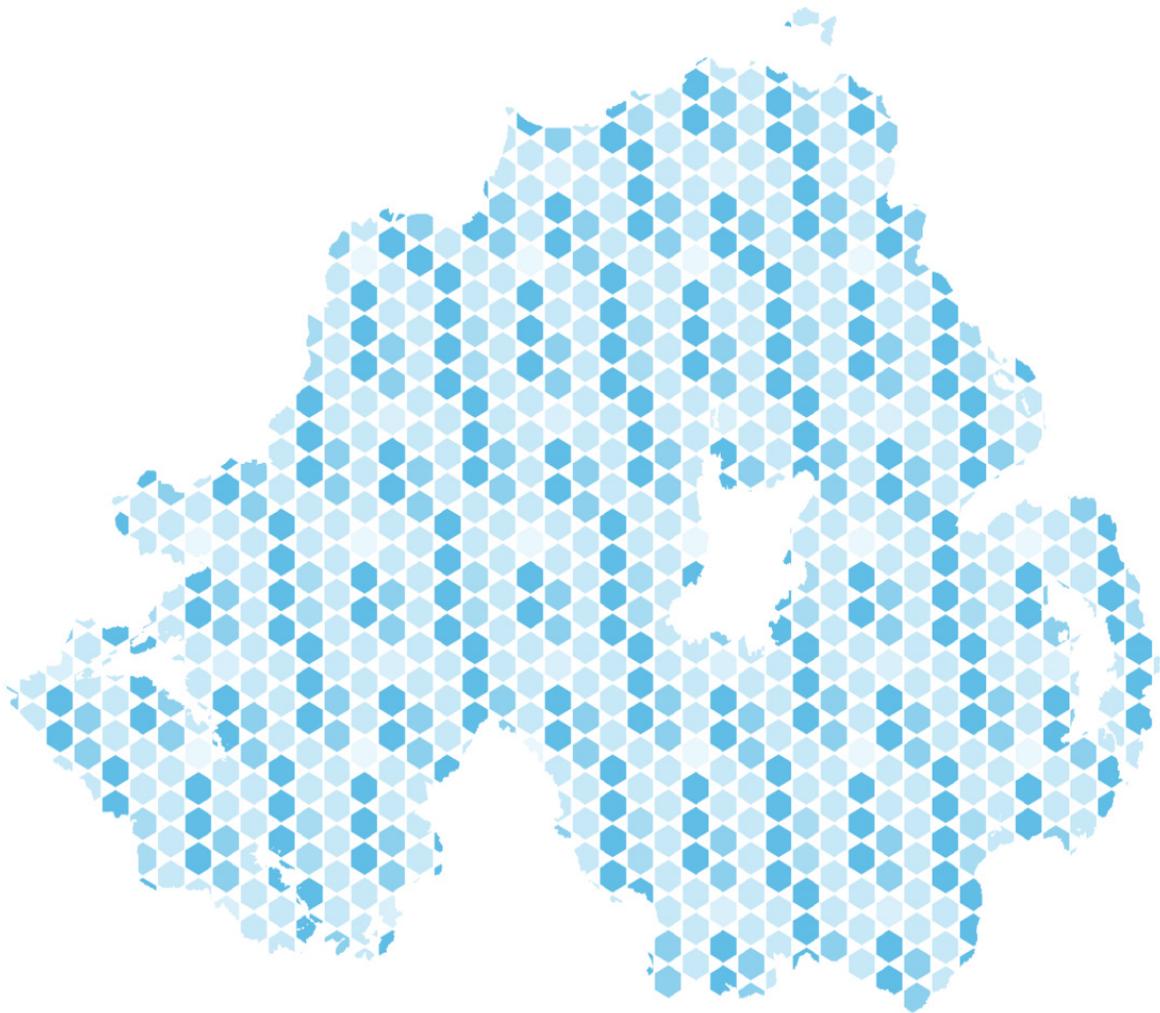


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Brownlee Primary School,
Lisburn

Report of an Inspection
in October 2011



CONTENTS

Section		Page
	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	2
3.	THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	4
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	5
5.	CONCLUSION	6

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where terms that are more general 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: Brownlee Primary** iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 03/10/11**
 ii. **School Reference Number: 401-0762** iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

B.

