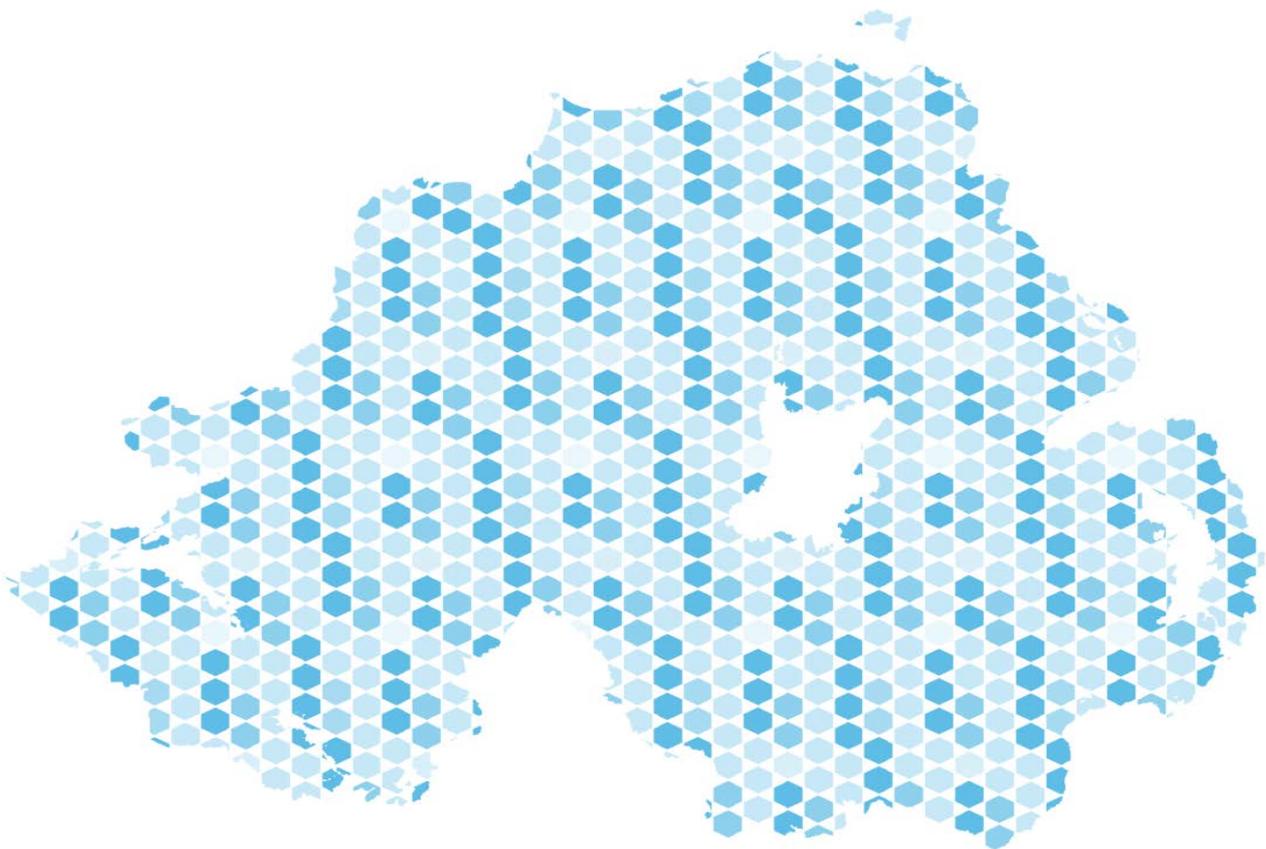


Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Paul's Primary School, Ahoghill, County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 303-6683

Report of a Follow-up Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike)
in October 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST PAUL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, AHOGHILL, COUNTY ANTRIM, BT42 1LF (303-6683)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St Paul's Primary School ¹in November 2016, which concluded that the school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement were to:

- review the roles, responsibilities and practice of strategic leadership at all levels;
- develop robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of planning, learning and teaching and assessment to improve further the progression and outcomes for the children;
- address urgently the deficits in, and poor management and use of the accommodation to meet effectively the needs of the children; and
- address the unsatisfactory safeguarding arrangements outlined in the report including:
 - developing policies and safeguarding procedures for activities held outside of school hours;
 - completing governors and safeguarding training for recruitment and selection; and
 - attendance of designated and deputy designated teacher at updated child protection training.

As a consequence, the Department of Education entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process under the Every School a Good School ²Policy in January 2017.

The school's action plans were adjusted following feedback given by the ETI. The school's development plan was also adjusted in light of the inspection findings and an interim school development plan is in place.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in September 2017, and a follow-up inspection in October 2018 which involved Action Short of Strike. Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact of actions taken and the extent to which the following areas for improvement had been addressed:

- to review the roles, responsibilities and practice of strategic leadership at all levels;
- to develop robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of planning, learning and teaching and assessment to improve further the progression and outcomes for the children; and
- to address urgently the deficits in, and poor management and use of the accommodation to meet effectively the needs of the children.

¹ https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/primary-inspection-st-pauls-primary-school-ahoghill-county-antrim-303-6683_0.pdf

² ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/ESAGS%20Policy%20for%20School%20Improvement%20-%20Final%20Version%2005-05-2009.pdf

The key findings of this inspection included evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflected broadly the guidance from the Department of Education.

The ETI carried out a second follow-up inspection in October 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 the teachers would not be engaging with the inspection. The senior leadership co-operated regarding their 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.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the school has received external support provided by the Education Authority in relation to strategic leadership and management including governance; and planning, learning, teaching and assessment.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- a period of temporary leadership;
- a reduction in the school's enrolment by approximately 38 % to 46 children;
- significant changes in the school's governance including the very recent appointment of a second interim-chair of governors;
- the introduction of a new shared education partnership with two local controlled primary schools; and
- continued external support provided by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) in relation to governance and leadership.

Key findings

- During the follow-up 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 6 and year 7 children reported that they feel safe in school and they know who to talk to if they have concerns about their safety and well-being, including how to stay safe online. However, owing the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate the impact of actions taken and the extent to which the following significant areas for improvement have been addressed:

- to review the roles, responsibilities and practice of strategic leadership at all levels;
- to develop robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of planning, learning and teaching and assessment to improve further the progression and outcomes for the children; and
- to address urgently the deficits in, and poor management and use of the accommodation to meet effectively the needs of the children.

Consequently, there remains a need for St Paul's Primary School to address urgently the significant areas for improvement³.

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. The school is a high priority for future inspection.

Further action will be considered by the Department of Education.

³ The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools that it is working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

APPENDIX

Health and Safety

The school has identified accommodation matters which are being progressed by the relevant stakeholders.

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