

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School, Altinure,
County Derry

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in May 2018



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 Mary's Primary School, Altinure, County Derry (203-2294)

Introduction

The previous inspection in June 2015, evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Mary's Primary School, Altinure as outstanding¹. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 30 May 2018.

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 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 children, with whom the inspectors met, spoke well about their roles and responsibilities within school councils, and talked about the skills they are developing through the shared education programme with a local controlled primary school.

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, with whom the inspectors met, were very respectful of each other. They reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. The children are well informed about various forms of bullying and other dangers they can encounter. 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.

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school evaluated previously as outstanding or very good has been reported as a school demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.

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.

Health and Safety

- The governors and senior leaders have carried out a risk assessment of the school premises. They identified health and safety risks to staff and children at an exit point from the building and an area of low fencing; they are in communication with the Education Authority regarding the findings.

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