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 1 Intake	23	23	26	28	25
Enrolments					
Primary	160	191	182	170	168
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): 94.1% **NI Avg Att: 94.7%**
- Average Attendance for those children on the Special Educational Needs Register: 93.29%
- | | Primary & Reception | Nursery Unit | Special Unit | Irish Medium Unit |
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|--|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
- D. i. Number of Teachers (including the principal and part-time teachers): 8.84 0 0 0
 (Full-time equivalent = 25 teaching hours)
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 19.0 NI PTR: 20.2
- iii. Average Class Size: 24
- iv. Class Size (Range): 22 to 26
- v. Ancillary Support:
 Number of Hours **Per Week**:
- | | |
|---|----|
| i. Clerical support: | 30 |
| ii. Foundation Stage Classroom Assistant Support: | 25 |
| iii. Additional hours of other classroom assistant support: | 40 |
- vi. Percentage of children with statements of special educational needs: 1.79%
- vii. Total percentage of children on the Special Needs Register: 18.45%
- viii. Number of children who are **not** of statutory school age:
- ix. Percentage of children entitled to free school meals: 23.81%
- 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 | 100% | Mathematics | 100% | Irish | N/A |
|----------------|------|--------------------|------|--------------|-----|

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Brownlee Primary School is located on Wallace Avenue, Lisburn. The enrolment stands currently at 168 children. At the time of the inspection, approximately 24% of the children were entitled to receive free school meals and approximately 18% were identified by the school as having special educational needs.

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 staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors), a group of the children from year 6 and the School Council representatives from years 4, 6 and 7.

One hundred and thirty-four questionnaires were issued to the parents; approximately 54% were returned to Inspection Services Branch of which 31 contained additional written comments. Nearly all of the responses indicated an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the school. In particular, the parents reported their high regard for the staff and the leadership of the school, the care and support provided by all of the staff for the children and the inclusive ethos of the school. An analysis of the questionnaires and the few issues raised by the parents were shared with the Principal and the governors.

Ten teachers and seven support staff completed the online questionnaire; with additional written comments from both. All the responses were very positive and supportive of the work of the school; they reflected the excellent working relationships at all levels and the effective team-work.

The governors expressed their appreciation of the work of the school, the commitment of all the staff to the children and the leadership provided by the Principal. They reported that the Principal and the co-ordinators keep them well informed about the management of the school, the curricular developments and the standards achieved by the children.

In discussions held with the year 6 children and members of the School Council, they talked enthusiastically about the welcome given to new children, the interesting and enjoyable learning opportunities available in class lessons, and their participation in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. They also indicated strongly that they feel happy in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. The school's practice reflects its mission statement, "a school where the individual is valued in a supportive and safe environment where everyone's learning experience is celebrated." The Principal and Vice-principal play a key role in ensuring that the pastoral care and the special educational needs provision integrate well with the ongoing curricular developments. The school has an inclusive ethos and there are excellent working relationships at all levels. The children's behaviour is exemplary and they are courteous and welcoming to visitors. The teachers motivate them well through the very good use of praise and encouragement and the reward system. The children in years 4 to 7 enjoy their involvement in the School Council through which they can bring forward ideas for consideration by the Principal and Vice-principal. The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The children access a wide range of physical activities and the school operates a healthy break and lunch programme thereby encouraging the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

1.5 SAFEGUARDING

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

1.6 LINKS WITH PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The children experience a wide range of educational visits to local sites of interest, these include joint visits with children from a maintained school, and they enjoy annual residential visits within the United Kingdom and Europe. In addition, they benefit from their involvement in an international link with a school in Canada. The children have good opportunities to develop their interest in music through the school's music programme and school concerts. The staff give generously of their time to extend the children's learning experiences through a wide range of after-school activities. The Parent-Teacher Association gives very good support to school events and provides additional educational resources to broaden the children's learning opportunities.

2. **ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 LEARNING

The children are well-motivated, display very positive attitudes to their work and achieve very good standards. Almost all participate well in group and paired work, are willing to ask questions, explain their reasoning, and summarise their findings. In the foundation stage (FS), the children's learning experiences provide very good opportunities to develop their problem-solving capabilities, greater independence and connected learning through the play-based learning sessions. Across the three key stages, the children respond well to the high expectations set by the teachers, and they acquire systematically a very good range of skills across the areas of learning due to the agreed whole school teaching practices. There is a collegial approach between the children and the teachers to learning.

An analysis of end of key stage (KS) 2 assessment data for English and mathematics, over the past four years, shows that the school has made consistent improvement and is now well above the Northern Ireland average. When compared to schools in the same free school meals category, the school is above the Northern Ireland average. The school's internal performance information indicates that most of the children are attaining in line with their ability.

The children's ICT skills are very good; by year 7, they use a wide range of ICT applications with confidence and make informed decisions about the effective use of ICT. The school's participation in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) KS2 ICT accreditation scheme extends effectively the children's skills and improves standards; all of the children achieve Level 4.

2.2 ENGLISH AND LITERACY

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

The teachers provide very good opportunities for sustained talking and listening across the curriculum. In the FS, the children listen to and respond well to stories. They talk about their learning in very good question and answer sessions at the end of reading and mathematics task-time and play-based learning. In KS1 and KS2, most of the children develop their thinking skills through effective group work; they share their learning and views through plenary sessions relating to issues across the curriculum.

Across the three key stages, the reading programme is well designed focusing appropriately on the children's acquisition of and progression in the core reading skills. In the FS, the teachers effectively use shared and group-guided reading sessions to develop well the children's phonic skills and early comprehension skills. In KS1, the children read a variety of fiction and non-fiction books, and begin to use the internet and a variety of software programmes to develop and extend effectively their reading skills. In KS2, the children attain a very high standard of reading. The children enjoy access to a very good range of fiction and non-fiction material. The children interrogate skilfully the internet, dictionaries and other sources for relevant information for their topic-based work. The more able children talk enthusiastically about their reading, and demonstrate very good skills in reading familiar and unfamiliar text.

The systematic development of the children's writing is a strength of the literacy provision. By the end of KS2, the standard of the children's writing is very good. The children develop their writing skills across the curriculum through narrative, report, procedural, explanatory, persuasive and recount writing. In the FS, the children's letter formation, word building skills and knowledge of the basic conventions such as simple sentence structure develop well through shared and independent writing activities. In KS1, the children write for a range of purposes, and with increasing accuracy, across the curricular areas. In KS2, the children write enthusiastically and with purpose, particularly through topics in the World Around Us and mathematics. Information and communication technology is used effectively through, for example, the wide use of the interactive white boards and the very good course created on Learning-NI where children communicate with each other and with staff by posting messages, up-loading material and creating PowerPoint presentations.

Most of the children achieve a very good standard in English by year 7, and most make good year-on-year progress.

The Literacy co-ordinator develops successfully the strategic objectives of the literacy action plans derived from well-focused audits of the children's views and staff evaluations. Very good use is made of classroom observation and the effective analysis of the qualitative and quantitative performance data pertaining to literacy. She liaises well with other co-ordinators to ensure that key literacy skills are an integral part of all areas of learning. The very good whole school literacy scheme gives clear guidance to the teachers.

2.3 MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

The children's mathematical experiences develop systematically and are characterised by the appropriate use of practical materials and the frequent opportunities to apply their learning to problem-solving activities. The children focus well on the explanations by the teachers of new mathematical concepts, which make appropriate links to prior mathematical knowledge and skills and the follow-on work is well-matched to the children's abilities. The children's written work, in class, and for homework, demonstrates their competence in a range of mathematical skills and processes. Throughout the school, the mathematics curriculum is suitably broad and balanced.

In the FS, the children develop their mathematical concepts, skills and language through a variety of games, activities and practical mathematics lessons, reinforced through effective play-based learning. They achieve a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. In KS1 and KS2, the teachers give a high priority to developing the children's flexibility with number, their reasoning skills and the appropriate use of mathematical language. The work links to other areas of the curriculum and there are well-planned opportunities for the children to apply mathematics to real-life contexts. Across the key stages, effective questioning and opportunities for discussion improve the children's understanding of key concepts. Information and communication technology programmes support effectively the children's work in mathematics. The children who require additional support with their understanding of mathematics receive very good quality teaching in withdrawal classes. The content of these lessons match closely the mathematics topics taught in the classes and assists well the children's return to the class lessons.

During the inspection, the most able children in year 4 demonstrated good knowledge of number and very good knowledge of shape and space, and measures. The most able children in year 7 demonstrated high levels of competence in all areas of the mathematics curriculum, and excellent use of mathematical language. By the end of KS2, most of the children achieve very good standards in mathematics.

The numeracy co-ordinator provides very good curricular leadership. The mathematics action plans reflect appropriately an analysis of performance data, a review of a range of qualitative information from the teaching staff, such as, the children's work and the mathematics planning, and classroom observation of the children's learning. The current action plan outlines the further development of the mental mathematics programme.

