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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

St Mary's Primary School
Derrytrasna

Inspected: November 2008

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL,
DERRYTRASNA, CRAIGAVON, BT66 6NR (503-6009)**

The focused inspection in English, information and communication technology (ICT) and the school's arrangements for pastoral care conducted in March 2005 highlighted strengths in the very positive and inclusive ethos, the strong support of the parents, the Board of Governors and the wider community, the attractive learning environment and the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Other strengths included, the quality of the working relationships throughout the school, the very good behaviour of the vast majority of the children, the conscientious and hard-working staff, the commitment of the Principal to developing and improving the school curriculum, the good quality of much of the teaching, the good progress made in the use of ICT, the useful start being made to aspects of monitoring and evaluation and the effective support of the classroom assistants.

The findings of the follow-up inspection confirm that these areas continue to be significant strengths.

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

- to continue to review the provision for structured play;
- to improve the written presentation in the work of a number of the children;
- to mark the children's work for improvement and make further use of the information from internal and external assessment to inform planning, learning and teaching; and
- to review the present format for planning to ensure that it addresses more effectively the individual needs of the children.

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

- the school has experienced significant fluctuation in enrolment. This resulted, initially, in the reduction of the permanent teaching staff by one. More recently, the enrolment has increased and an additional teacher has been appointed for one year;
- the principal release time has been increased from one to two days; and
- the school has received good support from the Southern Education and Library Board's Curriculum and Advisory Support Services.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out two monitoring visits prior to the follow-up inspection in November 2008.

The following are the most important improvements since the focused inspection:

- the School Development Plan has been adjusted in light of the original inspection findings;

- the planning for play-based learning has been effectively reviewed to provide a greater focus on key learning outcomes and to connect the children's learning across the curriculum;
- the outdoor play area has been developed to create a more stimulating learning environment for all of the children;
- the teachers have begun to develop more comprehensive planning for literacy. The year one programme has been completed and the year two programme is currently being drafted;
- the teachers have developed and begun to implement an agreed marking policy which has been shared with the parents and the children;
- the school is providing parents with more detailed information about the curriculum in order to help them support their children's learning; and
- the teachers are beginning to use internal data more effectively to identify and make appropriate provision for children with additional needs.

Since the inspection, the school has evaluated the progress made in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. The Inspectorate recommends that the processes for self-evaluation are developed to focus more strongly on self-evaluation as a means to bring about improvement.

Good progress has been made in most of the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection but there is a need for the school to extend the use of internal data to inform planning and provision for all of the children and for marking to focus more explicitly on promoting improvement in the children's learning.

The school's progress in the areas for improvement will be followed up by the District Inspector.

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