



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Ashgrove Primary School
Newtownabbey**

March 2016

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ASHGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 6LJ (301-6244)

The original inspection of Ashgrove Primary School carried out in November 2014¹ concluded that overall, the quality of education provided by the school was inadequate and identified significant areas for improvement, including the need to:

- provide effective, stable leadership at all levels throughout the school and make effective use of data to inform practice at all levels and to effect whole-school improvement, which should include addressing the deficiencies in the safeguarding arrangements;
- develop a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning, teaching and differentiation in order to ensure appropriate progression in the children's learning and improve the consistency in the quality of the learning experiences provided for all the children; and
- agree and implement a robust whole-school approach to monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's provision, and use the outcomes, to inform the school's development planning process and to raise the standards achieved by all the children.

As a consequence, the Department of Education entered the school into the formal intervention process under the Every School a Good School policy, in November 2014².

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

- a new principal and vice-principal have been appointed and a new senior leadership team has been established;
- there have been significant changes to the staffing and subsequent changes in the allocation of key roles and responsibilities;
- the staff and governors have received advice and professional development from the School Development Service of the Education Authority in a number of key areas including safeguarding, literacy, numeracy and leadership and management, including governance; and
- significant improvements have been made to the school accommodation, including new perimeter fencing.

Key Findings

- The principal, ably supported by the vice-principal, is providing highly effective strategic leadership which has brought about stability and a wide range of significant improvements, including consistently better learning experiences and outcomes for the children.

¹ <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-primary/inspection-reports-primary-2014/primary-inspection-ashgrove-primary-school-newtownabbey-co-antrim.pdf>

² <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/ESAGS%20Policy%20for%20School%20Improvement%20-%20Final%20Version%2005-05-2009.pdf>

- The governors are now more aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to raising standards and improving further the provision.
- The senior leadership team, staff and governors are working collegially and effectively on the school development planning process which is focused clearly on realising the school's mission statement of 'Learning, Caring, Growing Stronger Together'.
- The processes for self-evaluation have developed significantly and an appropriate range of qualitative and quantitative data including the very effective target monitors, are being used well to track and review the progress made in the key areas under review.
- The extensive work carried out to address the shortcomings in the safeguarding arrangements has resulted in comprehensive safeguarding of the children, which reflects the guidance issued by the Department of Education and is evident in the highly positive and child-centred ethos.
- The lessons observed during the follow-up process were of a high standard; almost all of the lessons were effective in promoting learning and 60 percent were very good.
- The processes for communication and consultation with parents and children are much improved and children are now involved fully in making decisions including through the highly effective school council.
- The parents are more engaged in the life and work of the school, in particular, through the curriculum meetings which help them support their children's learning.
- The standards the children attain are high, as evidenced by the school's internal assessment data and the high quality of the work in the books.

Overall effectiveness

Ashgrove Primary School has demonstrated the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement, including how it develops further the roles of the middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility.

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