

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Macosquin Primary School, Coleraine, County Londonderry

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 301-3700

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Macosquin Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in the village of Macosquin, three miles south-west of Coleraine. The school values the nurturing of music and the performing arts and its senior school choir was awarded third place in this year's BBC Northern Ireland School Choir of the Year competition. The school has been awarded an Eco-School Green Flag and a Sustrans¹ Silver Award for participation in the Active School Travel Programme. The school is involved in a shared education partnership with two other primary schools.

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. The industrial action 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 co-operating with the inspection. The senior and middle-leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to safeguarding and aspects of their leadership 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.

Macosquin Primary School	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Enrolment	204	203	213	203
% School attendance	97.2	96.3	96.9	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	94.9	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ²	24.5	27	25.3	23.1
No. of children on SEN register	39	31	20	11
% of children on SEN register	19	15.2	9.4	5.4
No. of children with statements of educational need	5	*	*	*
No. of newcomer children	0	0	0	*

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 confidential, online questionnaire information to year 7 children, parents and staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on their views.

¹ 'Sustrans': sustainable transport is a charity which encourages children and adults to walk, cycle and use public transport rather than private cars in order to reduce motor traffic.

² 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 fully:

- 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 inspectors met with a group of mature and articulate year 6 children who reflected well on their learning experiences and presented their views and opinions in a thoughtful and assured manner. The children have good social skills and possess very positive dispositions to learning across the breadth of the curriculum and including extra-curricular sporting, cultural and social activities. They value learning with, and about, the children from their partner schools in the shared education programme, providing them with a better understanding of diversity and inclusion.
- The very accomplished senior school choir performs with flair, precision and very good expression; additionally, the children communicated commitment to being members of the choir and pride in representing their school in public performances, including on television.

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 year 6 children, who met with the inspectors, identified aspects of school life that improve their knowledge and skills, such as: mathematical activities; the science week; and many sporting opportunities. All of the children have participated in, and benefited from, a wide range of extra-curricular experiences including: horse-riding, surfing, and cookery lessons.

- The children spoke with pride about the eco-council's work on leading the development of their sensory garden; and with enthusiasm about the school's new reward system, which the school council was involved in creating. They reported that their teachers are approachable, supportive and take good care of them.
- Based on the documentation presented, the school has good quality planning for its own thematic teaching units which provide opportunities for children to explore interesting topics, acquire knowledge and develop a wide range of skills and interests.
- The school has a good quality e-safety policy and provides formal lessons from years 1-7, which include helping children to stay safe online and to use digital devices more responsibly.

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

- There is a clear strategic vision in the school shared by senior and middle leaders that includes providing a broad range of experiences that promote the 'children's voice' and enjoyment in learning. The school development plan is informed well by consultation with all stakeholders along with the school's own internal performance data. Appropriate targets and actions have been identified as a result of close scrutiny and effective self-evaluation processes.
- The senior and middle leaders know and understand their roles and responsibilities very well. They work collegially to lead and promote school improvement, such as, staff using tailored child-centred target progress plans to address underachievement. The children's progress is carefully monitored and interventions applied appropriately and effectively.

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 who met with the inspectors conveyed a good understanding of how to stay safe; they reported that they feel safe in school, and online. They 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 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.

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 senior and middle leaders in relation to leadership and school development;
- a meeting with the principal and designated teacher in relation to safeguarding responsibilities;
- a review of the school development plan, action plans, evaluations and related documentation;
- a review of documentation relating to safeguarding;
- a discussion with a group of year 6 children and a performance by the senior school choir; and
- a walk of the school including its immediate outdoor surroundings.

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 management³:

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.

³ 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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