3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 PLANNING

The quality of the planning is outstanding. The full-time and job-share teachers co-operate closely with one another and they prepare well for their lessons. The detailed planning enables the teachers to carry out excellent monitoring and tracking and to make predictions about each child's progress. By analysing the assessment and qualitative information gathered, the teachers draw out the implications for their teaching and review regularly its quality and effectiveness; the range of relevant information is used well to inform action planning and modify lesson plans. Such effective self-evaluation and the overall auditing and co-ordination of the literacy and numeracy practices ensures that learning opportunities are well matched to the ability of each child and that tailored help is provided to those who need it.

3.2 TEACHING

The quality of teaching in all of the lessons observed ranged from good to outstanding; most of the lessons evaluated were very good or outstanding. The most effective teaching was characterised by the skilful questioning from the teacher which promoted well the children's extended responses, and ensured appropriate pace and challenge to the children's learning. The development of purposeful paired and group work, through practical and well-planned follow-on activities, catered well for the wide range of the children's abilities and, in particular, developed very well their thinking skills and personal capabilities. Where the classroom assistants were deployed effectively, they enhanced the quality of the teaching and provided good support for children requiring additional support with their learning.

3.3 ASSESSMENT

The school has an effective whole school assessment policy. The FS teachers monitor closely the children's progress; the effective analysis of their qualitative observations informs their teaching and improves the children's learning. In KS1 and KS2, the school makes very good use of performance data from a range of sources, and use the children's own views to inform practice. The analysis of data involves detailed yearly evaluations of the children's progress and attainment at whole class and individual child level. The school makes very good use of C2k Assessment Manager to assist them in the effective use of data.

The children regularly mark their own and their peers' work, and receive informative and constructive feedback from their teachers, both orally and in written form.

The school has good procedures in place for reporting to parents, for example, mid-term and mid-year interviews, end-of-year report, curriculum information sessions and the year 1 induction process. Parents are informed of their children's individual education plan (IEP).

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The overall quality of the provision to support children who require additional support with aspects of their learning is very good. The children's needs are identified at an early stage and well-focused IEPs provide appropriate guidance for their work. The progress made by each child is monitored and reviewed regularly and adjustments made to planning by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the teachers.

The children develop well their literacy and numeracy skills to a standard that reflects the increasing pace of their learning and the high quality of the teaching and classroom assistant support. The performance data shows that by year 7, the level of teacher concern has reduced for the majority of the children.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEADERSHIP

The Principal provides outstanding leadership, and has a high regard for the well-being of the children and the staff. The Principal and Vice-principal maintain an overview of the development work to bring about whole school improvement, and support the leadership capacity of the co-ordinators to improve the quality of learning and teaching. The leadership team and co-ordinators have clearly defined roles and responsibilities that focus on improving children's attainment. There is excellent internal communication, and a collegial approach to the implementation and review of school development work.

4.2 PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

The whole school self-evaluation and school development planning processes are very good. There are effective procedures for identifying the targets for development each year and, importantly, for evaluating progress against these targets. Appropriately, there are specific action plans for literacy and numeracy that are based on enabling the school to raise and achieve its performance targets for these two areas of learning.

The school gives very good attention to, meets the requirements of the School Development Plans (SDP) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, and has produced a wide range of associated action plans which are based on an audit of need. The governors evaluate the action plans and the staff development programme to ensure that there are sustained improvements in standards, learning and teaching.

4.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The school receives beneficial support from the Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS) of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board. Staff development receives a high priority and links to the key objectives within the SDP. These priorities are evaluated regularly and the staff development activities organised accordingly. Appropriate links are made between staff development undertaken and outcomes for learning and teaching in the classrooms.

4.4 RESOURCES, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The school governors make very positive contributions to the life and work of the school and support effectively the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the SDP. They ensure that all aspects of the life and work of the school are kept under review.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the outstanding quality of the pastoral care provision which fosters an inclusive ethos whereby the children enjoy their learning, care for and are respectful towards each other;
- the quality of the teaching observed, with most of the lessons very good or outstanding;
- the very good quality of the provision and the high standards achieved in literacy and numeracy by the children by the end of KS2;
- the very good provision for children who require additional support with their learning;
- the outstanding quality of the Principal's strategic, curricular and pastoral leadership; and
- the very good quality of the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching by all the co-ordinators, and the structures in place to promote self-evaluation leading to improvement in the children's learning and attainment.

5.2 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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