

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,
Saintfield, County Down

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in December 2017

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Mary's Primary School, Saintfield, County Down (403-1672)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Mary's Primary School as good.¹ A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 6 December 2017.

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

Key findings

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the lines of inquiry; and
- the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school did not provide evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect or reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education². 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 and safeguarding being provided for the children. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

The ETI will return to the school within six weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

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

² The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Education Authority that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, SAINTFIELD IN DECEMBER 2017

SAFEGUARDING

The ETI returned to the school on 8 February 2018 to monitor and report on arrangements for safeguarding.

The purpose of the visit was to provide the school with a further opportunity to provide evidence on its arrangements for safeguarding; owing to action short of strike, the school did not provide evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding reflect or reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education at the time of the inspection in December 2017.

On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements now reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE). However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding at the school.

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