

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Lack Primary School, Enniskillen, County Fermanagh

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref. No. 201-6184

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Introduction

The previous inspection in January 2017 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Lack Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Since then, there has been a change in senior leadership and the school has continued to engage in a shared education partnership with two local primary schools. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 9 January 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. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that the teachers would be co-operating with the inspection 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
- a line of inquiry was not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- A group of year 6 children met with the inspector and spoke positively about their learning experiences, across the primary curriculum. They report that their teachers listen to their views and provide guidance and encouragement to support their learning. The children value their opportunities to work and learn online and confirm this is increasing their interest in numeracy and their World Around Us topics. They participate in a range of extra-curricular activities and emphasise their enjoyment of the longstanding shared education opportunities with two other local primary schools.
- The children report that that they have good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through their roles in the school-council.
- 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.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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. The children report 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 welfare. In discussion with the inspector, the group of year 6 children described their positive use of the 'Grins and Grumbles' box to share their successes and worries, for further confidential discussion with the school's safeguarding team. 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:

- establish a schedule to ensure an accurate and timely review of all associated 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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