



## **Windsor Hill Primary School**

### **Development of an inclusive and supportive ethos**

Windsor Hill Primary School is located in the city of Newry.

This case study focuses on the school's development of an inclusive and supportive ethos and culture of support.

Over the past five years the enrolment has increased steadily from 179 in 2013-14 to 246 in 2017-18. At the time of the January 2017 inspection it stood at 225 pupils. The inspection team identified the school as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.

The inspection found all key areas including outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management, to be very good.

#### **A culture of support**

The staff are a blend of long established teachers with some more recently appointed staff who work effectively together in the best interests of the pupils.

The Principal has been in post for the past seven years and has worked with the staff team and community to develop a highly supportive care and welfare system.

The school's supportive culture of encouragement permeates all aspects of school life and was identified as a strength in the inspection and reported by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) as being 'clearly evident in the school.'

This supportive culture is summed up in the school's motto which is 'care, courtesy and consideration.'

The school has worked hard to develop and deepen the school's supportive culture.

#### **Welcoming Schools**

Their participation in the former SELB's 'Welcoming Schools' initiative that was based around the principles of invitation education, is deemed as having been a useful catalyst in the development of the positive, inclusive culture within the school.

Working through the welcoming schools programme, all stakeholders, including parents, pupils and Governors, reviewed current provision at the school. This was examined through consideration, within the school, of the five Ps, *i.e.* policies, programmes, people, places and processes.

Collectively everyone worked together to refine and develop all aspects of the school's practices to achieve 'Welcoming Schools' status.

Whole staff formal meetings at Windsor Hill Primary School are supported by regular key stage and curriculum meetings where discussion is centred on classroom practice and monitoring and evaluation of learning.

### **Pupil contribution to school life**

The school council has planned a number of events during the year, the most recent of which coincided with World Book Day.

They have also reviewed and updated playground activities and resources using an allocated budget.

One of the more recent Eco Committee programmes has been to devise a litter management system and rotas which involve the whole school.

All year seven children apply to be prefects and each prefect has a particular area of responsibility including playground pals, helping with lunch and supporting classroom assistants during break and lunch time.

The prefect system develops and empowers the children to take responsibility and prepares them for the transition to post-primary and the next stage of their education.

The achievements and successes of individual children and classes are celebrated in assemblies. These include academic achievements and successes in both classwork and external successes.

### **Parental engagement**

The inspectors concluded that there is effective engagement with parents which is characterised by open communication. Responses to the ETI parental questionnaire indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school.

This is supported by many anecdotal instances of support; parents have often commented to staff that the school is a friendly school and parents feel supported by the school in supporting their child's learning at home.

### **Developing the use of data**

The Principal and VP have worked with staff on the development of significant areas which have included reviewing, revising and updating how data is used in the school to monitor

progress, set targets and inform priorities for development and ultimately raise standards in teaching and learning. This has included the use of SIMs Assessment Manager packages.

Both the Principal and VP acknowledge the importance of furthering this work through developing the capacity of all coordinators. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators especially are equipped to make effective use of quantitative data and to conduct the internal moderation of samples of work and standards as part of their monitoring and evaluation work.

Education Authority training and support has contributed to the school's goal of making middle leaders more confident and competent in their roles.

### **Integration of technology**

A similar approach to the introduction and development of the use of iPads as an effective tool to enhance teaching and learning has also been instrumental in the sustainable integration of technology into classroom practice. The school focused on building staff capacity and confidence through a structured EPD programme before using this technology with pupils in the classroom.

### **A supportive environment**

Co-ordinators work closely together in a mutually supportive environment. They know and understand the framework for carrying out their roles, are more skilled and have clearer ownership of their roles. They are willing and able to work together.

The support of senior leadership for the development of middle leaders was acknowledged by ETI who commented on a culture of encouragement. They noted that 'senior leaders are continuing to build the capacity of the coordinators and all of the staff in monitoring and evaluating to improve further the provision and outcomes achieved by the children.'

Since the inspection, the culture of encouragement has continued to develop. It requires commitment, hard work and dedication. It also requires collaborative working, all of which the school recognises as an on-going process and one which the school actively strives to sustain and further develop.

### **The Principal of Windsor Hill Primary School, Isobel McKane, offers her reflections on how the school has developed a culture of support**

At Windsor Hill it is acknowledged that a cycle of continuous improvement is essential to raise standards and outcomes and opportunities for our children.

The school development plan, and more importantly the process everyone engages in to produce this document, is the foundation of this work.

The progress made in our school highlighted in the inspection is an acknowledgement of the hard work and dedication of a conscientious, committed staff who work together for our pupils

as a collegial team supporting each other in what I believe is a busy but happy school.

The affirmation we received after the inspection, albeit with areas for future work, has refocused us on the importance of prioritising development work and the value of not trying to do too much at once, but rather having a sharper focus on specific areas and working together to develop these well before moving on.

This year more of our staff meetings are being taken by subject co-ordinators leading development in their areas of responsibility. These meetings provide staff with the opportunity to share good practice across key stages. Pupils' work is reviewed and internal moderation of cross curricular tasks initiates further opportunities for professional dialogue.

**For further information, please contact:**

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