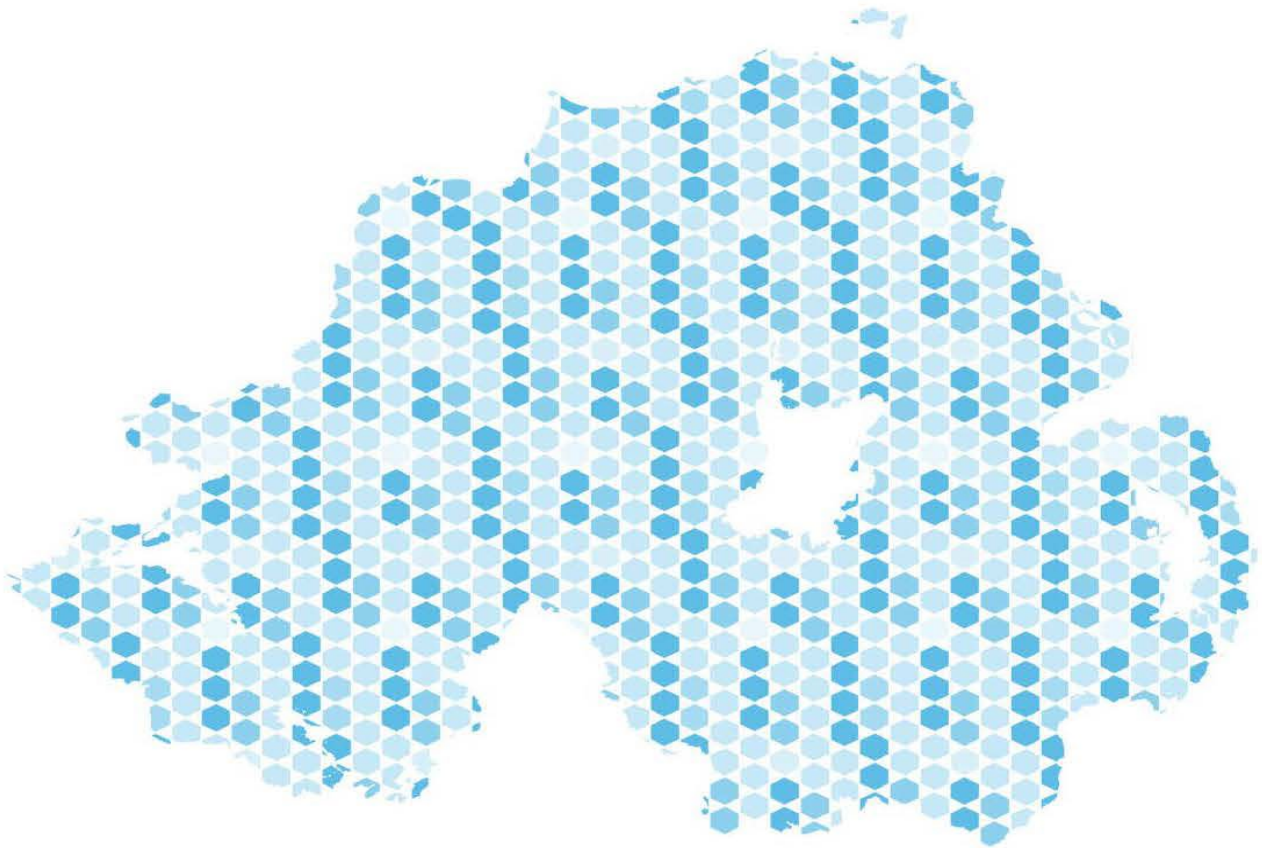


Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Michael's Primary School, Belfast

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (103-6140)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in June 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Department of Education
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Michael's Primary School, Belfast (103-6140)

Introduction

The previous inspection in April 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Michael's Primary School as having capacity for sustained improvement. The school has received recognition in a range of fields notably achieving their first Eco- Flag, a Digital Schools Award and a NSPCC (the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) Health Action Award. Both the junior choir and the camogie team have been awarded recently first place in local competitions. The school has begun a shared education partnership with controlled primary school. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 11 June 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 inspectors. The senior leaders co-operated with the inspection team in relation to 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 group of year 6 children spoke enthusiastically about the extensive range of opportunities they have to develop their leadership capabilities through, for example, their roles in the School- and Eco-Councils and as 'digital leaders'. They enjoy the wide range of after-school activities on offer and spoke positively about their participation in the shared education activities and the chance to work in collaboration with children from another school.

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 provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. In discussion with a group of year six children, they report that they feel safe in school and know 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. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

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