

# Education and Training Inspectorate

## PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Malachy's Primary School, Carnagat, County Down

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-6433)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection in June 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Malachy's Primary School, Carnagat, County Down (503-6433)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in November 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Malachy's Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. There have been a number of changes to staffing since the last inspection, including three new teaching appointments and additional co-ordinator roles. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 13 and 14 June 2019.

### **Focus of the inspection**

The purpose of the SII was to evaluate the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were:

- to review the quality and consistency of marking for improvement; and
- to develop independent writing across the curriculum.

### **Key findings**

- The senior leadership team provide highly effective strategic leadership which focuses appropriately on whole-school development and improvement. The improvement process is underpinned by high quality self-evaluation and is linked to a coherent school development plan. The key priorities in the school development plan concentrate appropriately on improving further the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards that they attain. The needs of the children are of paramount importance in the school and the nurturing approach by the staff to the children's development meets effectively their personal, social and emotional needs. A collegial approach to school improvement is a key feature of the work of the school, and a well-tailored staff development programme ensures that all staff understand the process of, and are committed to, sustaining improvement.
- There is a consistent approach to marking for improvement in the school; evidence in the children's books indicates that the teachers provide appropriate and positive feedback, including comments that identify clearly how the children can improve their work. Children are encouraged, through self- and peer- assessment, to reflect upon and improve the quality of their work and that of others. A group of children from year 7, who met with the inspectors, reported that: they receive regular verbal and written feedback from their teachers; and, they are given time in class to reflect on and redraft their work and use the feedback to improve their work.
- All of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective in progressing the children's learning. The well planned learning opportunities, based on real-life contexts, are effective in progressing the quality and range of the children's independent writing. They engage confidently in writing tasks and develop well their individual writing styles. The children are provided with extensive

cross-curricular opportunities to write in a range of genres, for a variety of purposes and audiences. A group of children from year 7, who met with the inspectors, spoke very positively about the writing opportunities provided for them in school. They are enthusiastic writers, keen to share samples of their written work with the inspectors and explained eloquently the process they use to improve their writing.

- Throughout the school, there is an emphasis on promoting independent thinking and learning. As they progress through the school, the children increasingly take responsibility for their own learning, reflecting the school's aim to "provide a wide range of learning opportunities for the children to help them grow into independent and responsible people." The quality of written work in the children's books is of a high standard and the outcomes they achieve are very good. The school's internal assessment data shows that nearly all of the children in English, and, all of the children in mathematics, make progress at the expected level or above.

### **Safeguarding**

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The children, with whom the inspectors met, reported that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

### **Conclusion**

St Malachy's Primary School continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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