



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Department of Education
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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Newbuildings Primary School
Londonderry**

March 2016

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF NEWBUILDINGS PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDONDERRY, BT47 2RL (201-2261)

The original inspection of Newbuildings Primary School carried out in March 2014 concluded that in most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school was satisfactory; the strengths outweighed the areas for improvement¹.

The inspection identified the following areas for improvement:

- for leadership and management to develop more rigorous and robust arrangements for the monitoring, evaluation and review of all aspects of the work of the school in order to raise the standards the children attain;
- for the roles and responsibilities of staff to be reviewed to develop the capacity of all staff to effect improvement in the children's learning experiences and in the standards the children attain; and
- for the board of governors and the principal to implement fully the requirements of the child protection/safeguarding legislation with respect to administration.

The action plans received by the Department of Education following the inspection were of a good quality and were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out three² monitoring visits during 2015 and 2016 and conducted a follow-up inspection in March 2016.

The parents, teaching and support staff were provided with the opportunity to complete confidential questionnaires. Ten percent of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire. The small number of parents who provided written comments highlighted the excellent range of after-school activities available to the children but raised some concerns regarding the frequency of changes in staffing, both at teacher and leadership level, over the last two years, and the current vacancy of the post of principal. Fifty-five percent of staff responded to the confidential questionnaire, one-half of whom provided written comments. The small number of staff who provided written responses commented on the good pastoral care for the children. The ETI has reported to the acting principal and the chair of the board of governors the nature of the views expressed in the parental and staff confidential questionnaires.

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

- there has been significant changes in staffing at senior leadership level and, at the time of the follow-up inspection, the post of principal is vacant and two members of staff have undertaken the role of acting principal;
- the enrolment has increased over the past two years by 10% from 154 to 169 children;

¹ <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-primary/inspection-reports-primary-2014/primary-inspection-newbuildings-primary-school-and-ballyore-community-nursery-unit-londonderry.htm>

² An additional monitoring visit was carried out due to the changes of staffing at senior leadership level.

- extensive building work has been undertaken and is nearing completion to improve the quality of the school's accommodation; and
- school leaders, including governors, have received training from representatives of the Education Authority in the areas of school leadership including governance, school development planning, co-ordination of literacy and numeracy provision, and pastoral care/safeguarding.

Key Findings

- The two acting principals have undertaken significant work to foster a culture of robust self-evaluation. This work has led to improvements in the children's learning experiences in literacy and numeracy provision and in the development of the effective use of data to support the school's self-evaluative processes. Although at an early stage, the more effective use of a wider range of performance and pastoral data has improved the capacity of the teachers to identify underachievement, set appropriate learning targets for individual children and to identify specific teaching strategies to support children's learning.
- Regular consultation has been undertaken with the staff, parents and children to support robust self-evaluation and to inform the next cycle of school development planning through the articulation of a shared vision for the school's improvement agenda. The current draft of the next three-year school development plan is of a sound quality. The associated action plans vary in quality; in the main, the action plans identify appropriate priorities for further improvement.
- Senior leaders have developed further the use of the 'Performance Review: Staff Development' process in the school and, through well-planned staff training opportunities, are supporting the teachers' acquisition of the skills required to meet the curricular and pastoral needs of the children.
- The development of the role of co-ordinators across all curricular areas within the school is at an early stage. At present, improvements in key aspects of curricular provision are not being progressed sufficiently and in a timely manner. The senior leadership team, including governance, need to review the roles and responsibilities of staff, at all levels, to create and support a more collegial and robust approach to school improvement and to build the capacity of the staff to effect the required improvement in a timely manner.
- The role of the governors in school development planning and self-evaluation has been developed well. The governors have undertaken relevant training and have played a key role in overseeing the creation and review of policies relating to pastoral care, including safeguarding, and learning and teaching. It will be important to develop further the governance of the school, in particular, the capacity of the board of governors to monitor the standards achieved by the children.

- All of the lessons observed during the follow-up process were good or very good. Since the time of the initial inspection, the children's skills in talking and listening have been developed more fully and progressively with the introduction of a wider range of effective learning and teaching strategies to promote the children's oral skills across all key stages.
- The school's internal data and the standards in the children's books show that, in English and mathematics, the majority of the children are working in line with their ability or above expectation. The teachers' planning is currently being developed further to meet more effectively the learning needs of the significant minority of children who have been identified as underachieving in English and mathematics.
- The support for children identified as having special educational needs is through in-class differentiation. Given the level of underachievement in the school in both English and mathematics, there is a need to develop further: the planning for learning across all areas of the curriculum to meet more effectively the learning needs of these children; and, the individual learning support within the school, including for those children identified as having special educational needs.
- The senior leaders, including the governors, have now put in place appropriate administrative arrangements for the safeguarding of children. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the follow-up inspection, the school continues to have satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. To develop these arrangements further, it is essential for the governors to monitor more closely the administrative arrangements for the safeguarding of children and the outworking of the revised policies.

Overall effectiveness

The school needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all of the learners. The follow-up inspection has identified the following areas for improvement:

- to review the roles and responsibilities of staff, at all levels, to create and support a more collegial and robust approach to school improvement and to build the capacity of all staff to effect the required improvement in a timely manner;
- to develop further the governance of the school, in particular, its capacity to monitor the administrative arrangements for the safeguarding of children, the outworking of the school's revised policies and, importantly, the standards achieved by the children; and
- to meet more effectively the learning needs of the significant minority of children identified as underachieving, including the children identified as having special educational needs, in order to raise the standards they attain.

The ETI will conduct a further follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

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