

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Gibson Primary School, Omagh, County Tyrone

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 201-6089

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in February 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Gibson Primary School, Omagh, County Tyrone (201-6089)

Introduction

The previous inspection in October 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Gibson Primary School, Omagh, as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. Since then, the school has maintained a steady enrolment and continued to develop a shared education partnership with another local primary school. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 5 February 2020.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute, and also workload and other management issues. The industrial action 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 team in relation to their leadership and 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

- Senior leadership has a strategic vision for the future development of the school. This is reflected in a comprehensive school development plan which is informed by meaningful consultation with a range of relevant stakeholders, including the children and parents.
- During the inspection, the senior leadership provided evidence to reflect authentic processes for self-evaluation, including a range of qualitative and quantitative data, which is used effectively to evaluate the impact of the school's work on the children's learning and progress. The senior leadership is developing the middle leadership team with a focus on whole-school improvement.

- The board of governors is well-informed about the life and work of the school. They have a very good range of complementary skills and offer effective challenge and support to the principal, as appropriate.
- A group of year 7 children, who met with the inspectors, spoke positively about their learning experiences across the primary curriculum. The children value their participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and residential visits. They report that the more practical approaches and the wider range of resources they are using within spelling, mathematics, World Around Us and information and communication technology are increasing their learning, particularly when the activities relate specifically to current issues of topical interest.

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 children from year 6, with whom the inspectors met, described a visit from the Northern Ireland Fire Service which has increased their capacity to stay safe when at home and in the local community. The children report that they feel safe in school and know what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare; and they have an excellent understanding of how to stay 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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