

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Dromara Primary School, Dromara, County Down

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No (401-1619)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Dromara Primary School, Dromara, County Down (401-1619)

Introduction

The previous inspection in April 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Dromara Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. The school is in its fourth year of a shared education partnership with a local maintained primary school. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 16 May 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 none of the staff would be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal and a representative from the board of governors co-operated in relation to 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 6 children, who met with the inspector, spoke enthusiastically about school life and how helpful and kind the teachers are to them. They reported that they especially enjoy reading and engaging in outdoor learning, including a 'daily mile' walk.
- The children are confident and articulate expressing their views and ideas and are eager to take on leadership roles; for example, through their work on the School Council, they purchased new toys for the school playground. They have enjoyed participating in mathematical activities with their peers from another school as part of the shared education activities. The children are enthusiastic about the new school rewards system entitled 'Dromara Dynamos' and they appreciate the opportunities to develop interests through the after-school clubs, which include: Eco-club, hockey, dodgeball and information and communication technology (ICT).

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- a line 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 year 6 children who met with the inspector report that they feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. They are very well informed about farm safety and are knowledgeable about how to stay 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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