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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

St Malachy's Primary School Nursery Unit
Castlewellan

December 2006

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF ST MALACHY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, CASTLEWELLAN, BT31 9DN (403-6454)

The inspection in May 2005 highlighted strengths in the ethos and the links with the adjoining primary school and also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the staff's interaction to promote learning; and
- the planning and assessment methods.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the nursery unit have taken place.

- The staff have received in-service training and support from the Early Years officer of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service.
- The staff have made visits to a number of other pre-school centres.
- Additional resources have been purchased to support the development of physical and outdoor play giving the children a wider range of activities to choose from.
- The school development plan has been amended to incorporate the issues identified during the original inspection.
- A new principal has been appointed in the adjoining primary school and took up post in September 2006.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a series of inspection visits to the nursery unit as part of the follow-up process. This report was compiled following the inspection visit on 4 December 2006 and also takes account of the findings of the visit in May 2005.

Although work has begun to develop the planning and assessment methods and to build more effectively on the children's own creative ideas, evidence from the follow-up procedures indicates that insufficient progress has been made in addressing some important areas identified for action by the original inspection. The following key areas have been inadequately addressed.

- The staff's interaction is not consistently effective enough in promoting safe and productive play and in extending learning through the activities and routines.
- The staff need to make more effective use of the assessment information to match the level of support more closely to the needs of the individual children.

The educational provision has shown insufficient improvement since the original inspection and some important shortcomings remain. The Inspectorate will continue to monitor the progress being made and will carry out a further inspection. The report of the findings will be published.

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