

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí, Machaire Fíolta/Magherafelt, County Derry

Irish-medium, co-educational DE Ref No (304-6691)

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí is an Irish-medium primary school situated in Magherafelt. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the town and surrounding rural areas and the remainder from other parts of County Derry and nearby parts of County Antrim. At the time of the inspection, the naíscóil had secured new premises for September 2019. The governors are currently working with the Education Authority in relation to new premises for the gaelscoil. The school is involved in a shared education partnership with a maintained primary school, a controlled primary school and an integrated primary school.

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 inspector 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.

Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Enrolment	125	132	138	139
% School attendance	96.5	97.1	95.8	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	30.4	25.0	23.9	21.6
No. of children on SEN register	24	31	18	24
% of children on SEN register	19.2	23.5	13	17.3
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

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

As a result of the action short of strike, the school did not distribute the online, confidential questionnaire information to children, parents and staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of children, parents and staff.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

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

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

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 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

- A group of year six children spoke confidently in Irish about their learning experiences in school. They spoke about: the friendly staff and children; the positive learning environment; the school's rewards systems that motivate them to do well; and, the opportunities they have to contribute to the life and work of the school, in particular, to the school's *Cód Iompair* (code of behaviour).

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 ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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 (DE). The school needs to update aspects of the child protection and safeguarding policies and risk assessments to reflect more fully the school's practice and the guidance from the DE. The group of year six children reported that they feel safe in school and are aware of 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 and safeguarding being provided for the children. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

Health and safety/Accommodation

1. The school gates and perimeter wall and fence are not adequate to ensure the security of the school grounds and the safety of the children. The school has been working with the Education Authority to address these and other issues concerning a fire alarm system and emergency lighting.

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 from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete an online, confidential questionnaire.

Where, owing to the action short of strike, this evidence base was not available, it has been referenced in the body of the inspection report.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- meetings with the principal;
- scrutiny of child protection and safeguarding documentation; and
- a meeting with a group of year 6 children.

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 impact 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.

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