

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Comgall's Primary School, Antrim

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (303-0832)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in June 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 St Comgall's Primary School, Antrim (303-0832)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Comgall's Primary School as having a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on the 3 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 teachers 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:

- lines of inquiry were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities; and
- 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.

Key findings

- In discussion with a group of year 6 children, they reported that they have many opportunities to develop leadership capabilities through their participation in various roles, such as, playground peer mediators, School Council members and Eco-councillors. The children discussed how they enjoy coming to school, feel supported in their learning and described a range of strategies they use if they encounter challenges whilst learning. They agreed that the school's reward system motivates them and reinforces positive behaviours.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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 (DE). The ETI met with a group of year 6 children who reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and 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.

The school needs to:

- continue updating the relevant policies to reflect accurately the DE guidance and the school's practice.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the school, 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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