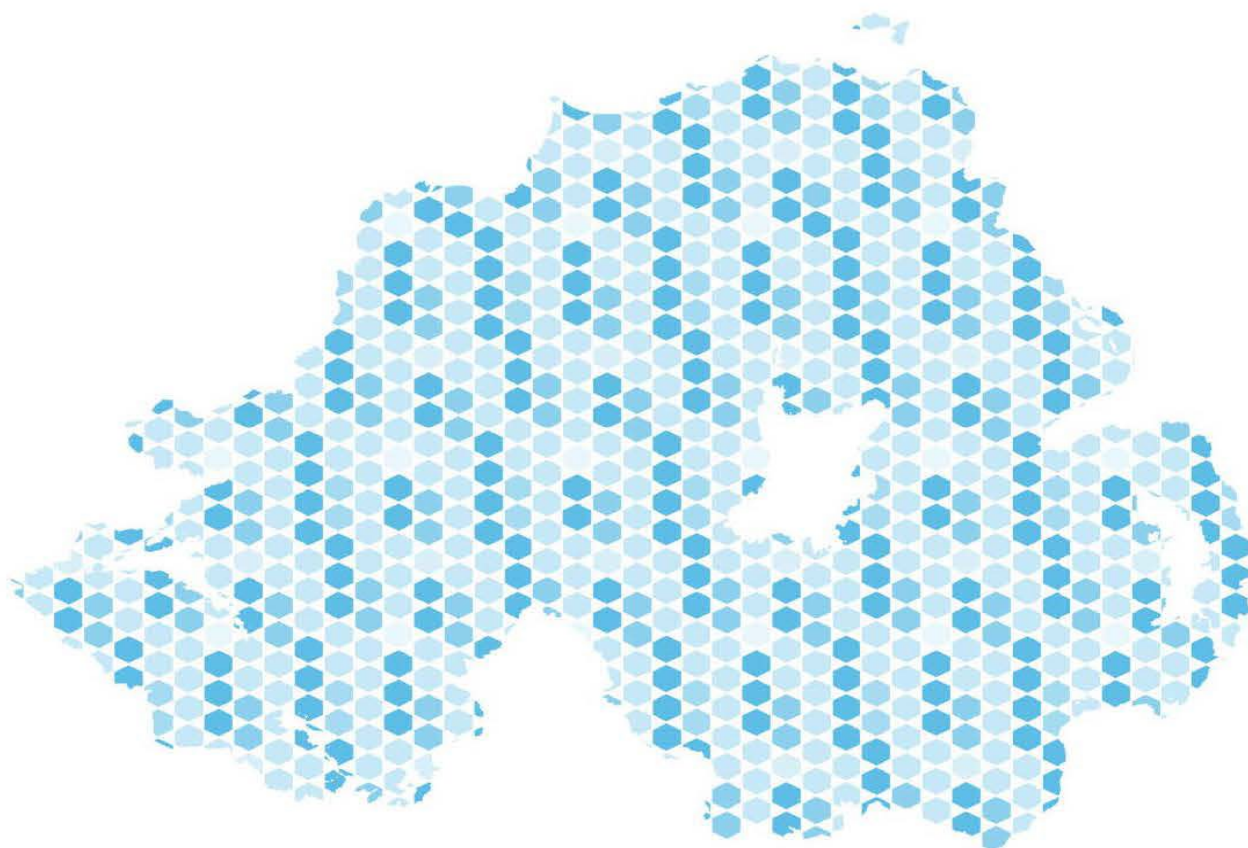


Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Malachy's Primary School, Belfast

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (103-6466)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in October 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 Malachy's Primary School, Belfast (103-6466)

Introduction

The previous inspection in October 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Malachy's Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 3 October 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 inspection. The senior leadership co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their leadership and 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

- The new school development planning process is well under way and is informed by consultation with children, parents, staff and governors. A systematic approach to self-evaluation is in place and extensive quantitative and qualitative data is used to inform future actions and identify school priorities. Regular, ongoing monitoring and analysis of the data is used to set whole-school, class and individual targets for improvement. A range of intervention strategies are planned to support individual needs.
- The literacy samples of work provided, in books and electronic records, indicate differentiation and clear progression through and across the year groups. The children have opportunities to participate in a wide variety of learning experiences and are involved regularly in self- and peer-assessment.

- The group of year 6 children who met with the inspector report that they have good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through the 'Digital Leaders' and 'playground buddies' scheme and look forward to their engagement in the recently reformed eco council. The children appreciate the range of after-school activities offered in the school, for example, various sports and clubs and welcome the opportunity they have to provide feedback to the school through regular questionnaires.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the line 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 well-being. They are clear about the procedures they would follow to deal with concerns when online at school or at home. 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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