

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Mary's Primary School, Newtownbutler, County Fermanagh

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 203-1869

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Mary's Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 26 September 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 inspection. The senior leadership 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 line of Inquiry during the SII was:

- the whole-school focus on broadening the children's learning experiences within numeracy in order to improve mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Key findings

- The school leadership set high expectations for all the staff and the children. An embedded culture of self-evaluation for sustaining whole-school improvement is evident. The well-constructed school development plan is informed through a wide range of consultation processes with children, staff and parents. The senior leadership outlined a robust and systematic approach to gathering evidence and data to monitor outcomes and progress in the children's learning. Currently, there is a whole-school focus on building resilience and promoting positive parenting in order to enable the children to realise their full potential for learning.
- A group of year 6 and 7 children report that they have very good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities and roles of responsibility through the eco- and school-councils and as 'playground buddies'. The children are developing an understanding of the democratic process and elect committee members with specific roles to ensure that there is a sense of agreed purpose to help a range of charities and to enhance the learning environment at their own school. These opportunities are developing the children's sense for responsibility for the care of the environment and others in need of help and support. The children expressed high levels of satisfaction with the care and support provided by all the staff.
- The learning displays in the corridors celebrate the use of a range of mathematical, literacy, art and information and communication technology (ICT) skills which reflect the children's interests, achievements and sporting activities. A group of children from years 4, 6 and 7 used good reasoning skills when investigating addition and subtraction operations and were able to explain the value of simple fractions. The children report that they are more confident using a wider range of strategies during problem solving.

- Samples of the children's work indicated a clear focus on the outcomes for learning in order to develop further the children's mathematical problem-solving capabilities.

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. A group of year 6 reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

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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