



*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

**Kirkinriola Primary School
Ballymena**

November 2012

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF KIRKINRIOLA PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT43 6TB (301-0780)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a focused inspection of Kirkinriola Primary School in the week of 28 March 2011 and as a result the school entered the formal intervention process on 13 April 2011. The Department of Education (DE) indicated at that time that a follow-up inspection would take place and that, in the interim, a follow-up visit would evaluate the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements¹.

After the action plan was received an initial visit was carried out by inspectors on 23 November 2011, as a result of which the action plan was adjusted. An interim follow-up visit (IFUV) took place on 2 February 2012.

At the time of the original inspection the ETI recommended that DE exercise its power under Article 14 of the Education (NI) Order, 1998, to appoint additional voting members, with appropriate experience and expertise, to the governing body. As a result, four additional governors have been appointed by DE to the Board of Governors (governors).

The arrangements for the follow-up inspection included: a meeting with the acting-chairperson; a meeting with a small number of governors at their request; and the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Data on the questionnaire returns is shown in the table below.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	40	21	52.5	14
Teachers	5	5	100	5
Support Staff	5	5	100	*

* fewer than 5

The responses from the questionnaires were mostly highly positive; the ETI reported to the acting-Principal and the acting-chairperson the areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires.

In the interval since the original inspection the school has received support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the North Eastern Education and Library Board, and the following changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- there have been two acting-Principals owing to the long-term absence of the Principal;
- five governors have resigned, including three who were appointed by DE, and the position of chairperson is being filled currently in an acting capacity;

¹ For further details, see the key strengths and areas for improvement reported originally in the Report of an Inspection of Kirkinriola Primary School in March 2011.

- there have been five changes in teaching staff across the school, necessitating temporary changes in personnel in key co-ordinating posts; and
- the enrolment has fallen further from 93 at the time of the original inspection, to 57 children.

The most important improvements since the original inspection include:

- the children in the foundation stage have higher levels of independence and, throughout the school, the children's talking and listening skills have improved;
- in 2012, all of the year 7 children achieved the expected level in English and mathematics² and, across key stage 2, most of the children made expected or better progress in these areas;
- a majority of the lessons observed during the follow-up inspection were good, demonstrating improvement in the quality of the children's learning experiences with the work being matched more closely to their needs and ability;
- the children with special educational needs and their parents are involved in identifying, agreeing and reviewing more precise and measureable targets within their individual education plans;
- the quality of pastoral care is now good, including regular opportunities for the teachers to listen and respond to the views of the children;
- the teachers are evaluating more effectively the quality of the children's learning and using the outcomes of the evaluations to inform appropriately future planning;
- the teachers and the co-ordinators are using an extended range of assessment data more effectively to track progress and to recognise the children who are underachieving, or achieving at a low level;
- in literacy and numeracy, long-term planning for progression is being developed, co-ordinating roles and responsibilities have been clarified and strengthened, and there is an appropriate structure for monitoring the quality of the provision in these areas;
- communication within the school has improved and the teachers report higher morale and a greater sense of collegiality among the staff; and
- the governors report that they have a clearer understanding of and are better informed about standards, including end of key stage assessment outcomes, and developments being undertaken in the curriculum.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the follow-up inspection the school now has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children; these arrangements reflect the guidance issued by DE.

² The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children.

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

The areas for improvement include the need:

- for the Principal and staff, supported by the governors, to work together to build upon the more effective working relationships presently evident in the best interests of the children³;
- to continue to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, particularly at key stage 1; and
- to improve the quality of the leadership and management at a senior leadership level³, in particular, revising the school development plan and developing a more critical and reflective approach towards self-evaluation and using effectively the outcomes of the monitoring activities to plan for and effect sustained improvement.

The employing authority, governors and staff need to continue to plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school's provision and budget in order to: address the current and future needs of the children and the staff; and sustain the improvements already made and address the areas for improvement. In addition, having currently personnel in an acting capacity at a senior leadership level within the school, and within the Board of Governors, needs to be resolved as a matter of priority.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will carry out a further follow-up inspection within 12-18 months and a report will be published.

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³ Owing to the long-term absence of the Principal, and for this contextual reason, it has not been possible for the school to address these aspects of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the original inspection. As a result, these remain areas for improvement which will need to be addressed in due course and their outcome evaluated subsequently.