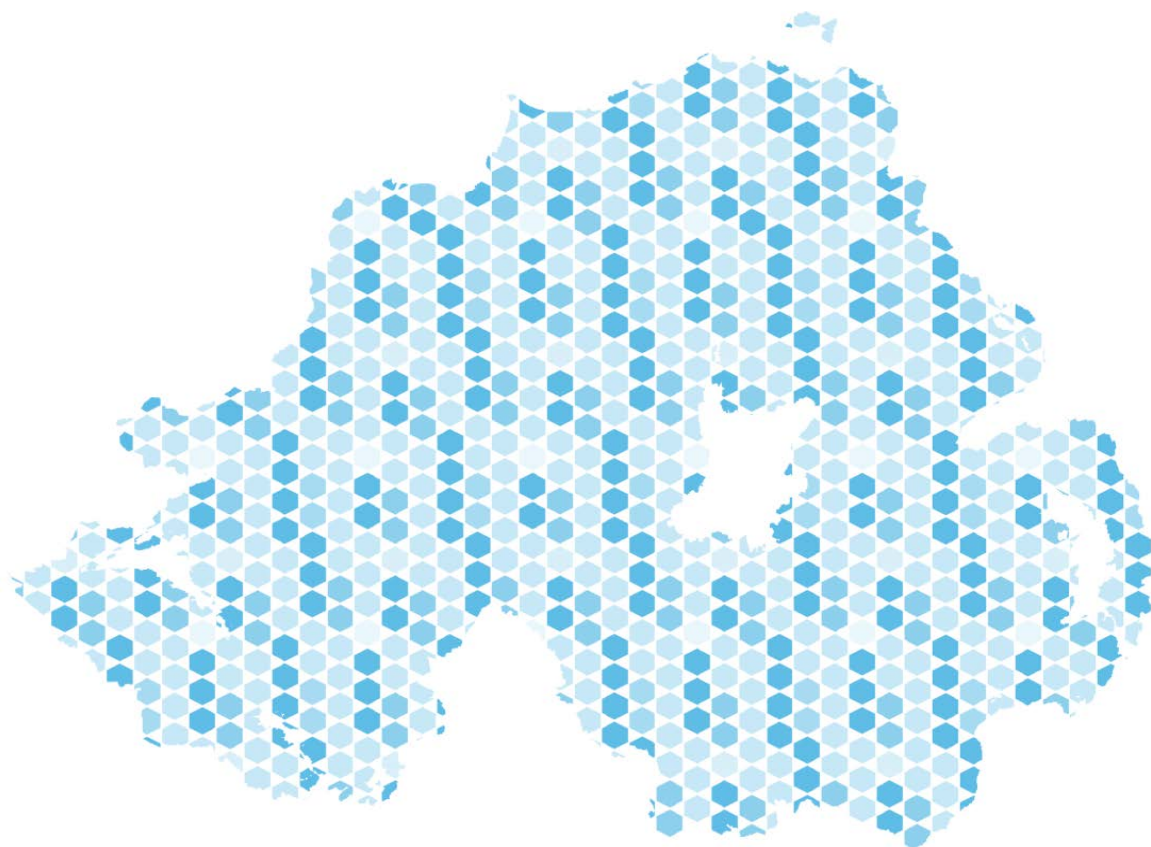


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Bernard's Primary School,
Newtownabbey, County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Monitoring Inspection
(Involving Action Short of Strike)
in March 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Monitoring Inspection of St Bernard's Primary School, Newtownabbey, County Antrim (303-3313)

Introduction

The aim of the Monitoring Inspection is to evaluate the extent to which the leadership and management uses self-evaluation effectively to inform the development planning process to bring about improvement. The outcome of the inspection will inform future inspection activity.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that one-half of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on evaluating action to promote improvement and its impact on learning and teaching and outcomes for learners. During the inspection, a line of inquiry was selected from the development plan priorities; the school was asked to demonstrate if and how the actions taken have led to improvement for the learners. The line of inquiry focused on the school's actions to:

- identify underachievement in numeracy and how the school monitors and evaluates the children's progress and the strategies used to promote improvement in mathematics.

Key findings

- The school development plan (SDP) and action plans are based on effective analysis of a range of data sources and include appropriate strategies to address barriers children may have to their learning in numeracy; the very effective withdrawal groups, provided by a specialist teacher for numeracy support, impacts positively on the children's attainment. The development programme for mathematics is linked strategically to the priorities in the SDP and involves key staff in numeracy development and sharing best practice across the key stages.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The children in year 7 report that they feel safe in school. They know what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety or well-being. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to observe lessons in half of the classes and was, therefore, unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding across the whole school.

Work on the following aspects is underway and needs to be completed:

- the boundary fence to the rear of the school is an unsafe, temporary structure and, along with the incomplete building site works, they represent a risk to health and safety; and
- some teaching rooms have insufficient vision panels.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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