



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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*Providing Inspection Services for*  
**Department of Education  
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## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

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

**St Malachy's Primary School Nursery Unit  
Castlewellan**

**June 2007**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION IN ST MALACHY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY UNIT, CASTLEWELLAN, CO DOWN, BT31 9DN**

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

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

A follow-up inspection was carried out in December 2006. The evidence from the first follow-up procedures indicated that insufficient progress had been made in addressing some key issues identified at the original inspection.

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

- The nursery teacher has been on a period of extended absence.
- A substitute teacher has been employed since April 2007.
- The nursery staff and head of key stage 1 have visited another nursery.
- The staff have worked closely with the South-Eastern Education and Library Board Early Years Curriculum Support Officer and have valued this support.

This report was compiled following the second follow-up inspection visit on 6 June 2007.

The following are the most important improvements brought about by the staff and the management group.

- The changes to the room layout and removal of a number of internal doors has helped the staff make more effective use of all of the available space.
- The children have better opportunities to take more responsibility for their personal needs.
- The staff observed on the day of the inspection visit demonstrated skill in promoting safe, productive and settled play. The reviewed behaviour management strategies are implemented in a positive and consistent manner; the children respond very well to the staff.
- During the visit, there were many examples when the staff extended the children's thinking, language and learning and promoted a sense of fun and enjoyment.
- The children demonstrate much higher levels of concentration and motivation in their learning. There are better opportunities for the promotion of imaginative role play, investigation and observation and the development of an interest in books.

- The changes in the daily routine make better use of the time. The transitions are managed smoothly and effectively.
- There is improvement in the planning and management of outdoor play.
- The staff have developed an information booklet for the parents. They are encouraged to come in to the playroom to collect their children and this helps establish useful links with the staff.

Although progress in developing the links between the assessment information and the planning has been delayed due to staff absence, this area is prioritised on the school development plan for immediate development and there has been a significant improvement in the overall quality of the provision.

The nursery unit has made good progress in addressing the key areas for action. The parents and broader community can have confidence in the school's commitment to improvement.

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