

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Garvagh Primary School,
Coleraine, County Londonderry

Controlled, co-educational

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Garvagh Primary School, Garvagh, County Londonderry (301-6119)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Garvagh Primary School as good¹. In the interim, a new principal was appointed in September 2015 and there have been significant changes to the staff, including the appointment of a senior teacher. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 14 and 15 May 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 none of the teachers would 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 purpose of the SII was to evaluate 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 lines of inquiry during the SII were:

- the development of the school's monitoring and evaluation processes; and
- the revisions made to the school's action planning processes and the links to the school development plan.

Key findings

- There are rigorous monitoring processes in place, which are used to inform good quality evaluations of the children's learning experiences, progress and attainment. The principal promotes well a culture of robust self-evaluation, using first-hand evidence and effective data analysis. Appropriate and effective consultation with children, parents, staff and governors has been central to the success of these processes.
- Action planning processes are a strength and characterised by systematic and highly visible links between actions to bring about improvement and the broader areas for improvement detailed in the school development plan. There are very explicit links between the strategic and operational documents and there are specific and quantifiable targets being identified appropriately and placed on a clear time frame for action. Management oversight is very good and leads to appropriate summative progress reports being used to inform next steps; in discussion with two of the governors, they reported of being kept well informed about the work of the school.

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school evaluated previously as good has been reported as the school demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

- In discussions with the inspectors, the group of year 6 children stated they are happy in school and valued the positive working relationships they have with the staff. The children spoke with pride about their school and identified a range of important improvements that have taken place since the last inspection. They value the role the School Council has in giving them a say in matters that affect them and are appreciative of the recently rejuvenated outdoor play facilities.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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 discussions with the inspectors, the group of children stated that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of 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 education provided for the children. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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