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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

**Mullaghdubh Primary School
Islandmagee**

June 2007

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF MULLAGHDUBH PRIMARY SCHOOL, ISLANDMAGEE, LARNE, CO ANTRIM, BT40 3SY (301-0760)

The focused inspection in October 2005 highlighted strengths in the work of the school, including the caring, welcoming and friendly ethos, the exemplary behaviour of the overwhelming majority of the children, the quality of the teaching, the pastoral leadership of the Principal and her dedication and commitment to the future development of the school, the strong support of the parents and the Governors. The inspection identified the need for improvement in a number of areas including the following:

- to place more systematic emphasis, in the planning and teaching, on challenging and extending the standards of numeracy of all of the children and, especially of the more able;
- to put in place a range of strategies to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of planning, learning and teaching and of the out workings of school policies. In addition, there is a need to make more effective use of the statistical information (school performance information) already available to inform and modify classroom practice; and for the staff to develop, over time, a culture of school self-evaluation.

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

- the declining enrolment which is now 43 and a subsequent reduction in staffing;
- the relevant and effective staff development and progress in important curricular areas and especially in those areas which were identified for improvement in the focused inspection of 2005;
- an increasing focus on monitoring and evaluating the life and work of the school; and
- the valuable support which the school received from the North Eastern Education and Library Board Curriculum, Advisory and Support Service.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection on 20 June 2007.

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

- the professionalism and hard work of the Principal and all of the staff in addressing the areas for improvement which were identified at the time of the focused inspection;
- the excellent working relationships amongst the staff and the very good emphasis placed on collegial decision making and in sharing practice;
- an even stronger focus on matching the work more consistently to individuals and groups of children through, for example, even more regular assessment by the staff of their systems of short-term planning and in classrooms by employing an even wider range of learning and teaching strategies;
- a review of the provision in structured play which is having a very positive impact on the children's progression in learning in the early years. In addition, the strong emphasis being given to promoting creativity and independence in play;
- the very good emphasis placed on continuing good progress being made in promoting numeracy within and across the school and in using information and communication technology to support teaching and learning; both of these are having a positive effect on the teaching of mathematics, on the children's learning and in higher standards being achieved;

- health and safety matters raised at the time of the focused inspection are being addressed;
- the ongoing commitment, development and implementation of more rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate the life and work of the school including a stronger focus on assessment and in analysing and using data; and
- the hard work of the Principal and his teaching staff who are clearly committed to enhancing and promoting the work of the school.

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 Principal and her co-ordinators submitted self-evaluative reports to the Inspectorate setting out their work and comments findings.

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

There are strengths in the school's approach to self-evaluation; the quality of the reports and supporting documentation were good. The reports provided clear evidence of the good progress made following the inspection. The processes used to gather the evidence were effective. The Inspectorate confirms that the findings and recommendations contained in the self-evaluative reports are accurate and appropriate, and are an effective response to the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection report.

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

There is an urgent need for the employing authority, the school governors and the staff to plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and the school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

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