

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,
Ballygawley, County Tyrone

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, Ballygawley, County Tyrone (503-2735)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Mary's Primary School as outstanding¹. The principal and all of the staff are in post since the last inspection. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 1 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 the teachers, including the principal, would not be co-operating fully 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

- A group of year 6 children reported that their views are sought on a range of matters and they contribute to the life and work of the school in a variety of ways including the Eco- council.

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 ETI met with a group of year 6 children; they described the very caring and supportive learning environment, and reported that they feel safe and secure in the school. They understand what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety or 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.

¹From 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and Safety

The mobile classroom is in an extremely poor state of repair with extensive damage in one area exposing an internal wall. This needs to be replaced as a matter of urgency.

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