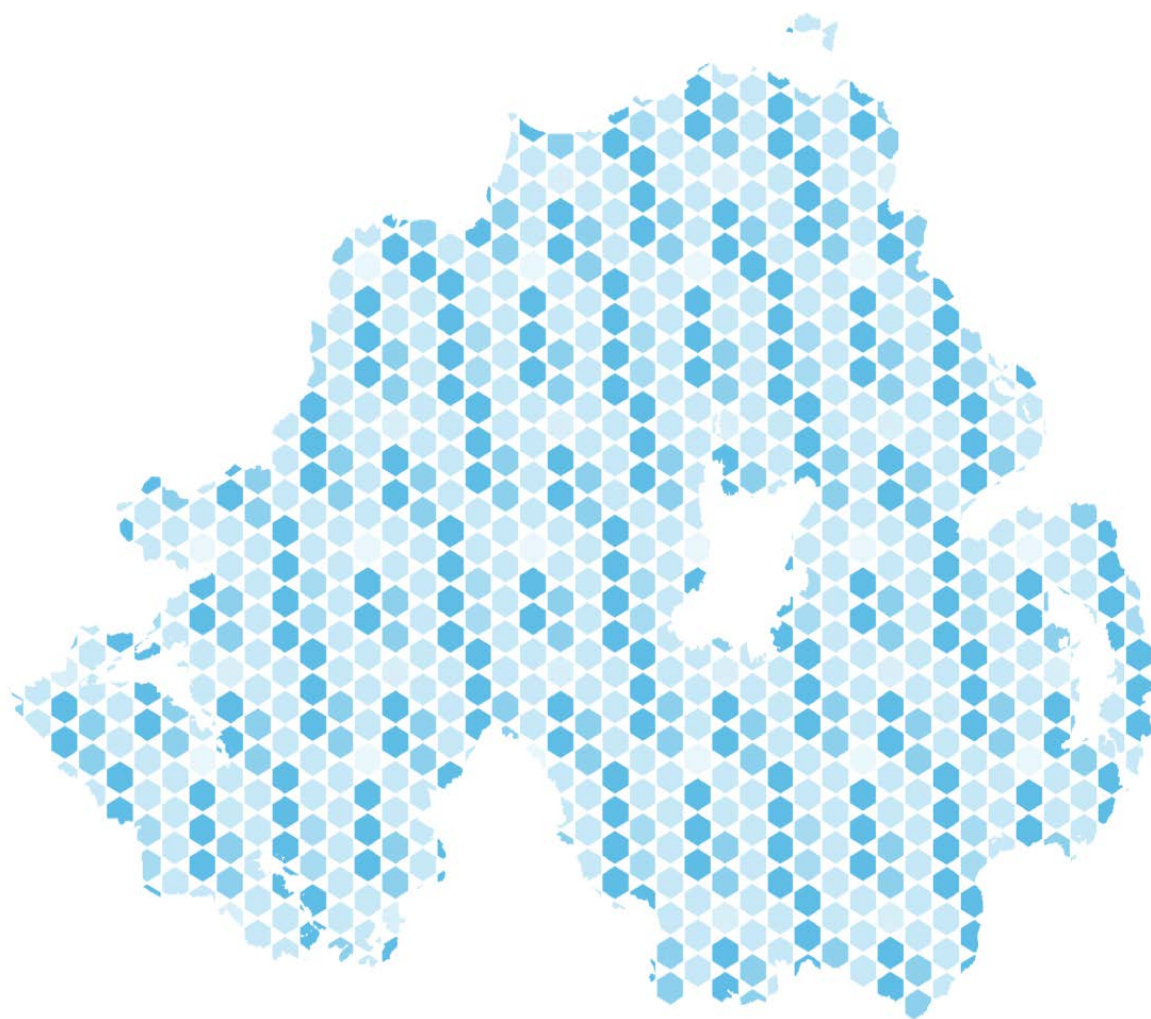


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Castle Gardens Primary School,
Newtownards, County Down

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
April 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Castle Gardens Primary School is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Newtownards, County Down. The school has a wide catchment area with most children coming from the town and surrounding areas. Two learning support classes have been established recently within the school; the proportion of children with statements of educational need has risen accordingly. The new principal took up post in September 2016.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council 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 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 limited evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

Castle Gardens Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	259	244	236	254
% School attendance	96	96	96.2	96.5
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	95.5	N/A
% FSME Percentage ¹	25.5	25	26	30
No. of children on SEN register	47	72	57	44
% of children on SEN register	21	32	29	27
No. of children with statements of educational need	7	8	13	25
No. Of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

Fifteen percent of parents responded to the questionnaires. Almost all of the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the school's positive approaches to care and welfare, the approachable, dedicated and helpful staff, and the welcome changes being introduced by the new principal, including improved communication between school and home. A minority of the staff responded to the questionnaire and their responses were also affirmative. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the responses to the questionnaires and the discussions with the children.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum and how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum; and
- quality of leadership and management.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they are reported below.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure of the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

No performance level is available for the learning support classes.

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the learning outcomes for the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences; and
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning.

7. Leadership and management

- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors provide appropriate support to the senior leadership across key aspects of the life and work of the school. As the governors continue to develop their shared understanding of relevant data, policies and procedures, their challenge function needs to increase accordingly.
- The school development plan identifies a range of whole-school priorities; the associated action plans do not always contain sufficient detail about the targets to effect and measure improvement in the children's outcomes.
- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. In discussion with the inspectors, a group of children from year 6 reported that they feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their 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.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact and effectiveness of:

- the strategic leadership;
- the middle leadership; and
- action to promote and sustain improvement.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

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.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website: [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observe learning and teaching, scrutinise documentation and the children's written work and hold formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for inspection include:

- a meeting with a representative(s) from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

During this inspection, inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including safeguarding and curriculum policies.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- meetings with the principal on the pre-inspection visit and during the inspection;
- meetings with representatives from the governors, including the designated governor;
- a meeting with a group of children from year 6; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management²:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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