

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Nicholas' Primary School,
Carrickfergus, County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational

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



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 Nicholas' Primary School, Carrickfergus, County Antrim (303-6563)

Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2013, evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Nicholas' Primary School as very good¹. In the interim, there has been a change in senior leadership with the appointment of both a new principal and vice-principal. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 10 January 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 included non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed ETI that all of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI have 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

The inspection focused on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were:

- the embedding of problem solving activities and mental mathematics strategies; and
- the development of the interconnectedness of mathematical concepts across the curriculum.

Key findings

- The recent focus of improvement in mathematics is underpinned effectively by scrutiny of a range of data, supported by relevant staff development and written guidance for staff and agreed processes for monitoring and evaluation. As a result, there is an increasing range of opportunities being provided for children to develop their problem solving skills and apply their mathematical thinking to real life contexts both in the classroom and the wider community. In discussion with the sample group of year six children, they demonstrate their use of a range of strategies to solve problems, know how mathematics are linked to real life and use feedback from their teacher to make improvements to their work.
- The baseline positions in action plans are not clear and evaluations of measurable improvements in the outcomes for the children are not rigorous enough.

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

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- The quality of the work in the children's books, the quality of learning and teaching within the classroom and the effectiveness of the work of the relevant co-ordinators.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding continue to reflect² the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, 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.

² From January 2017, arrangements previously evaluated as comprehensive are reported as **reflect** the guidance.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2017

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk