

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Friends' School Preparatory Department, Friends' School,
Lisburn, County Antrim

Voluntary, co-educational DE Ref No: 462-0050

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
February 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



CONTENTS

| SECTION | PAGE |
|---|------|
| 1. Context | 1 |
| 2. Children's, parents' and staff questionnaire responses | 1 |
| 3. Focus of the inspection | 2 |
| 4. Overall findings of the inspection | 2 |
| 5. Outcomes for learners | 2 |
| 6. Quality of provision | 2 |
| 7. Leadership and management | 3 |
| 8. Safeguarding | 3 |
| 9. Overall effectiveness | 3 |

APPENDICES

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Friends' School Preparatory Department is an integral part of Friends' School, Lisburn and is situated within the same grounds. The school draws its ethos and values from the Quaker tradition. The school is regularly oversubscribed; the enrolment stands currently at 165 children. The school places an emphasis on outdoor learning and has 'Forest School' accreditation. In September 2017, a new Head of the Preparatory Department was appointed.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute and also workload and other management issues. 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 inspection¹. The senior leadership and the governors co-operated with the inspection in relation to leadership and safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice among teachers 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.

| Friends' School Preparatory Department | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Enrolment | 160 | 153 | 164 | 165 |
| % Attendance | 97.3 | 97.6 | 97.5 | 97.9 |
| % NI Primary School Average | 95.5 | 94.9 | N/A | N/A |
| Percentage of children entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) | 1.3 | 1.3 | 2.4 | 1.8 |
| No. of children on SEN register | 15 | 20 | 19 | 26 |
| % of children on SEN register | 9.4 | 13.1 | 11.6 | 14.5 |
| No. of children with statements of educational needs | 5 | * | * | * |
| No. of newcomer children | * | * | 0 | 0 |

Source: data as held by the school

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Children's, parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Most of the year 7 children responded to the confidential, online questionnaire. The children's responses highlighted their enjoyment of learning; the extra-curricular opportunities available to them; and, the support they receive from the staff.

Over one-half of the parents responded to the online questionnaire. The responses were positive and endorsed: the school's provision for learning; the improved communication between home and school; and, the pastoral care of the children. A majority of the respondents provided additional written comments; while most of these comments were positive, a number of individual concerns in relation to aspects of the school's provision were also raised.

¹ The previous inspection in January 2017 was impacted by action short of strike:

https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/asos-monitoring-inspection-friends-preparatory-department-friends-school-lisburn-county-antrim-462-0050_2.pdf

Almost all of the staff completed the online questionnaire; their responses were very positive, affirming the work of the school, the sense of community and the child-centred ethos.

The ETI has communicated to the Head of the Preparatory Department and the chair of the board of governors the main findings, and the individual issues arising, from the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum; and
- quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Overall effectiveness | Unable to assure 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 |

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The children are courteous, confident and very articulate. They talk with pride about their school and engage in conversation with one another, and with adults, enthusiastically and with ease.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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 group of year 6 children, who met with the inspectors, spoke highly of: the care and support provided by the staff in the school; and, the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. They explained how the school's new approach to promoting positive behaviour is encouraging them to improve their own work and respect one another.
- The year 7 children, who met with the inspectors, talked about their enjoyment of reading and mathematics. They reported that they engage in a range of cross-curricular learning experiences based on their reading material and are appreciative of the resources and support available to them. The children find their learning in mathematics to be suitably challenging and enjoy the fun and varied approaches and resources used.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership has a clear vision for the development of the school; this is focused on improving further the children's learning experiences and the outcomes they attain. The recent reorganisation of staff responsibilities, together with the practical arrangements for developing self-evaluation are supporting the school's improvement work. The school development plan is informed by good levels of consultation with all stakeholders and outlines appropriate priorities for development.
- The governors are very well-informed about the life and work of the school and its strengths and challenges. They use to very good effect, their professional knowledge, skills and understanding to support and challenge, as appropriate, the work of the school.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of strategic leadership and governance;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The children from year 6, with whom the inspectors met, reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. 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.

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

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with representatives of the governors;
- a meeting with the Head of the Preparatory Department;
- meetings with groups of children;
- a review of the school development plan;
- a review of safeguarding and child protection documentation; and
- the opportunity for the children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential, online 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 |

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

| |
|---------------------------|
| High degree of confidence |
| Confidence |
| Limited confidence |

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

| |
|-------------------------------|
| Reflects the guidance |
| Reflects broadly the guidance |
| Unsatisfactory |

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

| |
|---|
| Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners. |
| Does not impacts positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners. |

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

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 in 12 to 18 months. |
| 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 in 18 to 24 months. |

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2020

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk