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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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**Department of Education  
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## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

**Castledawson Primary School  
Magherafelt**

**June 2007**

## **FOLLOW UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF CASTLEDAWSON PRIMARY SCHOOL, MAGHERAFELT, CO LONDONDERRY, BT45 8AB (301-3704)**

The focused inspection in Castledawson Primary School in May 2005 highlighted strengths in the good working relationships between the staff and the children, the behaviour of the children, the industrious and committed teachers, the effective use of mental and practical approaches to the teaching of mathematics and the strong links with parents and the wider community.

The inspection identified as areas for improvement the need to:

- develop the provision for structured play in order to promote continuity, progression and cohesion in the children's experiences and to provide greater challenge for the more able children; and
- develop the provision for children who are experiencing difficulties with their learning.

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

- A new Principal was appointed in December 2005 and a new Vice-principal was appointed in September 2006.
- The staff carried out a school audit to outline the strengths and the areas for improvement within the school.
- The layout of the equipment and resources in the classrooms in key stage 1 has been reorganised to introduce learning areas to ensure that all the space and time for the informal play programme is used purposefully to promote the children's thinking and learning.
- The school has acquired additional resources for physical outdoor play and has enhanced the playground to improve the quality of the formal and informal play experiences for the children.
- The staff have introduced a formative monitoring system to track the children's progress throughout the different year groups.
- Additional resources have been acquired for physical play outdoors.
- The school has adjusted its School Development Plan in light of the initial inspection findings and the staff have drawn up detailed and comprehensive action plans to guide the development of the provision.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection in June 2007. This report also takes account of a monitoring visit in December 2006.

The following are the most important improvements brought about since the focused inspection.

- The teachers have introduced a greater variety of practical teaching approaches to involve the children more actively in their learning.
- The children are enjoying a wider range of experiences through play based learning which provide good opportunities for challenge, investigation and the development of problem solving and thinking skills.
- The teachers' planning for learning has been modified to ensure that opportunities for differentiation are more clearly identified.

- The school has developed well-structured support sessions for those children with additional learning needs.
- The teachers have introduced an appropriate range of strategies to promote the children's independence and thinking skills.
- The school has begun to make effective use of internal and external assessment procedures to record and report on the children's progress.
- The teachers have begun to make careful evaluation of the children's responses to the planned activities and as a result the children enjoy a variety of stimulating and inviting learning experiences which develop throughout the term.
- The staff are committed and dedicated to improving significant aspects of the educational programme.
- The Principal has provided effective leadership for the school since her appointment and has managed significant development in a short period of time.

As part of the follow-up inspection process, the school conducted its own evaluation of the progress in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. The school submitted a self-evaluative report to the Inspectorate setting out its findings.

The school has received good support from the North-Eastern Education and Library Board Curriculum Advisory and Support Service in developing the process of self-evaluation, and in gathering evidence of improvement.

The inspection confirms that, through effective self-evaluation, the school has identified appropriately its priorities for future development and improvement.

The school has made good progress in addressing the key areas for action. The parents and broader community can have confidence in the school's commitment to and action for improvement, and the effectiveness of its response to the findings of the focused inspection.

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