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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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*Providing Inspection Services for*  
**Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

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

**St Malachy's Primary School  
Newry**

**February 2009**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST MALACHY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, CARNAGAT, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT35 8PJ (503-6433)**

The focused inspection in March 2007 highlighted strengths in the school's ethos, including the quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection and the happy, supportive and caring atmosphere based on mutual respect between the children and adults. The report also highlighted, the bright and attractive learning environment and the satisfactory to good quality of most of the teaching and the instances of excellent practice. It also identified a clear willingness within the school community to promote improvement in important areas.

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

- the need for effective curricular leadership and strategic management to guide the work of the school;
- the need for rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of the out-working of the school's policy on learning and teaching and of the children's attainments;
- an urgent need to make more effective analysis and use of the school's quantitative internal and external data to inform planning and to set targets to address the needs of all of the children;
- the need for a review of provision in special educational needs (SEN);
- a need for the staff to develop, over time, an increased self-evaluative culture; and
- a need for The Board of Governors (governors), in partnership with the staff, to ensure that the provision across the school is consistent and effective. In addition, the governors need to oversee the full implementation of the school's Professional Review and Staff Development programme.

In the interval since the inspection, the following action which affects the work of the department has taken place:

- the school accessed appropriate support for literacy, and for planning, from the Southern Education and Library Board's Curriculum Advisory and Support Service and from the employing authority the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- the Principal, who was absent at the time of the inspection, has returned to his post and has gained considerably from the support of new vice-Principal who was appointed with a clear role for curriculum development; and
- the governors took a strong and active interest in the school's response to the inspection and performed a very clear role in monitoring the work of the school.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out two monitoring visits in 2008 and 2009, and a follow-up inspection on 28 February 2009.

The action plans produced by the organisation in response to the inspection findings were of very good quality. The school's development plan had been adjusted in light of the inspection findings and meets the statutory requirements as set out by the Department of Education.

Very good progress has been made in the areas of improvement identified during the original inspection. The following are the most important improvements since the inspection:

- at the time of the follow-up inspection staff morale was evidently much higher and all of the teachers interviewed were content with the recent positive developments and future direction of the school;
- the teachers and co-ordinators have reviewed their planning for literacy and numeracy and for the use of information and communication technology, all of which includes more detail on how the identified learning objectives are to be achieved, and shows clear progression across all of the year groups;
- the teachers are using a wider range of teaching strategies to challenge, motivate and engage the children and to meet the varying needs within the classes;
- the provision in SEN is still being reviewed in the best interests of the children;
- the school has made effective use of its performance data to promote higher standards in the work of the children;
- the teachers have compiled samples of work from across the curriculum to ensure consistency in marking, and to inform further improvement in the standards; and
- there has been stronger curriculum leadership and clear strategic direction from senior and middle management and curricular roles and responsibilities across the school have been reviewed to meet the current and future needs of the school.

Since the inspection, the school evaluated the progress made in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. The promotion of a self-evaluative culture throughout the follow-up inspection period contributed to the improvement made, and helped the school identify appropriately its priorities for future development. The inspection confirms that, through self-evaluation, the school demonstrated clear evidence of improvement. Accordingly, the Inspectorate recommends that the processes for self-evaluation now in place are maintained and extended.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this organisation is now good. The organisation is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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