

# Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Sion Mills Primary School, Nursery Unit and Speech and Language Unit, Strabane, County Tyrone

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 201-6442

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in November 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Sion Mills Primary School, Nursery Unit and Speech and Language Unit, Strabane, County Tyrone (201-6442)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in October 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Sion Mills Primary School, Nursery Unit and Speech and Language Unit as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 20 November 2019.

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 in relation to safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice among teachers 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**

- The group of year 6 children report that they have very good opportunities to participate in a range of sporting and shared education activities. They develop their leadership capabilities through their roles in the school- and eco-councils and as 'playground buddies' and Rights Respecting School ambassadors.

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 report that they feel safe in the school and that they 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 outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

The school needs to:

- develop a schedule for the ongoing review of pastoral policies and update the e-safety policy.

## **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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