

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Drumadonnell Primary School and Nursery Unit, Ballyroney, County Down

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 501-6616

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Drumadonnell Primary School and Nursery Unit, Ballyroney, County Down (501-6616)

Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2012 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Drumadonnell Primary School and Nursery Unit 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). The school took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII) in October 2015. Since then, there has been a change in senior leadership and the school has continued to engage in a shared education partnership with two local maintained primary schools. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 30 September 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 inspection. The senior leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to their 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
- a line of inquiry was not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- A group of year 6 children met with the inspector and spoke positively about their learning experiences. They explained that their teachers listen to their views and provide guidance to support their learning. The children articulated practical examples of how they were challenged and encouraged to approach mathematics and science using differing methodologies. They value their classroom activities and their opportunities to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

- The children also report that that they have good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities within the school's 'Friendly Faces' playground 'buddying scheme' and through their roles in the school- and eco-councils.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the line 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. Whilst compliant, the school has identified accurately, a review of the anti-bullying policy in preparation for the impending changes to statutory requirements. The children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. They describe accurately the actions required to remain 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 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.

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