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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

**Ballycarry Primary School
Carrickfergus**

March 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF BALLYCARRY PRIMARY SCHOOL, CARRICKFERGUS, CO ANTRIM, BT38 9HE (301-0809)

The focused inspection of Ballycarry Primary School in October 2011 highlighted strengths in the pastoral care and the good standards being attained by a majority of the children in literacy and numeracy.

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

- to review and improve the quality of the teacher's planning to meet more effectively the needs of all of the children, and to ensure consistency in the quality of the learning experiences for the children;
- to improve the quality of the provision for play-based learning; and
- to develop more robust and systematic monitoring and evaluation, including self-evaluation processes, to bring about the necessary improvements in learning and teaching.

The inspection conclusion in October 2011 was:

"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 staff have received intensive training and support from the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB), and C2K to support the school in the areas identified for improvement;
- the staff have visited other schools to observe and share practice;
- one teacher has left the permanent staff;
- the principal has been on a period of extended leave since October 2013 with one of the permanent teachers temporarily acting up in this role; and
- the governors are currently in the process of recruiting and appointing a new principal to take up post in September 2014.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a total of two monitoring visits and a follow-up inspection on 10 March 2014.

The action plans received by the Department of Education following the inspection were of a good quality and adjusted appropriately in the light of feedback given by ETI during the interim visits. The school staff and the governors have plans in place, in conjunction with the continued support of the NEELB, to begin a period of training, consultation and review to inform the next stage of the school development planning process.

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

- the clearer overview of progression, continuity and connections in the children's learning informed by the more detailed and informative long and medium term planning;
- the more focused learning intentions and effective differentiation in the teaching and learning identified more clearly through the teachers short term planning and evaluations;
- the improved continuity of support for children identified with additional needs as a result of a more collegial whole staff approach and better link between withdrawal sessions and in class teaching;
- the improvement in the children's oral responses, thinking skills, problem solving and self management as a result of the teachers more effective questioning and the increased opportunities for the children to engage in practical, paired and group work;
- the children's systematic progression of skills through more detailed, well planned guided reading sessions;
- the more stimulating range of learning experiences being provided in the foundation stage resulting in higher levels of engagement, independence, creativity and independent writing among the children;
- the more robust and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the teaching and learning including analysis of data, scrutiny of children's work, classroom observation and sharing of practice;
- the increasing use being made of data, combined with the teachers knowledge of the children, to set individual targets for improvement;
- the increased involvement of the parents in their children's learning through an increased range of appropriate opportunities to be informed;
- the quality of the teaching and learning observed during the follow-up inspection which as always good or very good; and
- on the basis of the evidence at the time of the follow-up inspection , the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children which now reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

CONCLUSION

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

It continues to be important that the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

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