

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Brigid's Primary School, Altamuskin, County Tyrone

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 203-2573

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in February 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, ALTAMUSKIN, COUNTY TYRONE, BT79 9JA (203-2573)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St Brigid's Primary School, Altamuskin, in October 2015¹ which concluded that the school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

The ETI carried out a follow-up inspection (FUI) of St Brigid's Primary School in May 2017², which concluded that the school had improved. However, it needed to address an important area for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The area for improvement was for the staff to:

- make more evaluative use of the range of information gathered about learning and teaching in order to inform the setting of more rigorous baselines and targets in the action plans.

A second FUI, involving action short of strike, was conducted in October 2018³.

The ETI conducted a third FUI in February 2020.

Views of the parents and staff

Eighty-four percent of the parents responded to the confidential, online questionnaire and two-thirds of these responses included written comments. Most of the parents' responses were highly positive, with most of the written comments affirming their children's enjoyment of their learning. A small number of the parents expressed concerns about aspects of the provision. All of the staff completed the confidential, online teaching and support staff questionnaire and their responses were highly positive. The findings of the questionnaires were shared with the principal and governors.

In the interval since the original inspection, the school has received external support provided by the Education Authority (EA). The quality and impact of this collaboration has been good, particularly the development of the roles of the senior and middle leaders to evaluate the children's learning experiences and outcomes. Consequently, there have been improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

In the interval since the previous inspections, the actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- greater stability in senior leadership;
- a reduction in staffing levels, leading to the re-allocation of leadership roles;
- the good support for the work of the governors and principal provided by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS);
- the reconstitution of the board of governors, complemented by a re-structuring of governors' responsibilities, including the establishment of a dedicated school improvement sub-committee; and

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/primary-inspection-st-brigid%E2%80%99s-primary-school-altamuskin-county-tyrone>

² <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/follow-inspection-st-brigids-primary-school-altamuskin-county-tyrone>

³ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/follow-inspection-involving-action-short-strike-st-brigids-primary-school-altamuskin>

- the painting of the school and enhancement of the information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, funded in part by the supportive parent-teacher association, to enhance the children's learning.

Key findings

- The quality and effectiveness of strategic leadership is now good. There is a more consistent approach to action-planning, supported by the use of a range of qualitative and quantitative information to set appropriate targets, notably to raise further the standards attained by the children in numeracy. The co-ordinators have developed their capacity to identify areas for improvement and monitor progress in their respective areas of curricular responsibility through the use of first-hand evidence gained from classroom observations, evaluations of children's work and robust analysis of the school's performance data.
- The governors' school improvement sub-committee plays a more active and informed role in monitoring the outcomes for the children. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's progress in the areas for improvement and provide both support and challenge as required. They have identified, for example, the need for the teachers to implement more consistently the marking for improvement policy and strategies across the year groups. There are regular opportunities for the co-ordinators to report directly to the governors on progress within their areas of responsibility.
- All of the lessons observed were good or very good. This effective practice was characterised by excellent working relationships at all levels, good pace in the teaching and appropriate levels of challenge. The children manage their own learning maturely and work collaboratively with their peers. In numeracy, the teachers' consistent implementation of whole-school planning for progression helps them match the tasks closely to the children's individual needs and abilities. As a result, the children are increasingly confident in their use of mathematical language and in their application of strategies to solve word problems.
- The children's attainment in literacy has been consistently high and the current performance data indicates that all the children are achieving at or above the expected levels. The children's talking and listening skills are well developed. However, the work in the children's books is too variable in the quality of presentation, including handwriting, and the teachers' marking for improvement is not fully in line with the school policy. In discussions with the inspectors, the children spoke articulately and proudly about their school and about their leadership roles as members of the school council.
- It continues to be important that the employing authority, governors and staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

Safeguarding

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding continue to reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussion with a group of year 6 and 7 children, they reported that they feel safe in school; they know what to do if they have concerns about their well-being.

Overall effectiveness

The follow-up inspection of St Brigid's Primary School indicates that the school now demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the children.

The school needs to:

- develop further the use of first-hand evidence about learning and teaching, particularly including consultation with all stakeholders.

The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

Health and safety/Accommodation

1. The privacy of the secretary's office is not secured. A hatch for visitors to conduct business at a distance from the desk is required. This work, identified at the time of the first follow-up inspection in May 2017, has not yet been completed.

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