

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St John's Primary School, Coleraine, County Londonderry

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (303-3709)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St John's Primary School, Coleraine, County Londonderry (303-3709)

Introduction

The previous inspection in April 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St John's Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. Since that inspection, there have been five teaching and senior leadership appointments. Enrolment remains steady at 155 children and the school engages keenly in a shared education partnership with another local primary school, which it values highly. The school is also involved actively in a joint professional development cluster (teacher professional learning) with an additional two primary schools. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 13 May 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 all of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal and the designated teacher 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
- a line of inquiry was not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- A group of children from across key stages 1 and 2, who met with the inspector, were friendly, confident and spoke well of their enjoyment of school. The children talked positively about the leadership opportunities they enjoy through the School Council, or as 'digital leaders', and they expressed enjoyment of a range of learning experiences across the curriculum, including aspects of literacy, numeracy, shared education and after-school activities. The older children were clear about how taking leadership roles contributed to developing their wider social skills.

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. In discussion with the inspector, the group of year 6 children stated that they feel safe and 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 arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

The school needs to:

- continue with its schedule of updating and ratifying its suite of pastoral care policies, ensuring revisions are in line with the most recent guidance from the Department of Education.

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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2019

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk