

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Ballycraigy Primary School, Antrim

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 301-3331

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in February 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Ballycraigy Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 3 March 2020.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute, and also workload and other management issues. The industrial action 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 inspection. The senior leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice among teachers 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
- lines of inquiry were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- The group of year 6 children report that they enjoy the wide range of learning and extra-curricular activities including physical education, information and communication technology and after-school games. They talked enthusiastically about the joint activities they participate in as part of the well-established shared education partnership with a local Integrated Primary School. The children report that they have very good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through the school- and eco-councils, and they appreciate the support they continue to receive from the school's nurture unit.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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. The children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. In particular, they are well informed about keeping safe online. 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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