

# PRIMARY INSPECTION

## The Good Shepherd Primary School, Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

DE Ref No: 403-6285

### Report of a Follow-up Inspection in June 2022



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Department of Education  
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## Follow-up to the inspection of The Good Shepherd Primary School, Belfast, BT17 0PJ (403-6285)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection of The Good Shepherd Primary School in November 2017<sup>1</sup>. Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact of actions taken and the extent to which the important areas for improvement had been addressed, namely to:

- continue to build the capacity of the senior leaders and co-ordinators to develop effective leadership and teamwork;
- monitor and evaluate effectively the impact of improvements in the children's experiences on their learning outcomes; and
- share and embed more consistently the effective practice within the school.

Consequently, there remained a need for The Good Shepherd Primary School to address the important areas for improvement.

The school's development plan and associated action plans were adjusted in light of the inspection findings and the feedback given by ETI.

ETI carried out a monitoring visit in December 2021 and a second follow-up inspection in June 2022.

In the interval since the follow-up inspection, the school reports that it received very good external support from the Education Authority (EA) in relation to: aspects of leadership and management; and aspects of provision, in particular, the practices and principles of nurture, positive behaviour and special educational needs, including planning for learning in specialist provision. The school also acknowledges the pastoral support for leadership and governance provided by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

Over the same period, the other key actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- the establishment of new senior leadership, middle leadership and whole-school curricular teams;
- the appointment of a significant number of new teaching staff;
- the re-constitution of the board of governors and appointment of a new chairperson;

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<sup>1</sup> [Follow-up Inspection \(Involving Action Short of Strike\) - The Good Shepherd Primary School, Belfast](#)

- the implementation of a more strategic, collegial and robust approach to the school development planning process; and
- the introduction of a 'modelling excellence programme' to build further the professional partnerships across the school, disseminate effective classroom practice and develop the capacity of more recently qualified teachers.

As a consequence of the external support and the key changes and actions taken within the school, there have been significant improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

## Key findings

Seventeen percent of parents and almost 60% of the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaire. The responses to the parental questionnaire were very positive and almost all of the written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The responses to the staff questionnaire were also wholly positive and endorsed: the supportive and collaborative leadership; the opportunities afforded to staff to develop professionally; and, the commitment throughout the school to each individual child. The ETI has communicated to the principal and the chair of the board of governors the main findings, and any individual issues arising, from the questionnaires.

The outcomes for learners have improved and are now very good.

Across the key stages the children are highly motivated and engage enthusiastically in their learning. Their thinking and self-management skills are very well developed and they work effectively both independently and collaboratively, in pairs and small groups. The children contribute confidently to whole-class discussions and use extended and sophisticated language to share their knowledge and express their opinions. There is clear progression in the children's work from foundation stage to key stage 2 and overall the standards in the children's books are very good. The presentation of the children's work is also of a high standard, in particular in the foundation stage, owing to the recently introduced approach to cursive writing.

The year 6 children who met with the inspectors read fluently; they discussed their favourite authors, books and characters and justified their choices. They also talked at length about their role on the school council and explained the election process in detail. The year 6 children have a very good knowledge of key mathematical concepts and apply skilfully a range of strategies to solve problems.

The quality of provision has improved and is now very good.

Planning for learning and teaching is comprehensive and robust and guides very effectively classroom practice. An innovative dual tracking and intervention system is in place that combines a range of pastoral and academic internal qualitative and quantitative data to inform planning and track progress for individual children. Children who require additional support, both pastorally and academically, are identified early

and are supported through a range of appropriate interventions. All of the lessons observed were good or better, and most were very good or outstanding. In the very good and outstanding lessons, the children are provided with opportunities to take responsibility for and engage actively in their learning; teachers use skilful questioning to stimulate the children's thinking and extend their vocabulary; and classroom assistants support the children very effectively.

The quality of leadership and management has improved and is now very good.

Leadership at all levels, including governance, is reflective and innovative. There is a well-established, embedded collaborative management structure and a collegial vision for whole-school improvement which is informed by a robust school development planning process. There is a vibrant professional learning community within the school and a shared commitment to improving pedagogy and the learning experiences and outcomes for all of the children.

## **Overall effectiveness**

The Good Shepherd Primary School now has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interests of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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