

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Iveagh Primary School and Nursery Unit, Rathfriland, County Down

Controlled, co-educational DE ref no (501-1611)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Iveagh Primary School and Nursery Unit, Rathfriland, County Down (501-1611)

Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Iveagh Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. In the interim, a new principal has been appointed to the school and a nursery unit was opened in 2016. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 21 January 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 nearly all of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal and designated teacher for child protection co-operated with the inspection team in relation to 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
- lines of inquiry were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- The group of year 6 children, who met with the inspector, spoke very positively about their experiences in school. They highlighted, in particular, the many opportunities they have to engage in activities beyond the classroom and their enjoyment of learning through practical activities and group work. The children also spoke about their appreciation of the kind and supportive staff in the school.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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 issued by the Department of Education. The children, with whom the inspectors met, reported that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. 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 teachers, 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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