with a range of stakeholders, and the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. There are well-embedded systems in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the improvement work on the children's progress in learning at individual, class and whole school level, including regular engagement with the children. The staff have identified the need to enhance further the consistency in the children's learning through re-engaging with staff observation of learning and monitoring of curriculum planning.
- Staff professional learning is aligned very well to the school's priorities and is impacting positively on the learning experiences for the children. The staff work collaboratively to monitor, evaluate and review the impact of the strategies and approaches implemented as a result of their professional learning and continue to identify further priorities for improvement.
- The leadership and staff work well strategically and collegially to support and promote the emotional health and wellbeing of pupils and staff, for example through the 'PATHS' programme delivered by Barnardo's NI. The governors and leadership have worked successfully to: bring about stability in staffing; review the school ethos statement; identify appropriate areas for development; and improve the communication between the school, parents and the local community. Through the work of the board of governors curriculum sub-group, the governors are continuing to exercise appropriately their challenge and support function.

Child Protection

At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the school demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance.

Going Forward

The staff and governors in Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore Nursery Unit have worked strategically and collegially to support the children and improve their learning experiences. The school's improvement work is underpinned by their ethos statement to support every child to feel welcomed, safe, nurtured and actively involved in their learning journey to achieve their educational, social, and emotional potential.


The ETI, through the engagement of the District Inspector, will work with the school to take forward the areas for action set out in this report.

No further follow-up inspection is required.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2024

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the [ETI website](#)

Follow us on  [@ETI_news](#)

 [@ETInews](#)

 InsPIRE

 Empowering
Improvement
Stepping Forward Together