



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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**Department of Education
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Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**St Mary's on the Hill Primary School
Newtownabbey**

June 2008

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST MARY'S ON THE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM, BT36 6JU (303-6046)

The focused inspection in April 2002 highlighted strengths in the ethos of the school and the good quality of much of the teaching and the standards achieved by many of the children in mathematics. The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the need to review the mathematics programme;
- the further integration of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum; and
- the development of the role of the subject co-ordinators to facilitate more systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

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

- there have been a number of staffing changes, which necessitated the reallocation of the roles of numeracy co-ordinator and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO);
- a new Vice-principal was appointed and took up post in March 2007; the current Vice-principal has assumed the roles of acting numeracy co-ordinator and of SENCO;
- the school has acquired additional resources for (ICT), Literacy and Numeracy;
- the school has accessed funding through the Dissemination of Good Practice scheme to create support materials for children with special educational needs;
- the staff have accessed relevant in-service training, particularly through the school's involvement in the Northern Ireland Numeracy Strategy, and more recently in relation to the implementation of the revised curriculum;
- the school has become involved in the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment ICT accreditation and took part in the MediaScapes initiative with Classroom 2000 (C2k) and Hewlett-Packard;
- the security arrangements in the school have been improved, including the upgrading of the closed circuit television system and the installation of new perimeter fencing; and
- the school development plan (SDP) was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection visit on 16 June 2008.

The District Inspector reported that the main strengths within the school's educational and pastoral provision include the following:

- the very positive ethos and good working relationships at all levels. The children are very well-behaved; they are well-motivated and respond well to the high expectations of the teachers;
- the teaching observed during the visit was well-planned and included a range of effective strategies, including the sharing of learning intentions with the children and the promotion of some aspects of assessment for learning;

- the mathematics programme has been reviewed and updated. The co-ordinators have provided useful guidance for the staff on lines of development, and mental mathematics strategies are now incorporated into the lesson planners;
- the increased, effective integration of ICT to enhance the children's learning at all key stages. The ICT policy has been updated and very good use is being made of the newly-acquired resources including class laptops, digital cameras and interactive whiteboards;
- the line of progression in all four strands of the ICT programme agreed by the staff and the identification of opportunities to incorporate ICT into their weekly planning for Literacy, Numeracy and The World Around Us;
- the monitoring of the children's progress through the use of an ICT Skills Record and the compilation of individual portfolios; and
- the good use being made of all available school performance data to inform planning and to track the children's progress.

The Principal, the management team and the staff are currently revising the SDP, and have identified appropriate areas for improvement, including the redefining of the role of the co-ordinators and the review of whole-school planning.

Since the previous inspection, the school has evaluated the progress made in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. It will be important that the processes for school self-evaluation are developed further, as a means to bring about continuous improvement and raised standards.

Good progress has been made in the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are well met. The parents and broader community can have confidence in the effectiveness of the school's response to the findings of the inspection and its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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