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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**



## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

**Abercorn Primary School  
Banbridge**

**January 2014**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ABERCORN PRIMARY SCHOOL, BANBRIDGE, CO DOWN, BT32 3HR (501-1594)**

The focused inspection of Abercorn Primary School in April 2012 highlighted the following strengths: the courteous, co-operative and well-behaved children; the good quality of the arrangements for pastoral care; the good quality of the withdrawal provision for children with additional learning needs and the progress they make; the good standards achieved by most of the children in literacy and numeracy by the end of year 7; and the hard-working staff and the good leadership of the Principal in initiating and developing the processes for self-evaluation to promote improvement.

The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to improve the overall quality of the teaching;
- to enhance the quality of the learning experiences for the children and connect their learning more effectively across the curriculum; and
- to build the capacity of the senior leadership team.

The inspection conclusion in April 2012 was that:

- in most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management and in learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- the role of the senior leadership team has been further developed to provide strategic leadership and a shared vision for the work of the school;
- a curriculum leadership team has been formed to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and the standards achieved by the children;
- the board of governors have been involved in the improvement process through meetings with co-ordinators and the allocation of appropriate resources;
- the roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators have been clarified and developed further to include monitoring, evaluation and leading staff development;
- the staff have worked diligently with the curriculum leadership team to identify and share very good practice; and
- the staff have received professional development and support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) in a number of areas including literacy, numeracy and leadership and management.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out two interim follow-up visits in May and October 2013, and a follow-up inspection in January 2014.

The action plans produced by the school in response to the inspection findings were of a good quality. The school's development plan has been adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The following are the most important improvements in the primary school since the original inspection:

- the highly effective, committed and strategic leadership provided by the principal, supported well by the vice-principal, the senior leadership team and the curriculum leadership team which has resulted in a collaborative culture focused clearly on school improvement;
- the rigorous process of school development planning and self-evaluation supported by well-focused staff development has led to significant improvements in the quality of the provision;
- the well-developed processes of disseminating innovative practice in teaching and learning within the school;
- the effective use made of performance data to identify low and underachievement in literacy and numeracy, to identify curricular areas for development and set targets for further improvement;
- the improved quality and consistency of the learning and teaching across all key stages as evidenced by the very good and outstanding lessons observed during the follow-up process, two thirds of which were outstanding;
- the significantly enhanced quality of the learning experiences for the children including the literacy and numeracy-rich classrooms and shared areas, the consistent opportunities for collaborative group and paired work in the lessons, the appropriate focus on developing thinking skills and the well-planned, connected learning across all aspects of the curriculum; and
- the improving trends in the quality of the children's literacy and numeracy and the overall standards they attain; the school's internal performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make very good progress in English and mathematics and achieve in line with their ability, or above expectation.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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