

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Mount St Michael's Primary School  
and Nursery Unit, Randalstown,  
County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational

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



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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Mount St Michael's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Randalstown, County Antrim (303-0688)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in March 2015, evaluated the overall effectiveness of Mount St Michael's Primary School and Nursery Unit as very good<sup>1</sup>. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 5 March 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**

The inspection focused 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. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The line of inquiry selected during the SII was to:

- develop further the children's problem-solving skills in mathematics and raise the standards of attainment in the outcomes for numeracy.

### **Key findings**

- The school development plan and associated numeracy action plan have prioritised appropriately the improvements in the standards of the mathematics provision across the key stages. Scrutiny of the planning indicates that the teachers use a variety of differentiated learning and teaching strategies and evaluate the children's learning. The plans are highly evaluative and reflective upon both the children's acquisition of skills and the strategies for learning; however, there is variation in their use to inform the learning in future lessons.
- The school's internal data for the past three years indicates that, by the end of key stage 2, most of the children make progress commensurate with their ability. During discussions, the most able year 7 children articulate the strategies they use during problem-solving tasks. The children's use of specific mathematical vocabulary, during their explanations, requires further development.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 with a group of children in year 6, they reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do and who to talk to if they have concerns about their safety or well-being. 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 a majority of 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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