

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

# PRIMARY INSPECTION

## St Clare's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Belfast

Maintained, co-educational, DE Ref No 103-6630

### Report of a Follow-up Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in May 2023



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# Second follow-up inspection of St Clare's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Belfast, BT13 2SE (103-6630)

## Introduction

The original inspection of St Clare's Primary School and Nursery Unit was carried out in [May 2016](#) when the school's education provision was evaluated as having important areas for improvement, namely to:

- improve the quality of the leadership at all levels of key curricular areas through the development of more robust self-evaluation practices, in order to improve further the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards they attain; and
- develop further the teachers' planning to ensure the learning needs of all the children, including those in the nursery unit, are met fully.

ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in February 2017, a follow-up inspection which was impacted by industrial action short of strike in [December 2017](#), and a monitoring visit in October 2021; a monitoring visit summary letter was provided to the school and the Department of Education.

This second follow-up inspection, carried out in May 2023, was also impacted by industrial action short of strike (at the time of the follow-up inspection, members of the five main teaching unions in Northern Ireland were mandated by their unions to participate in legitimate industrial action short of strike, which includes not engaging with ETI inspections). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that due to industrial action short of strike by the teaching unions, the teaching staff would not be co-operating with the inspection. The school leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to elements of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils. The senior leaders and representatives of the board of governors in the school engaged in discussions with the inspectors about the arrangements for safeguarding children and provided a range of relevant safeguarding documentation.

As a result of the industrial action, the school was unable to provide a complete inspection evidence base, including observations of teaching and learning, to demonstrate the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. The ETI has a [statutory duty](#) to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education being provided for children and young people. The follow-up inspection proceeded on a partial basis and the key findings are based on evidence made available at the time of the inspection visit.

## Key actions and changes

In the interim period since the follow-up inspection in December 2017, the school has received external support provided by the Education Authority (EA) in relation to:

- school leadership, including governors, on whole school development planning and associated action planning;
- effective questioning; and
- self-evaluation processes in relation to the identified areas for improvement.

## Views of children, parents/carers and staff

As a result of the industrial action short of strike, the online questionnaires were not distributed to the children, parents/carers and staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of the children, parents/carers and staff. The ETI will re-issue the questionnaires at the time of the next inspection visit to complete this follow-up inspection.

## Key findings in relation to safeguarding

- The year 6 and 7 children who met with the inspectors reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. The children presented their views and opinions in a thoughtful manner and reflected well on how they are encouraged by the staff to use the calm corners and sensory walks within the school to support their emotional health and wellbeing.
- Most of the school's policies are in line with the guidance from the Department of Education (DE). However, the school was not able to provide sufficient evidence for ETI to evaluate its arrangements for safeguarding children.

## Conclusion

The school's second follow-up inspection is incomplete due to the action short of strike of the teaching unions.

Based on the evidence made available there remains a need for the school to:

- improve the quality of the leadership at all levels of key curricular areas through the development of more robust self-evaluation practices, in order to improve further the quality of the children's learning experiences and the standards they attain; and
- develop further the teachers' planning to ensure the learning needs of all the children, including those in the nursery unit, are met fully.

The ETI has been unable to evaluate the school's progress in effecting the required improvements in the quality of its education provision for a period of five years since the first follow-up inspection. As the school did not provide sufficient evidence to evaluate the arrangements for safeguarding pupils, the Department of Education will write to the Education Authority and the Board of Governors to seek assurance in relation to the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children.

The ETI will continue to monitor the school's progress, and the follow-up inspection may be completed at the request of the school up to and including June 2023. Subsequently, the inspection will be completed without further notice.

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