

Inglis Street Elementary



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School and Community Context

Inglis Street Elementary School, located in the south end of Halifax, has served the community since 1952, originally as St. Francis School. It is a small school of approximately 200 students from Grade Primary to Grade 6.

The most notable characteristic of Inglis Street is its multiculturalism. Our students come from all over the world - Korea, China, Senegal, Bermuda, Iran, Germany, Poland, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Saudi Arabia are just a few of the countries represented during the 2008-2009 school year. Many of our students speak more than one language, and sometimes do not speak English when they arrive at Inglis Street, but they always learn quickly! Often, children are attending Inglis Street only for a year or two while a parent studies at a nearby university or works at the hospital, so there is a high turnover of students. These stu-

dents are always warmly welcomed by those who have been at Inglis Street for all of their school years and by their teachers.

Provincial, school board and classroom assessment results show that the students at Inglis Street perform well academically. Our staff is dedicated to student success - most of our teachers have several years of teaching experience. Parents, grandparents, and other caregivers are very supportive and interested in the education of our students. We have a very active School Advisory Council and Parent-Teacher Association.

Besides achieving well in the classroom, students at Inglis Street School are involved in the many activities offered here. Among these activities are choir, violin and band classes, running club, intramurals, Mad Science, MusIQ (piano lessons), and Battle of the Books club.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Our school's "Getting to Great" survey results show that a strong majority of our students, families and staff consider Inglis Street to be a safe and inviting learning environment. Survey results over the past three years have consistently indicated that over 90% of our students like school and believe their teachers listen to what they have to say. We offer a variety of programs that promote good behaviour, such as Positive Ef-

fective Behaviour Supports (PEBS) and the STARS leadership program. Respect for diversity is part of our school culture and is celebrated in many ways.

One of our challenges is to provide sufficient support to students who are new English language learners and for us to communicate effectively with their parents - we will continue to work on this!



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Family and Community Involvement

96% of parents/guardians surveyed agree that they feel welcome at our school. When they are able to help with school activities and events they feel appreciated by our school staff (92% agree).

However, we would like to have more parent involvement. Of parents who responded to a recent survey, approximately 37% stated that they were able to volunteer on a consistent basis. To this end, we are currently working on ways to invite more family and community involvement our school.

Provincial and Board Assessment Results

Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) students participated in provincial and board-wide assessments. The information gained through these assessments will help us determine our next steps in improving student achievement in literacy and mathematics. Please note that the percentages used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole number.

* French Immersion students completed the assessment in French.

Literacy Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 2 Board	English Reading Accurately: 91% English Reading Fluently: 77%	English Reading Accurately: 74% English Reading Fluently: 67%
Grade 3 Provincial	Reading: 100% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 96% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 100%	Reading: 81% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 82% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 82%
Grade 5 Board	Reading: 93%	Reading: 81%
Grade 6 Provincial	Reading: 100% Writing: 95%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Math Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 2 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 100%	Mathematics Concepts: 95%
Grade 3 Provincial	Mathematics Concepts: 93%	Mathematics Concepts: 71%
Grade 5 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 100%	Mathematics Concepts: 84%

We are pleased to report that students at Inglis Street Elementary School have consistently performed well in reading and writing in the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) and Department of Education (DOE) literacy assessments. Inglis Street students are also performing above the board and DOE average in mathematics assessments.

In both literacy and math, demonstrating understanding and supporting opinions by clearly communicating ideas is an area where we would like our students to improve. This is the focus of our school's Plan for Improvement. Our teachers have been learning about effective teaching in these areas and have gathered baseline data this year that will help us to measure our successes in 2009-2010.

Classroom Assessment

Literacy Assessment

Teachers have met several times this year to discuss strategies that will help our students to increase their understanding of text and to increase their ability to give and support their opinions about text. Teachers have also worked in groups and with our literacy coach to develop classroom assessments that would help us identify areas of strength and areas requiring additional instruction. In June 2009 we gathered and reviewed student responses to text to see how effectively students are using the strategies for reading comprehension that we have been teaching this year. This data will serve as a baseline as we continue to work on comprehension and supporting opinions about text next year.

Math Assessment

Students are expected to communicate their mathematical thinking using models, pictures, symbols and words when solving problems in daily math lessons. Teachers have been working this year on ways to increase students' ability to demonstrate understanding of the operations they use when problem solving. They have also met to discuss what to look for when assessing problem-solving. In June 2009 we collected data using a common assessment tool at all grade levels. This data will serve as a baseline as we continue to work on mathematics communication next year.



