

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Patrick's Primary School, Burrenreagh, Castlewellan, County Down

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (403-1671)

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

Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Patrick's Primary School, Burrenreagh, Castlewellan, County Down (403-1671)

Introduction

The previous inspection in February 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Patrick's Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Since the previous inspection, the enrolment has increased by almost 10% and currently stands at 70 children. A new temporary teacher has also been appointed. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 4 March 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 all of the teachers, including the principal, would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal co-operated with the inspection team in relation to his 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 inspector met with a group of year 6 children. The children are welcoming and respectful to one another and to visitors to the school. They spoke enthusiastically about their enjoyment of school, in particular they appreciate the emphasis placed on their health and well-being and the development of their creativity through art and design. The children also highlighted their role, as active members of the School Council, in raising funds to purchase additional information and communication technology (ICT) equipment to enhance learning and teaching opportunities throughout the school.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The children who met with the inspector reported that they feel safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety. 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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