



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**

**Rathcoole Primary School  
Newtownabbey**

**March 2016**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF RATHCOOLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNABBEY (301-0895)**

The original inspection of Rathcoole Primary School carried out in April 2013<sup>1</sup> concluded that in most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school was satisfactory; the strengths outweighed the areas for improvement.<sup>2</sup>

A follow-up inspection (FUI) was conducted in March 2015<sup>3</sup> and concluded that the quality of education provided in this school remained satisfactory.

The action plans received by the Department of Education following the FUI were of a good quality.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a monitoring visit in October 2015.

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

- there have been significant changes in staffing, roles and responsibilities at all levels, including the appointment of an acting-principal who took up post in September 2015, a new senior management team, special educational needs co-ordinator and information and communication technology co-ordinator; and
- the staff and governors have received professional development and support from the Education Authority in a number of areas including literacy, numeracy and school development planning.

### **Key findings**

- The children are responding well to the effective implementation of appropriate reward systems, nurture and behaviour strategies. They have more consistent levels of attention and concentration during lessons, participate more fully and complete more successfully their activities. Their developing social skills, respect for one another and enjoyment of learning are more evident throughout the school and reflective of a more positive climate for learning.
- The children in key stage 2 take on responsibilities within the school and talk with pride about their achievements as they carry out their newly formed roles as school prefects. There is a wider range of opportunities for the children to enhance their personal development and apply their learning as they participate in, for example, the 'Peace Proms' and the 'Poetry in Motion' competition.
- The school's internal data demonstrates early indications of improvements in the standards attained in literacy and numeracy. The reading programme is having a positive impact on raising the motivation and standards in reading and the children are using with greater confidence mathematical language in a range of contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-primary/inspection-reports-primary-2013/focused-inspection-rathcoole-primary-school-and-nursery-unit-newtownabbey.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> In 2015-16, the ETI changed the conclusions for the overall effectiveness of a school. The equivalent conclusion would be the school needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-primary/inspection-reports-primary-2015/follow-up-inspection-rathcoole-primary-school-newtownabbey.pdf>

- The staff are more skilled in using a range of data to identify and plan for the wide range of needs and abilities of the children. There is a need for a more consistent and effective approach to marking for improvement throughout the school, and teachers need to have more consistently high expectations of what the children can achieve.
- The effectiveness of the school improvement process is evident in the planning, learning and teaching which is of a consistently higher standard. On the day of the inspection visit, all of the teaching observed was good or better, with one-half being very good. The improved channels of communication and more open and transparent ethos encourage the teachers to share best practice and develop a better, shared understanding of high quality learning and teaching for the benefit of the children.
- The members of the leadership and management team have established a more robust and collegial approach to the school development planning process underpinned by: the effective engagement and consultation with the staff, the parents and the children; and, the development of systematic processes to monitor and evaluate learning and teaching, and track the children's progress.
- The governors have engaged in appropriate training, they are better informed about their role and demonstrate a commitment to ongoing school improvement.
- It will be important that the employing authority, the governors and the senior management team plan for, and manage, issues related to the recruitment and consistency of staffing and enrolment, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

### **Overall effectiveness**

Rathcoole 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.

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