

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Columba's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Kilrea, County Derry

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 303-6147

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection in February 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Columba's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Kilrea, County Derry (303-6147)

Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Columba's Primary School and Nursery Unit as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. Since the last inspection, the enrolment has seen year-on-year increases and the number of children attending currently stands at 270, including the children in the nursery unit. Every child in the school benefits from participating in a well-established shared education partnership with a local controlled primary school and through the school's active participation in an associated shared education hub. The school has been conferred an Eco-School's Green Flag and has also achieved the Silver Award as a Rights Respecting School. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 10 February 2020.

Focus of the inspection

The purpose of the SII was to evaluate 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:

- to improve the children's outcomes and experiences in numeracy; and
- to embed a transparent culture that values children's rights and ensures they are respected and lived out.

Key findings

- The outstanding leadership focuses on promoting continuous improvement through child-centred provision and highly effective pedagogy. The leadership is committed to teacher professional learning as a driver for improvement. There is a high quality school development plan, which is underpinned by robust self-evaluation and research informed practice; the outcomes of which improve the learning experiences and contribute to better outcomes for the children. The school's internal data indicates that, by the end of key stage 2, most of the children achieve as expected, or above, in numeracy.
- The children in the nursery unit experience a stimulating learning environment which provides appropriate learning opportunities to develop early mathematical skills; the quality of the learning experiences in the nursery unit provides the necessary groundwork for transition to foundation stage numeracy. Following on, the children experience a well-balanced coverage of number, shape and space, measures and handling-data across all key stages.

- Most of the mathematics lessons observed during the inspection, including observation of the mathematics mastery session, were very good and outstanding and promoted the children's enjoyment of learning. All of the lessons observed developed the children's thinking skills in mathematics and enabled them to use language to support their cognitive processes. The group of year 7 children, who met with the inspector, used a broad range of mathematical methods to answer questions accurately. Their thinking was flexible and they made calculations in a dexterous way using higher order mathematical language.
- The school's participation in the Rights Respecting Schools Award is core to the work of the school, impacting positively on its ethos and on the children's learning experiences and their aspirations and expectations. The children are empowered, through understanding, speaking and promoting the rights respecting language of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to work in partnership with the staff and to be listened to in matters that affect them. The children are well-informed about current affairs and news items and make clear the links between what they learn in school and the world around them using rights respecting language. They respond with empathy and maturity to local and international issues and through charity initiatives have learned how to help those children who are much less fortunate. Consequently, they benefit from opportunities that place learning in real and relevant contexts which also develop their inter-personal and leadership skills.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the Department of Education. The year 6 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. They are well informed and knowledgeable about how to stay safe online.

Conclusion

St Columba's Primary School and Nursery Unit continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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