

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Strabane Controlled Primary School, Strabane, County Tyrone

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No (201-2708)

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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CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Strabane Controlled Primary School, Strabane, County Tyrone (201-2708)

Introduction

The previous inspection in February 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Strabane Controlled Primary School as very good¹. A new principal took up post in September 2017. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 7 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 inspectors. The principal co-operated with the inspection team 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

- A group of year six children spoke confidently and enthusiastically about their learning experiences both within the classroom and after school. In particular, they spoke positively about the support and guidance they receive from staff on how to improve their work and of the opportunities given to them to discuss the life and work of the school through the School- and Eco-Councils.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the lines 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. In discussions with the inspectors, a group of year six children reported that they feel safe and happy in school and know what to do and who to talk to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being. The children were able to explain clearly how to stay safe online. 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.

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.

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.

Health and safety/Accommodation

1. In 2015, the ETI reported:

'The employing authority and board of governors need to address urgently the lack of a secure front perimeter fence to the school and parking facilities that enable the children to access safely the school grounds at drop-off and collection times.'

The education authority has approved a minor works application to resolve the issues with parking; however, the lack of a secure front perimeter fence has not been addressed.

2. The education authority and school need to review the access arrangements to the community playgroup which is accessed currently through the school playground.

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