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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



Providing Inspection Services for
**Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Hill Croft School
Newtownabbey**

June 2009

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF HILL CROFT SCHOOL, NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM, BT36 5UW (331-6510)

The focused inspection in May 2007 highlighted strengths in, for example, the good quality of the provision for the pastoral care of the pupils, the high quality of the school's programme for transition, the very good quality of the teaching in some classes and the quality of the support, involvement and commitment of the members of the Board of Governors to the development of the school. The inspection identified the need:

- to develop a systematic, formal and documented approach to the process of monitoring and evaluating the quality and consistency of learning and teaching to lead to further improvement;
- for the staff, individually and in teams, to address the dissemination of good practice across the school; and
- to clarify further the roles and responsibilities of co-ordinators and teams in order to develop clear lines of accountability and shared responsibility.

In the interval since the inspection, the staff, led by the management team, have:

- carried out an audit of curriculum areas;
- established curriculum teams for literacy and for numeracy;
- consulted widely;
- developed a whole-school approach to the promotion of positive handling;
- reviewed planning for learning at a whole-school level; and
- reviewed school policies, including the learning and teaching policy.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out two monitoring visits, in June 2008 and in March 2009, and a follow-up inspection on 9 June 2009.

The school's development plan had been adjusted in light of the focused inspection findings. The action plan produced by the school in response to these findings was of a very good quality.

Very good progress has been made in the areas for improvement identified during the focused inspection.

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

- the clear sense of planning at whole-school and at class level which ensures information is shared and used effectively for ongoing assessment and for future planning;

- the work of the co-ordinators for both literacy and numeracy in carrying out audits of the provision at whole-school level, which have helped to identify a process which is informing individual education plans and assessment; and
- the lead taken by the Principal and the Vice-principal in the whole-school review of monitoring and evaluating provision, which is promoting collegiality and providing cohesion among the staff.

The promotion of a self-evaluative culture throughout the follow-up inspection period contributed significantly to the improvement made, and helped the school identify appropriately its priorities for future development. The inspection confirms that, through effective self-evaluation, the school demonstrated clear evidence of improvement. Accordingly, the Inspectorate recommends that the processes for self-evaluation now in place are maintained.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is now good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision.

The follow-up inspection has identified some aspects of the areas for improvement still to be addressed, but equally, the school has demonstrated its capacity to address these.

It is of some concern that the post-school placement options, provided by the local health trust for some pupils, are limited and do not ensure an effective transition process from education to health.

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