

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St John's Primary School and Carnlough Community Nursery, Carnlough, County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (303-3317)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action
Short of Strike) in May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St John's Primary School and Carnlough Community Nursery, Carnlough, County Antrim (303-3317)

Introduction

The previous inspection in December 2012 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St John's Primary School as very good (from September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school evaluated previously as outstanding or very good has been reported as a school demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement). There have been a number of staffing changes since the previous inspection and, from September 2018, the principal and vice-principal share responsibility for strategic leadership. The school is participating in a shared education partnership with a controlled school and became a forest school in 2017. The school took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII) in May 2016. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 29 May 2019.

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 leadership co-operated with the inspection team in relation to safeguarding responsibilities. 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

Owing to the school's participation in industrial action:

- the inspection was unable to focus on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school planning; and
- lines of inquiry were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- The inspector met with a group of year 6 children who spoke very positively about all aspects of school life; they highlighted the helpful, friendly staff and their enjoyment of participating in shared education classes and educational visits. The children appreciate the range of after-school activities offered in the school, for example, art and crafts, dance, guitar, multi-skills sports, and information and communication technology (ICT). There are appropriate opportunities for the children to develop their leadership skills through the School Council.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the lines of inquiry; and
- the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The inspector met with a group of year 6 children who spoke maturely about what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and report that they feel safe in school. 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.

Conclusion

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. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

Health and Safety

- There is a need for a secure perimeter fence, at an appropriate height, to secure the premises.

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