



*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

**Gaelscoil na Móna
Belfast**

June 2011

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF GAELSCOIL NA MÓNA, BELFAST (104-6671)

The focused inspection in November 2009 highlighted strengths in the welcoming and caring ethos and the quality of the of the arrangements for pastoral care, the courteous, well-behaved children, the wide range of extra-curricular activities, the links with external agencies and the wider community; and the support of the parents and Board of Governors for the work of the school.

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

- to review thoroughly the school's provision for special educational needs (SEN);
- to review the current deployment of staff and the organisation of classes; and
- for effective strategic leadership, to include a well-devised school development plan, underpinned by formal and rigorous processes to monitor, evaluate and improve the currently low standards achieved by the children.

Subsequent to the inspection, the school entered the formal intervention process in January 2010. In the interval since the original inspection, the school received support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Belfast Education and Library Board and the Inter-board Irish-Medium and CASS team in developing aspects of the school's provision for literacy, numeracy, SEN, and leadership and management.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out three interim follow-up visits (IFUVs), and a follow-up inspection on 13 June 2011.

The following are the most important actions and changes that have taken place since the original inspection:

- a new management structure has been established;
- co-ordinators were appointed for literacy, numeracy and SEN; and
- the enrolment declined from 96 to 84, and the percentage of children entitled to free school meals increased significantly from 51% to 68%.

The action plan produced by the school in response to the inspection findings was of a good quality and was adjusted appropriately in light of feedback given by the Inspectorate during the IFUVs.

The following are the most important improvements made:

- the special educational needs co-ordinator has put in place a number of effective strategies to improve provision, including a wider range of initial assessments, comprehensive education plans and an effective system for monitoring the progress of the children;
- the teachers and classroom assistants have participated in a range of continuous professional development courses to enable them to meet more effectively the diverse range of learning needs within their classrooms; this is having a positive influence on the children's experiences and outcomes;

- there is notable improvement in the children's reading standards in English in key stage 2; their comprehension skills are now good; the children's writing in both languages is monitored systematically and a portfolio of written work is maintained for each child demonstrating progression over time; the children's writing skills now range from satisfactory to good;
- in numeracy, suitable targets and strategies for the promotion of mental mathematics have been agreed and lines of development finalised ensuring more effective progression in the children's learning from years 1-7;
- there is an increased focus on self-evaluation using the school's internal pupil performance data in order to identify low achievement, to set targets for improvement and to monitor the progress of the children; the co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy and SEN are involved increasingly in classroom observations based on agreed criteria;
- the Principal monitors the teachers' planning thoroughly and works closely with the school leadership team in evaluating the policies and practices within the school to ensure that the children's standards of achievement continue to rise; and
- the SDP now contains suitable priorities and there are associated action plans designed to effect further improvements in the children's achievements in literacy and numeracy.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is now good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The follow-up inspection has identified ongoing areas for improvement, including the need to raise further the children's achievements in literacy and numeracy and for the teachers to continue to focus on the quality of their teaching, which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

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