



*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

**Artigarvan Primary School and Community Nursery Unit
Strabane**

December 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ARTIGARVAN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY NURSERY UNIT, STRABANE, CO TYRONE, BT82 0HN (201-6068)

The focused inspection in February 2013 highlighted strengths in: the good quality of the pastoral care; the excellent behaviour of the children and the good working relationships between them, the teachers and support staff; the good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; and the support for children with special educational needs (SEN).

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

- to develop a more strategic and collegial approach to monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning in the school and nursery unit;
- to plan more coherently in the nursery unit and foundation stage to ensure that all staff interaction develops the children's learning and development through play more effectively; and
- to improve the quality and consistency of the curricular planning, teaching and learning in order to raise further the children's standards in literacy and numeracy.

The inspection conclusion in February 2013 was that:

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

Since the original inspection the enrolment of the primary school has increased from 104 to 112 children, the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has increased from 39% to 46%, and the percentage of the children on the SEN register has decreased from 39% to 26%.

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

- there has been increased stability in the school with the return of key members of staff;
- the teachers have visited a range of schools and pre-school centres to observe and share practice;
- the teachers have benefited from the support and training provided by the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) in the areas of school development planning, literacy, early years and SEN;
- all teaching staff and classroom assistants have received training on guided reading;

- training has been sought for the staff to develop thematic planning, and to support the teaching of problem solving and investigation skills in mathematics; and
- recently, a co-ordinator has been appointed for the foundation stage.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out two monitoring visits and a follow-up inspection on 11 December 2014.

The action plans produced by the school in response to the inspection findings were of a good quality and were adjusted appropriately in light of feedback given by the ETI.

The school's development plan has been adjusted in light of the inspection findings and prioritises appropriately the areas for improvement identified during the inspection.

The following are the most important improvements since the original inspection.

- The commitment and strategic leadership of the principal, vice-principal and governors has enabled a more collegial approach to school improvement which is focused clearly on raising standards and improving the quality of learning and teaching.
- The processes for self-evaluation are more effective in identifying strengths and relevant priorities for ongoing development through auditing and monitoring of the provision, and action planning that is linked to continued professional development.
- The curricular co-ordinators are motivated to improve the quality of provision in their areas of learning and provide effective leadership using assessment data well to: identify low achievement and underachievement; inform their planning; and implement appropriate intervention strategies. Consequently, most of the children identified as requiring additional support with literacy and numeracy have made good progress.
- The planned activities for play in the nursery unit and foundation stage provide more stimulating and challenging opportunities for the children to learn and as a result the children engage well in creative, concentrated and purposeful play.
- The nursery unit and foundation stage staff interact well with the children to exploit carefully the learning potential of the activities and extend the children's language and thinking; early writing and use of mathematical language.
- There is a more collaborative approach to whole school planning amongst the staff; the long term plans provide a better overview for progression in learning while the short term plans and the detailed observations and evaluations of the children's progress, guide the staff more effectively in their day to day work.
- Most of the lessons observed during the final follow-up inspection were very good, characterised by well-planned activities which met the needs of all the children, high levels of support from the classroom assistants, and the skilful use of challenging questions by the teachers which encouraged the children to explain and justify their responses; as a result, the children were motivated to learn and contributed well.

- The school's internal performance data shows that while most of the children are on or above target for their age in numeracy and the majority of children reach a similar standard in literacy, almost all the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, achieve in line with their ability, or above expectation.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in the school and the nursery unit is good. The school and nursery unit have important strengths in most of their educational provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school and nursery unit have demonstrated the capacity to address. That is the need to:

- embed and build on the improvements to date through a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation, as identified appropriately by the school.

The ETI will continue to monitor the school's progress in this area for improvement.

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