



*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 Bernard's Primary School
Newtownabbey**

May 2011

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF ST BERNARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM, BT36 6DW (303-3313)

The focused inspection of St Bernard's Primary School in February 2010 highlighted strengths in the pastoral care of the children and identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the inadequate leadership and management of the school;
- the inadequate standards and achievements of the children in literacy and numeracy across the school;
- the quality of provision for special educational needs; and
- the quality of the teaching, to ensure it is more sharply focused on the children's learning and more closely matched to their needs and abilities.

As a result the school entered the formal intervention process. The Department of Education indicated at the time that a follow-up inspection would take place and that in the interim, follow-up inspection visits would monitor the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements.

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

- the management structure and staffing of the school have been reviewed and developed, supported by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- the Principal who had been leading the school on a seconded basis has now been appointed on a permanent basis;
- a Vice-principal has been seconded to support the work of the Principal in leading and managing the school;
- extensive support has been provided by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board's Curriculum Advisory and Support Service in relation to school improvement;
- staff development has been provided to empower the teachers and co-ordinators to undertake their roles more effectively;
- provision has been enhanced to involve the parents and the local community more in the life and work of the school and the children, and
- minor works programmes have been implemented to improve the quality of the school's estate.

The school submitted appropriate action plans and an interim follow-up visit was carried out by the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) on 15 October 2010.

The school development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection on 19 May 2011. The following are the most important improvements made since the focused inspection:

- the very good leadership and management of the Principal and seconded Vice-principal, who provide highly effective strategic and operational leadership and management and who have worked well together to deliver significant improvements in the quality of learning and teaching throughout the school;
- the very good use made of performance data coupled with qualitative evaluations to monitor and track the individual children's progress;
- the strong commitment given to meeting the needs of children with special educational needs through early identification and appropriate support and the very effective work carried out by the special educational needs co-ordinator in leading this dimension of the school's provision;
- the very effective leadership and management provided by the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators and the robust processes for monitoring and evaluating they have put in place to effect further improvements;
- the improvement in the standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy which were inadequate at the time of the original inspection and are now good; and
- the high quality of the teaching observed, which was differentiated to meet the varying needs of the children, and all of which was good or better with most being either very good or outstanding.

CONCLUSION

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