

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballyhackett Primary School,
Castlerock, County Londonderry

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in November 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Department of Education
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CUSTOMER
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Ballyhackett Primary School, Castlerock, County Londonderry (303-2104)

Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2014 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Ballyhackett Primary School as good¹. Since the last inspection, a new principal was appointed in December 2017 and the school maintains a long-standing and very effective shared education partnership with Castleroe Primary School. The enrolment has since decreased from 40 to 36 children. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 12 November 2018.

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 none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal and designated teacher co-operated with the inspectors as part of their 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

- A group of year 5, 6 and 7 children, who met with the inspector, spoke confidently and very positively about aspects of the school's provision. In particular, they expressed an enjoyment of reading, talked well about the extra-curricular opportunities they enjoy, which include music, Spanish and sport. The children spoke positively about the developing opportunities the school provides them regarding leadership roles, including those through school council. They also talked about the skills and understanding they have developed through their shared education partnership, which they commended.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school evaluated previously as good has been reported as the school demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

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. In discussion with the inspector, the group of year 5, 6 and 7 children stated that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of 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 education provided for the children. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

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