

# Education and Training Inspectorate

## PRIMARY INSPECTION



### St Colman's (Bann) Primary School, Laurencetown, County Armagh

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-6400)

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



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# **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Colman's (Bann) Primary School, Laurencetown, County Armagh (503-6400)**

## **Introduction**

The previous inspection in December 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Colman's (Bann) Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. In the interim, there has been a change of principal and the admissions have risen by 16 to 134 children, which is full capacity for the school. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 22 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 none co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that most of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal co-operated with the inspection team in relation to leadership, teaching and 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**

The inspection focused on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were:

- to develop further of the provision for problem solving in mathematics; and
- to develop further the use of assessment to identify underachievement in literacy and numeracy, and to implement effective support strategies for children where required.

## **Key findings**

- The co-ordinator for mathematics has a planned and sustained focus on problem solving for mathematics, and along with the principal, monitors by observation, scrutinising samples of work, and talking to the children about their learning. The children engage very well in class, and respond with enthusiasm to the problem solving approach in mathematics, demonstrating flexible thinking, and effective working in teams and pairs. They are confident in explaining the strategies they use and solutions to the problems set. The school's data demonstrates that the children make steady improvement in their mathematical skills.
- There has been a sustained and skilled focus by the principal and staff on using the school's internal and external data to identify children who would benefit from interventions to support their learning in literacy and numeracy. The staff, including the classroom assistants, have completed relevant continued professional development in a range of appropriate interventions which have improved the children's learning and skills in talking and listening, literacy, numeracy, and self-confidence. The principal collates and analyses skilfully the resulting outcomes for the children, and the efficacy of the interventions. The progress the children make in their reading skills is evidenced well by the school's internal data.

- In discussions with the inspector, groups of children reported that they have very good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through their roles in the School- and Eco-Councils, and enjoy the after-school club activities, particularly the sporting activities. They also enjoy the additional reading materials available to them in the school library.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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. In discussions with the inspector, a group of year 6 children report that they know what to do and who to talk to 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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