

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Canice's Primary School, Feeny, County Derry

Maintained, co-educational DE ref no (203-2263)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Department of Education
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Canice's Primary School, Feeny, County Derry (203-2263)

Introduction

The previous inspection in January 2013, evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Canice's Primary School, Feeny, as very good¹. The school took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII) in January 2016. In the interim, the school has: commenced a shared education partnership with two other local primary schools; and, achieved the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) Model School Award. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 11 March 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 inspector. The principal co-operated with the inspector 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
- lines of inquiry were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- The group of year 5 and 6 children spoke positively about the opportunities they have to develop their leadership capabilities through the 'playground pals' scheme and roles they assume in the School- and Eco-Councils. The children informed the inspector that, through the shared education programme and the PATHS curriculum, they are developing well skills in resilience and mindfulness. They expressed their enjoyment of the accelerated reading programme and the range of extra-curricular activities in which they participate.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the lines 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 outstanding or very good has been reported as a school demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.

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, with whom the inspector 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 welfare. 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.

APPENDIX A

Health and safety/Accommodation

- The school's accommodation and health and safety issue outlined in a previous minor works application needs to be addressed.

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