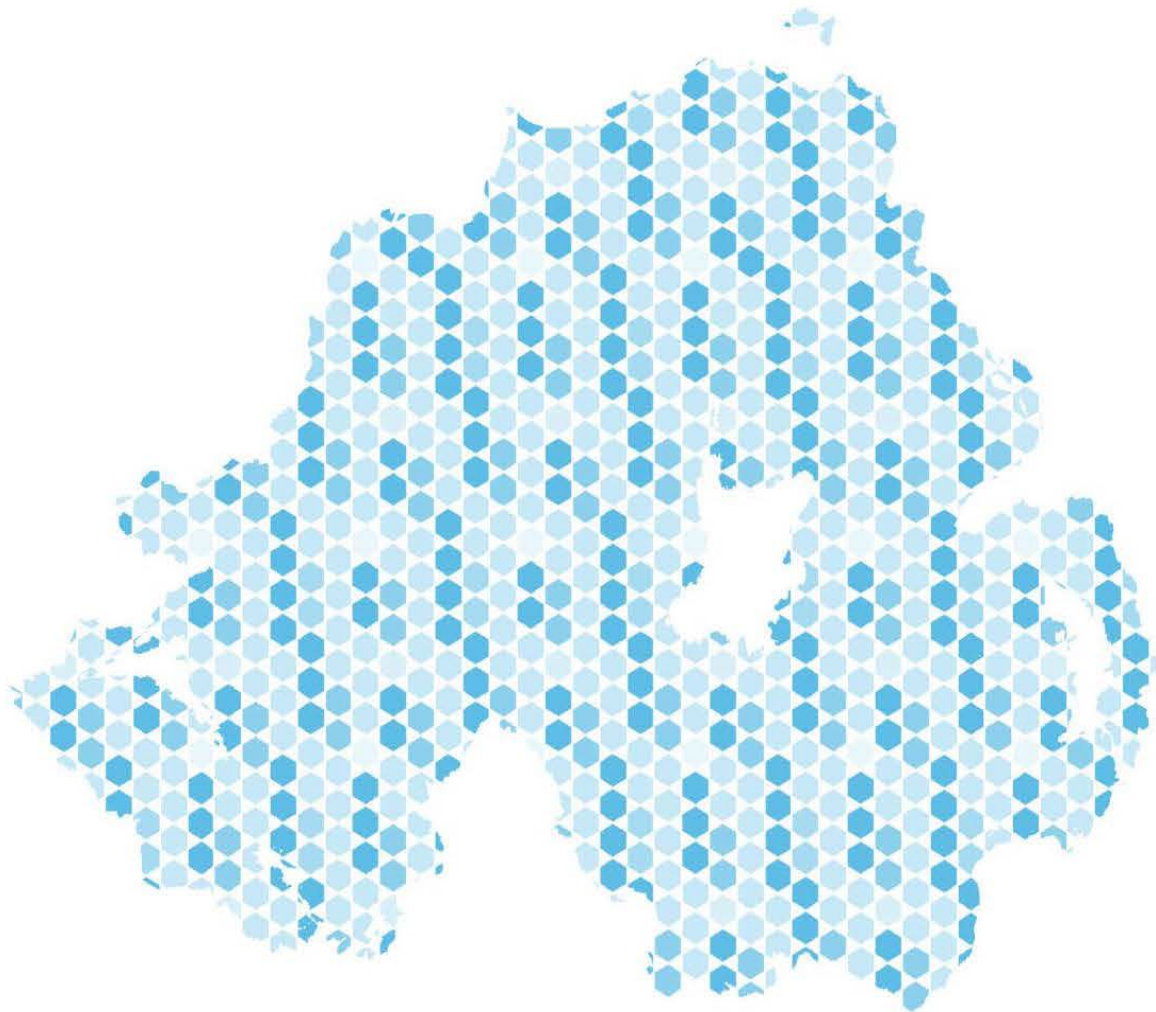


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Matthew's Primary School,
Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

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

eti

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 Matthew's Primary School, Belfast (103-6505)

Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Matthew's Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Since that inspection, the enrolment has increased steadily and the school has engaged in a Shared Education Peace IV programme with a local controlled primary school. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 13 November 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 would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal co-operated with the inspection team in relation to her 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 year 6 children met with the inspectors and spoke positively about their learning experiences including the subjects they enjoy, their participation in sports and extra-curricular activities and the work of the School Council.
- The children reported that their classroom activities and use of online programmes are increasing their interest and understanding of both reading and numeracy.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- a 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 inspectors met with a small group of year 6 children who stated that they feel happy and safe in school. The children reported that they know 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.

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 school has raised with the relevant authorities, the need for improvements to the security system at the main entrance, to ensure visitors cannot access the building prior to being screened. This work needs to proceed as a matter of urgency.

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