

# Education and Training Inspectorate

## PRIMARY INSPECTION



### St Joseph's Primary School, Madden, County Armagh

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-1138)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Joseph's Primary School, Madden, County Armagh (503-1138)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in January 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Joseph's Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 29-30 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 none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal, designated and deputy-designated teachers and area of learning co-ordinators co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their leadership 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 the provision for non-narrative writing; and
- improve further the children's understanding of, and attainment in, mathematical processes.

### **Key findings**

- The senior and middle leaders, supported by the staff and the governors, continue to provide high-level strategic leadership and self-evaluation. Improvement work undertaken since the last inspection has been highly effective in developing further the provision for the children and raising further the standards they attain. The extensive evidence made available by the school demonstrates the sustained improvement in the children's learning experiences and in their outcomes in literacy and numeracy.
- The planning for non-narrative writing demonstrates significant breadth and depth; a key strength is the use of the children's everyday experiences and contemporary local issues as a stimulus for the writing. This approach enables the children to produce very high quality, thought-provoking and carefully crafted written work in a variety of forms. The planning for numeracy includes the development of specific strategies to support the children's understanding of mathematical processes and information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively to underpin this area of learning. The monitoring and tracking of the children's individual learning and attainment is frequent, detailed and robust. Where needed, appropriate interventions or additional challenges are provided and as a result, the children make excellent progress in their learning as they move through the school.

- The inspectors met with a group of year 7 children to discuss their learning in numeracy and literacy. The children read with very high levels of fluency and expression; they demonstrated an excellent understanding of the techniques used by writers; and engaged enthusiastically in meaningful discussion about their favourite authors and books. The children were also able to use a wide variety of strategies to solve mathematical problems; they explained well their mathematical thinking and understood the relevance of mathematics to their everyday lives. During the inspection, the inspectors also met informally with children from all of the classes. All of the children were very respectful and courteous and their behaviour was exemplary. A group of year 6 children described the school community as very welcoming and friendly and commented very positively on the support they receive from the staff for their learning and development.

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. The group of year 6 children with whom the inspectors engaged, reported that they feel very happy and safe in school. 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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