Student Engagement

100% of Inglis Street students surveyed this year believe that their teachers always want them to try their best in school, and almost 98% of these students report that on most days, they do try their best. Teachers adjust their classroom practice to accommodate a range of student abilities and backgrounds. Students are given many opportunities to demonstrate learning and to celebrate their successes - among these are displays of work, public speaking, class science and social studies fairs, book talks, drama, concerts, written and oral presentations and monthly assemblies. We will continue to work next year on ways to increase student enjoyment of learning.

Time to Learn

All schools in the Halifax Regional School Board follow the Time to Learn requirements set by the Department of Education. This means that each subject has a required or recommended number of minutes. For the past three years, student and teacher surveys have indicated that we have few interruptions to learning caused by things such as announcements and discipline. However, learning is interrupted by the fact that we have several children arriving late each morning. We have been able to track our late arrivals more effectively this year, and are working on ways to improve in this area.

Professional Development

When teachers learn, student learning is improved. Teachers at Inglis Street School are actively involved in professional development on an ongoing basis. They meet regularly in small groups called Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to discuss student achievement and effective teaching strategies. Our literacy coach also meets regularly with teachers and models effective teaching strategies related to our literacy goal. One of the school board math leaders has also met with our teachers several times this year to discuss ways of teaching and assessing math communication. We have participated in professional development sessions on ways of celebrating diversity in the classroom and in our school. Many of our teachers are also working on increasing their familiarity with current technology and on helping students to use this technology in the classroom.

Additional School Supports

At Inglis Street School we have a number of additional school supports to improve student achievement:

- resource teacher
- Reading Recovery teacher
- English as a Second Language teacher
- educational program assistants (EPAs)
- library support specialist
- secretary
- literacy coach
- math leader
- speech language pathologist
- school psychologist
- school social worker
- YMCA school settlement worker
- lunch monitors
- YMCA School-Age care

Some of these supports are full-time, and others are scheduled as needed.



Planning for Improvement

The Inglis Street Elementary School community takes great pride in our students' success. There is much to celebrate here at our school! However, we also know that we can do even better. We are very dedicated to demonstrating our continued improvement. The Halifax Regional School Board's Planning for Improvement process helps us to identify what our students are doing well, and what areas need further attention and improvement.

Our teachers have chosen goals in the areas of literacy and math for school improvement. In literacy, we have looked at student achievement data and have discovered that our students could benefit from a focus on understanding text and supporting their opinions about what they read. With the support of our literacy coach, our

teachers have gathered resources and have developed plans to teach and assess reading comprehension. In mathematics, we are focusing our school improvement efforts on improving our students' ability to communicate their thinking and understanding when solving problems. These are skills that will benefit them in all subject areas.

The Inglis Street Elementary School Plan for Improvement is presented below for your information. It includes our goals, and strategies that we will use to meet those goals. We look forward to another year of student success!

School Goals

Mathematics Goal

Our students will increase their ability to demonstrate understanding of the operations when problem solving.

Strategies:

- Students will communicate their mathematical thinking using models, pictures, symbols and words to solve problems in daily math lessons.
- Teachers will engage in professional development on problem solving and communication.
- Teachers and students will develop a "kid-friendly" version of rubrics to be used for self and peer assessments of communication skills when problem solving.
- Teachers will collect samples of student work throughout the year to be used as models of good communication in mathematics.
- Teachers will establish a common understanding of what good communication in math looks like and will model this for students.
- Teachers will teach common problem solving strategies (for

example, the "3-read" strategy) at all grade levels.

- Teachers will create visual reminders in all classrooms of the common problem solving strategies.
- Teachers will work in groups to develop common assessments.
- Students will complete a problem-solving task in mathematics twice a year. This assessment will be used to measure progress in problem solving and mathematical communication.

Literacy Goal

Our students will improve in their ability to use a variety of comprehension strategies so that they will:

- Increase their understanding of text.
- Increase their ability to give and support their opinions about text in verbal/written form, as appropriate.

Strategies:

- Students will be taught to use a range of comprehension strategies. A focus will be placed on certain strategies at each

grade level. The strategies that will be used and assessed are: making connections, questioning, visualizing and inferring.

- The school's literacy coach will model lessons for teachers using the strategies listed above.
- Resources will be purchased to support the teaching of comprehension strategies.
- The school's literacy coach will prepare boxes of books and activities to be used in the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies.
- Teachers will meet regularly with our literacy coach to plan for effective teaching and assessment of comprehension strategies.
- Teachers will collect and review student responses to a given text twice a year, using rubrics adapted from a book called "Reading Power" by Adrienne Gear.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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