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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

**St Colman's Primary School
Newry**

October 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST COLMAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWRY, CO DOWN (503-6572)

The inspection of St Colman's Primary School in October 2011 highlighted the following strengths: the excellent working relationships throughout the school, the exemplary behaviour of the pupils and their enthusiasm for learning, the dedicated hard working staff, the good or better quality of teaching observed in the majority of the lessons, the very good provision for pastoral care, the good standards attained by the children in literacy and numeracy and the good leadership provided by the principal and vice-principal.

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

- to review and refine the current planning in order to ensure a more consistent and coherent approach to teaching and learning throughout the school; and
- have consistently high quality teaching in all the classes to ensure a more progressive development of the children's learning through the seven years.

The inspection conclusion in October 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 learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the children are to be met more effectively.

The school development plan was adjusted appropriately in light of the inspection findings and the action plan produced by the school was of a very good quality. The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out two monitoring visits and a follow-up inspection on 1 October 2014.

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

- there were a number of significant changes in staffing; two new teachers have been appointed and a part-time teacher employed to support children with additional needs;
- the principal has a non-teaching role and the senior leadership team (SLT) has been restructured with responsibilities for key areas of improvement clearly defined and allocated within the team;
- the appointment of co-ordinators in literacy and numeracy with a clear focus on monitoring, evaluation and leading staff development;
- the board of governors have been involved in the improvement process through meetings with co-ordinators and the allocation of appropriate resources;
- the staff have provided literacy and numeracy workshops for parents;
- the staff have worked diligently with the SLT to identify, share and disseminate good practice in planning, learning and teaching;
- a new planning format for the teachers' medium and short-term planning was implemented; and

- the staff have received very good professional development and support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) of the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) in a number of areas including literacy, numeracy, leadership and management.

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

- the rigorous processes of school development planning and self-evaluation supported by tailored staff development have led to a more consistent and coherent approach to learning and teaching throughout the school;
- the collegiate and reflective approach by all the staff to school improvement since the inspection, under the very good strategic leadership of the principal and vice-principal;
- leadership responsibilities are shared equitably across the school and links between the SLT and staff are effective in bringing about improvement;
- the effective leadership provided by the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators who monitor and evaluate rigorously the provision;
- the well-developed process for disseminating good practice in planning, learning and teaching within the school is improving the quality of classroom practice and meeting effectively the needs of all pupils;
- the detailed medium and short-term planning for literacy and numeracy focuses on the children's learning and matches more closely their needs and abilities;
- the consistently high quality of learning and teaching in most of the lessons evaluated during the follow up process; and
- the increased engagement of parents in supporting their children's learning.

In the areas inspected, the quality of the education provided by this school is 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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