



*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

**Rathcoole Primary School
Newtownabbey**

March 2015

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF RATHCOOLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM, BT37 9EL (301-0895)

The original inspection of Rathcoole Primary School in April 2013 highlighted strengths in the nursery unit, the special educational needs provision and the links with the parents. The overall quality of education was evaluated as satisfactory.

It also highlighted the following areas for improvement:

- to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinators at all levels to effect a coherent and collegial approach to curricular development;
- to continue to raise the standards in literacy and numeracy further for the children and review the arrangements at key transitional stages to ensure progression and continuity in the children's learning experiences; and
- to provide more sharply focused strategic leadership, including school development planning, at all levels and implement more robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the core work of the school.

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

- There has been an increase in the number of children entitled to free school meals and those identified with additional learning needs, including a significant number of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The staffing arrangements have continued to be unstable throughout the follow-up inspection.
- A new co-ordinator for literacy has been appointed.
- The staff have received a wide range of support and development from, notably, the North- Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) Curriculum and Advisory Support Service (CASS), C2K, and through meeting staff from other schools for professional exchange.
- Additional resources to support the teaching of reading have been purchased and the accelerated reading programme has been introduced.
- An additional outdoor play area has been developed in the school grounds.
- The space available for parents participating in parent workshops has been relocated with a more secure access point.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out two monitoring visits and a follow-up inspection on 2 March 2015.

The action plans received by the Department of Education following the inspection were of a good quality.

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

- more effective leadership and a shared team approach to the co-ordination of literacy and numeracy including clearer identification and sharing of best practice throughout the school;
- increased staff development leading to improvements in the consistency of the quality of the learning and teaching, most of which was very good and featured more consistent effective questioning to extend the children's thinking, more meaningful contexts for connected learning which motivate and interest the children;
- improvements in the literacy programme including the development of guidance in aspects of the literacy programme to ensure progression and continuity in learning, a broader range of writing forms being developed across the curriculum; and improving confidence in reading in key stage (KS) 2 through the accelerated reading initiative;
- the useful start made to integrating appropriately aspects of the nurture provision into the whole school and improvements in the attendance and punctuality of the children;
- the increasing range of procedures for monitoring and evaluation which are at an early stage and are beginning to be used to inform further work;
- improving lines of communication being developed between the governors and the wider staff team;
- increasing engagement with, and support of, parents to promote further their involvement in their children's learning; and
- the school's comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding the children.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of the education provided by this school remains satisfactory. The follow-up inspection has identified continuing areas for improvement in standards and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- to embed the improvement to date and continue to raise the children's standards and achievements in literacy and numeracy;
- to develop further the skill of the staff in using all of the available data to inform learning and teaching, track systematically the children's progress and meet the individual needs of the children; and
- to develop further the role of the newly re-constituted governors and the senior management team to provide a more strategic, collegial and well-paced whole school improvement process.

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

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