



*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 Patrick's Primary School and Nursery Unit  
Newry**

**January 2015**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT, NEWRY, CO DOWN (503-1158)**

The inspection of St Patrick's Primary School and Nursery Unit in April 2013 highlighted the following strengths: the strong team spirit amongst the staff; the effective provision for children with additional learning needs; the good use of information and communication technology to enhance the children's learning; and the very good quality of pastoral care throughout the school and nursery unit.

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

- for the teachers to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning and teaching, specifically in relation to differentiation, in order to raise the children's attainment in literacy and numeracy; and
- to develop a more strategic and coherent approach to self evaluation, including the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching, in order to identify and implement the key actions which will bring about improvement in the achievements and standards of the children.

The inspection conclusion in April 2013 was that:

'In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards, and 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 interim follow-up visits and a follow-up inspection on 27 January 2015.

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

- There have been a number of significant changes in staffing; two permanent early years teachers have been appointed and a part-time speech therapist appointed by the school to support children with speech and language difficulties.
- Teams for literacy and numeracy have been appointed with a clear focus on monitoring, evaluation and leading staff development.
- A parental engagement co-ordinator and pastoral team have been appointed.
- The staff have provided workshops for parents with a focus on reading and numeracy.
- A new board of governors has been established and engaged in the improvement process through, regular meetings with the co-ordinators and the allocation of appropriate resources.

- The staff have worked effectively with the senior leadership team (SLT) to identify, share and disseminate good practice in planning, learning and teaching.
- A new planning format for the teachers' short-term planning was agreed and implemented.
- The new outdoor classroom which has been created in the nursery unit enhances further the play provision.
- 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 most important improvements since the original inspection include:

- the effective strategic leadership provided by the SLT and school improvement teams who monitor and evaluate rigorously the provision;
- the processes of school development planning and self-evaluation, supported by tailored staff development which have led to a more consistent approach to planning, learning and teaching throughout the school;
- the shared vision and collegial approach amongst the staff, and their commitment to the academic and pastoral needs of all the children; evidenced through, the Welcoming Schools accreditation;
- the effective use of assessment information to identify the individual needs of the children, to track the children's progress and to inform learning and teaching;
- the detailed short-term planning for literacy and numeracy, which is improving the quality of classroom practice and meeting more effectively the needs and abilities of the children;
- the significant reduction in underachievement, in literacy and numeracy, throughout the school;
- the significantly improved quality of the children's work and the standards they attain. The school's internal assessment information shows that, in English and mathematics, most of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are achieving in line with their ability, or above expectation and are making very good progress in their learning;
- the consistently high quality of learning and teaching observed during the follow-up process; and
- the engagement of the parents and the local community in the life and work of the school and, in particular, the enhanced opportunities for parents and families to support 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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