



*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**

**St Colman's Abbey Primary School  
Newry**

**January 2014**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST COLMAN'S ABBEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT34 2ED (503-1576)**

The original inspection of St Colman's Abbey Primary School in November 2011 highlighted strengths in the pastoral care and the good standards being attained by a majority of the children in literacy and numeracy by the end of key stage 2.

It also highlighted the following areas for improvement:

- to raise the overall quality of staff development and of the planning for learning in order to raise standards further;
- to improve the overall quality of the teaching and the leadership and management; and to address the inadequacies in the quality of the provision within the nursery unit.

The inspection conclusion in November 2011 was that:

"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 training and support from a range of sources including the Southern Education and Library Board ( SELB ), the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools ( CCMS ) and C2K;
- the staff have visited a range of schools and pre-schools to observe and share practice;
- additional resources have been purchased for the nursery unit; and
- there have been a number of changes in the teaching staff.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a total of two monitoring visits and a follow-up inspection on 29 January 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's development plan was also adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

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

- the improvement of the overall quality of the teaching with almost all of the teaching being good or very good on the final follow up visit;

- the teachers' more effective questioning that develops more consistently the children's thinking, recall and reasoning with a better focus on using appropriate mathematical language and strategies including the application of learning to real life contexts;
- the more creative and independent play, improved oral skills and independent writing of the children in the foundation stage that are developing well through the increased opportunities provided;
- the improved quality and extent of the children's independent and extended writing across the whole school;
- the more collegial approach to whole school planning amongst the staff; the long term plans provide a better overview for progression in learning while the detailed short term planning guides the staff more effectively in their day to day work;
- the significant improvement in the quality of the provision in the nursery unit with a more richly resourced learning environment both indoors and outdoors; the teaching and learning provides very good opportunities for all areas of the pre-school curriculum and as a result the children spend more sustained periods in productive and purposeful learning through play;
- the better links with parents and other professionals to support early intervention both in the nursery and the school;
- the more strategic and collegial approach to school improvement by the leadership and management which is well focused on raising standards with more effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, progress and standards at all levels. Curricular coordinators provide an effective lead in their areas of learning and performance data is used increasingly to identify the needs of the children and track their progress; and
- the processes for self-evaluation and school improvement that are more effective in identifying strengths and relevant priorities for ongoing development, well linked to continued professional development.

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

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