

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Our Lady's and St Mochua's Primary School, Derrynoose, County Armagh

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-6639)

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in June 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Our Lady's and St Mochua's Primary School, Derrynoose, County Armagh (503-6639)

Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Our Lady's and St Mochua's Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. In the interim, the school has developed a shared education, cross-border partnership with another school and is now in receipt of extended schools funding. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 5 June 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 staff would be co-operating with the inspectors. The leadership co-operated with the inspection team in relation to 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

- A group of year 6 children spoke confidently and very positively about their learning experiences and expressed their appreciation for the range of extra-curricular sports, activities and trips provided for them. The children reported that all of the staff support them very well with their learning and the school's approach to promoting positive behaviour encourages them to do their best. The children are justly proud of, and demonstrate a very good understanding of, the school's 'Changemaker School' status; they talked about how this has inspired them to acquire and develop leadership and team-working skills and qualities such as creativity and empathy for others. The school provides a purposeful and varied preventative curriculum through its Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) provision, which is enhanced by a very good range of additional programmes, visiting speakers and opportunities for the children to develop leadership skills.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- any 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. In discussions with the inspector, a group of year 6 children reported that they feel happy and safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have any 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 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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