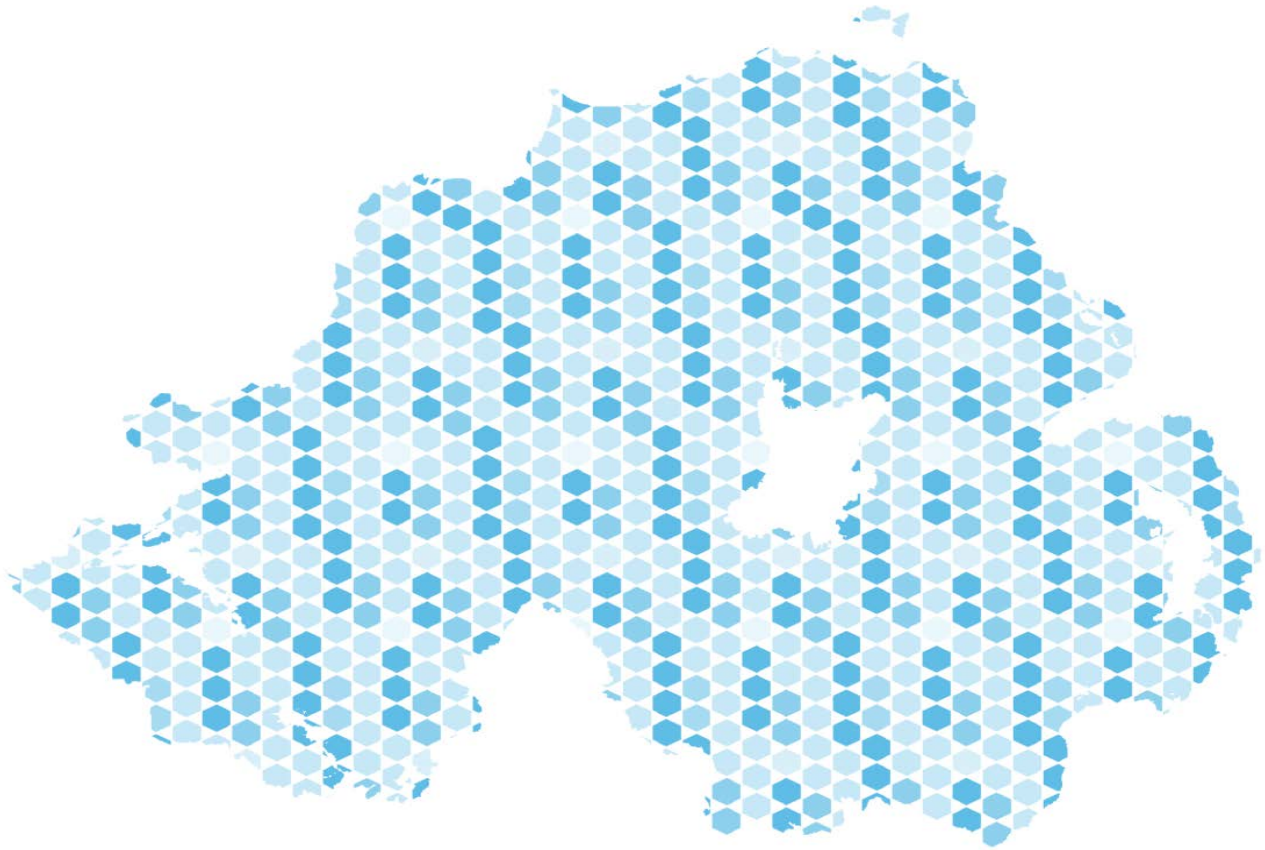


Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Ballymagee Primary School and Nursery Unit, Bangor, County Down

Controlled, co-educational DE ref no (401-6430)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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CUSTOMER
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Ballymagee Primary School and Nursery Unit, Bangor, County Down (401-6430)

Introduction

The original inspection in June 2011 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Ballymagee Primary School as outstanding¹. The school opened a nursery unit in 2014 and took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII). A second SII was conducted on 22 January 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 principal and vice-chairperson of the board of governors co-operated with the inspection team in relation to the school's safeguarding responsibilities and provided a wide range of evidence in relation to self-evaluation and school improvement. The inspection team also held a discussion with a group of children from year 6. 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 evaluate fully the school's 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

- There is a well-embedded culture of rigorous and reflective self-evaluation which informs systematically the whole-school improvement priorities.
- The group of year 6 children report that they enjoy a wide variety of connected and engaging learning experiences which challenge and extend their knowledge and skills and they also value their access to helpful support and guidance when they need it. The children understand and articulate clearly how the staff take account of their views and ideas within the school's Rights Respecting ethos and this is evident in their well-embedded opportunities to develop leadership skills and social responsibility and to contribute meaningfully to decision-making on all matters which affect them.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

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.

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, the group of year 6 children reported that they feel secure and happy in school and know what to do and who to talk to if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. They also explained confidently how to keep safe online. 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 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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