

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

PRIMARY INSPECTION

St Tierney's Primary School, Roslea
County Fermanagh

Maintained co-educational
DE Ref No: 203-1868

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in May 2021



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Department of Education
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Follow-up to the inspection of St Tierney's Primary School, Roslea, County Fermanagh BT92 7JS

Introduction

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a second follow-up inspection of St Tierney's Primary School February 2019¹ which concluded that the school needed to address important areas for improvement¹ in the interests of all the learners.

The follow-up inspection identified the following area for improvement:

- to improve the leadership and management at a senior leadership level including, in particular, the strategic direction for the identification of priorities for improvement, and the implementation of an up-to-date school development plan.

As a consequence, the Department of Education made the decision on 2 April 2019² that the school would remain within the Formal Intervention Process in line with its Every School a Good School, policy.

The school's subsequent action plans for improvement were of a good quality and were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings, the school's response to the COVID-19 and through their own self-evaluation and improvement processes.

In May 2021, the board of governors requested a follow-up inspection. While inspection continued to be paused owing to the COVID-19 pandemic³; the Chief Inspector agreed to the request by exception, and ETI conducted a third follow-up inspection on 24 and 25 May 2021.

In the interval since the second follow-up inspection, the school reported that it had received very good external support from the Education Authority (EA) in relation to embedding collaborative, evidence-based development planning processes to effect continuous school improvement. Consequently, there have been improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

During this period, the other actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- the appointment of a new principal and three new staff members;
- the formation of a new school leadership team;

¹ [Follow-up Inspection – St Tierney's Primary School, Roslea, County Fermanagh](#)

² [Every School a Good School](#)

³ Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, formal inspections across all phases of education and training were paused on 18 March 2020 (subject to review): [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) – ETI response](#)

- further development of the support and challenge function provided by the governors; and
- support for leadership and governance from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

Key findings

The outcomes for learners remain very good. The teachers have high expectations of the children and, in turn, the children take pride in their achievements. The children are well-settled in the safe routines of the school day in the context of COVID-19 and enjoy learning through play in the early years and working collaboratively with one another across the key stages. They are motivated, confident and independent and engage enthusiastically in a broad range of curricular experiences. The children are caring and respectful to one another, and responsive to staff and visitors.

By the end of key stage (KS) 2, the quality of the children's writing across a range of writing forms is well-developed, presented to a very high standard and includes creative illustrations using art work and information and communication technology (ICT). The children are articulate and express readily their ideas and views. They read with fluency and justify opinions about characters in the class novel. The children are extending their knowledge and understanding of problem-solving and mathematical investigations to address a few identified areas which were impacted by the lack of opportunities for collaborative mathematical learning during the COVID-19 lockdowns. They can plan and problem-solve collaboratively, using mathematical language and reasoning skills to explain the use of a variety of strategies. The children enjoy learning mathematics and can apply mathematical processes in real-life situations.

The children who require additional support with their learning are making very good progress and a small number are no longer on the register of special educational need.

The quality of provision is outstanding. Following the second period of remote learning (owing to COVID-19, January to March 2021), the staff focused appropriately on supporting children to reconnect socially, build positive relationships and engage enthusiastically with learning on return to school. The teachers provided opportunities for the children to be involved actively in practical, challenging, activity-based learning in a stimulating outdoor environment.

There is improved provision for high quality cross-curricular and connected learning experiences in the outdoors; suitably informed by the 'children's voice'. All of the lessons observed during the follow-up inspection were very good or outstanding; the teachers engaged the children in their learning through skilfully modelling language and open-ended questions.

The comprehensive schemes of work include whole-school adaptations of planning for remote learning to ensure continuity of learning and flexibility in meeting the needs of the children during the periods of lockdown. Appropriately, planning is kept under review to ensure that learning and teaching strategies and topics are challenging, meaningful and engaging for all the children.

There is an embedded culture of teacher oral feedback to the children, marking for improvement and self- and peer-assessment that identifies teaching processes and informs planning for learning. The classroom assistants make a valuable contribution and have a clear understanding of the intended learning.

The groups of year 6 and 7 children who met with the inspectors spoke confidently and positively about: their challenging and practical learning experiences during the periods of remote learning; the very good opportunities they have to develop their leadership capabilities through their roles in the school- and eco-councils; and the opportunities to participate in a range of sporting, cultural and creative extra-curricular activities which extend their learning.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The strategic, transformational senior leadership, combined with effective teamwork and distributed curricular leadership, have embedded systematic monitoring and self-evaluation processes in the work of the school. The whole-school culture of improvement, where 'great minds grow,' is robust, agile and adapted to the needs of the children and staff; it is well-focused on maintaining the children's health, well-being and progress in learning across all areas of the curriculum.

The school responded positively to challenges presented during the COVID-19 lockdown periods by: strengthening parental links and home learning partnerships; maintaining effective opportunities for learning in the online classroom; and providing well-considered 'home learning packs'. The live lessons during the second period of remote learning were instrumental in developing further the children's opportunities to engage positively with staff and peers. In turn, parents were provided with a direct insight into the educational opportunities provided by the school.

Based on the evidence presented at the time of the follow-up inspection, there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The school leadership team provide self-evaluation reports at regular intervals to the board of governors and improvement sub-committees. The cycle of school development planning is now systematic, robust, informed by the self-evaluation of learning and teaching, and a widely consultative process which includes regular parental feedback to inform action for improvement. During the lockdowns, the targets in the school development plan were adjusted to develop further leadership skills and professional development through the additional interim recovery plan for 2020-21.

Overall effectiveness

St Tierney's Primary School has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interests of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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