

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Carrickfergus Model Primary School,  
Carrickfergus, County Antrim

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection (Involving  
Action Short of Strike) in  
April 2018

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The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

Carrickfergus Primary School is a co-educational, controlled primary school situated in Carrickfergus. Most of the children attending the school come from the local area. The enrolment has remained relatively stable and the school operates at maximum capacity. Since the last inspection, a new principal has been appointed and took up post in September 2015; in addition, a new vice-principal has also been recently appointed. The school holds a Green Flag award as an Eco-school and has received a silver award for SUSTRANS<sup>1</sup> active schools travel programme. The school participates in the Shared Education signature project with two other local primary schools.

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 none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal and vice-principal co-operated in their capacity as senior leaders. 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.

Carrickfergus Model Primary School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrolment	406	398	400	408
% School attendance	96.5	96.7	96.9	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>2</sup>	14.0	11.1	11.5	13.2
No. of children on SEN register	55	51	59	63
% of children on SEN register	13.5	12.8	14.8	15.4
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomer children	19	29	31	32

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

### 2. Views of parents and staff

As a result of the action short of strike, the school did not distribute the confidential, online questionnaire information to parents and staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of parents and staff.

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<sup>1</sup> SUSTainable TRANSport

<sup>2</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

### 3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum; and
- quality of leadership and management.

### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Unable to assure of the quality of education
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	No performance level available
<b>Quality of provision</b>	No performance level available
<b>Leadership and management</b>	No performance level available

## KEY FINDINGS

### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The school's internal performance data indicates that a majority of the children, including those who require additional support with their learning, achieve as expected in English; most of the children achieve as expected in mathematics.
- Sample groups of children from year 7 met with the Inspectors to discuss their learning. They read from a range of books with fluency, expression and understanding of character, plot and language. They spoke enthusiastically and maturely about their favourite authors and a wide range of genres. In mathematics, the children have a good understanding of the key concepts across the curriculum. They are confident and accurate in their mental calculations and the children explain the range of strategies they use when solving unfamiliar problems.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the learning outcomes for the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions.

### 6. Quality of provision

- The sample group of children from key stage (KS) 2 talked about the approachable supportive teachers who help them with their learning. They spoke positively about how a new reading initiative has increased their enjoyment of reading and provides them with access to a wider range of age-appropriate books. The children were also able to identify and discuss how they use their mathematics across the wider curriculum and in real-life contexts.

- The school have developed opportunities to promote the children's sense of responsibility and leadership skills through, for example, their involvement in the school council, their roles as digital leaders and 'playground buddies.'
- The development of a secure, inner courtyard allows more space for play-based learning experiences across the curriculum and an outdoor classroom provides improved facilities to develop the children's learning opportunities in the World Around Us.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- care and welfare.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- In recent years, there have been significant changes in leadership roles and responsibilities across the school. While this has impacted negatively on the pace of continuous school improvement, the leadership is now in a more stable position and is fostering a more collegial and collaborative approach. This is being supported by the development of the role of middle leadership and new curricular teams.
- In preparation for the new school development plan, the leadership is consulting with parents, staff and children and, collating a range of data to inform the process. The leadership team members are in the early stages of developing effective action plans; however, the plans lack the full range of qualitative and quantitative data available to identify their key priorities for improvement, a clear baseline position and the detail to measure the impact of the planned actions on outcomes for the children.
- The governors bring a broad range of skills and experience to their role; they are actively involved with the life and work of the school. The governors have identified the need to be more involved with the school improvement process through, for example, meeting with co-ordinators and being more informed about the analysis of key data to track the outcomes for all children. They report difficulties in accessing suitable training for governors.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of strategic leadership and governance;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

## **8. Safeguarding**

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the children reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

## **9. Overall effectiveness**

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the staff, 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.

**Health and safety/Accommodation**

1. The location and condition of the toilet facilities are not conducive to the supervision and independence of the children in the foundation stage. There is only one appropriately sized sink for younger children.

### **Inspection methodology and evidence base**

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website: [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observe learning and teaching, scrutinise documentation and the children's written work and hold formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for inspection include:

- a meeting with a representative(s) from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential, online questionnaire.

Where, owing to the action short of strike, this evidence base was not available, it has been referenced in the body of the inspection report.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- meetings with the principal and vice-principal.



## Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

### Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

### Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management<sup>3</sup>:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

### Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

<sup>3</sup> And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

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