

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Harryville Primary School, Ballymena, County Antrim

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No (301-0781)

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

Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Harryville Primary School, Ballymena, County Antrim (301-0781)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Harryville Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. In the interim, there have been significant changes in staffing, including four new teachers and a number of newly appointed classroom assistants; the senior leadership team has changed and there is a newly formed middle leadership team. The school was awarded the Marjorie Boxall Award for Nurture in November 2016. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 8 April 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 teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal co-operated with the inspection team 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

- The inspectors met with a group of year 6 children who spoke very positively about all aspects of school life; they highlighted the friendly atmosphere and the support and care of their teachers. The children appreciate the range of after-school activities offered in the school, for example, 'board games, football, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) club. There are appropriate opportunities to develop their leadership skills through the recently reconstituted School Council.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the 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 (DE). The inspector met with a group of year 6 children who reported that they feel very safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being; they have a good understanding of 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.

The school needs to:

- implement a more robust system to update and review regularly the safeguarding policies.

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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