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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

**Bunscoil an Iúir
Newry**

April 2012

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF BUNSCOIL AN IÚIR, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT34 2DH (504-6597)

The focused inspection in October 2010 highlighted strengths in the positive ethos of the school, the mannerly and well-behaved children, the good working relationships between the teachers and the children, the children's high level of proficiency in spoken Irish, the good quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and the support of the parents and governors for the work of the school.

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

- for better strategic leadership by both the Board of Governors (governors) and the Principal to effect improvement and to raise the standards achieved by all of the children;
- for the Principal and the teachers to implement more fully the revised curriculum, in particular, the development of the children's skills in literacy and numeracy; and
- for a more collegiate approach to leadership and management to include the development of a middle management tier to provide firmer curricular direction to the work of the school.

Subsequent to the inspection, the school entered the formal intervention process in November 2010. In the interval since the original inspection, the school received support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) and the Inter-board Irish-Medium and CASS team in developing aspects of the school's provision for literacy, numeracy, foundation stage (FS), special educational needs (SEN), and leadership and management. The school reported that the support it received was of a high quality.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out three interim follow-up visits (IFUV), and a follow-up inspection on 24 April 2012.

The following are the most important actions that have taken place since the original inspection:

- the Board of Governors has been re-constituted and governor training has been instigated; and
- parents are involved more in the life and the work of the school.

The action plan produced by the school in response to the inspection findings was of a good quality and was adjusted appropriately in light of feedback given by the Inspectorate during the IFUVs.

The following are the most important improvements made:

- the Principal provides structured and strategic direction to the work of the school focusing more on the core business of raising standards in literacy and numeracy. A learning and teaching policy has been devised and there is ongoing whole-school development which has effected improvement in teaching and learning and in the standards which the children achieve; a wider range of teaching approaches has been introduced resulting in more connected and contextualised learning for the children;

- the staff has engaged in rigorous self-evaluation of the quality of provision for learning; a programme of classroom observations for the sharing of good practice has been instigated; and the school is making effective use of performance data to set targets for improvement for individuals and groups of children;
- the quality of planning for the revised curriculum is comprehensive; there is suitable balance and progression in the children's programme for writing in both languages and there have been discernible improvements in their standards in reading as a result of an intensive three-month paired reading programme. In English and Irish the children in years 6-7 achieve very good standards in writing;
- in mathematics, the children demonstrate flexibility in their use of number and can explain well the methods they use. They are able to apply their mathematical learning in real life situations. In key stage (KS) 1, the children demonstrate a sound knowledge of a range of mathematical concepts, including shape and space;
- the co-ordinators for the main curricular areas have adopted a more strategic role and monitor their respective areas very effectively; more collegial approaches are now adopted with joint planning and better subject overviews devised; information and communication technology is used more effectively and a virtual learning environment (VLE) was established to enable the parents to support their children's learning at home; and
- the Principal and the co-ordinators observe teaching and monitor the children's work in order to evaluate progress; the provision for SEN was reviewed and is now very good; targets set for improvement are more realistic and amended appropriately; the classroom assistants are deployed well and support the children in their learning; and effective interventions now take place with both withdrawal groups and in-class support.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is now good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The follow-up inspection has identified the need to improve the quality of classroom management in a small number of classes in order to foster more effective learning by the younger children, which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

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