

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballyclare Primary School,
County Antrim

Controlled, co-educational

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in April 2018

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The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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CUSTOMER
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Ballyclare Primary School, County Antrim (301-0631)

Introduction

The previous inspection in February 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Ballyclare Primary School as very good¹. Since the last inspection, a distributed leadership structure has been implemented with: permanent appointments to the senior leadership team; heads of year appointed; and, the re-negotiation of specific leadership roles. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 11 April 2018.

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 a majority 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 the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The line of inquiry selected during the SII was:

- the development of using information communication technology (UICT) to enhance the children's learning experiences and raise the standards of the children's outcomes.

Key findings

- A wide-ranging process of consultation has informed the strategic vision for UICT and the wider school development planning across the school. The comprehensive UICT action plans prioritise: additional refinement of the schemes of work; further use of ICT within areas of learning; and, to widen further the appropriate use of mobile devices.
- There are extensive arrangements in place to track the quality of, and outcomes in, UICT which informs the ongoing programme for staff development. Both in-house and external facilitators provide specific training and support to develop fully staff expertise in UICT.
- The school's internal data indicates that by the end of key stage two most of the children make progress in literacy and numeracy as expected. Furthermore, most of the children, identified as requiring support with aspects of their learning, make progress in numeracy and, a majority of children make progress in literacy as expected.

¹ 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.

- A group of children in year 6 reported that they enjoy their leadership opportunities through, for example, being 'playground buddies' and as members of the school's Eco-council.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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. In discussion with a group of children in year 6, they reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do and who to talk to if they have concerns about their safety or 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.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by a majority of 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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