

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Mercy Primary School, Belfast

Maintained, all girls

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Mercy Primary School, Belfast, County Antrim (103-6041)

Introduction

The previous inspection in April 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Mercy Primary School as very good¹. In the interim, there has been an increase in enrolment, a parent resource room was opened in September 2017 and a new vice-principal took up post in December 2017. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 2 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 almost all 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

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 development 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 reported that they value the extensive range of enrichment activities which help them enjoy their learning in school.

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. The children reported that they feel safe and cared for in school; they know what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. However, owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

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.

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.

APPENDIX

Health and Safety

- Erect a dividing barrier between the building situated on the campus and the primary school building.

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