

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Mill Strand Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit, Portrush, County Antrim

Voluntary integrated, co-educational DE ref no (306-6544)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Mill Strand Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated on the Dhu Varren Road in Portrush. All of the children attending the school and the single class nursery unit come from Portrush, Portstewart, Coleraine and surrounding rural areas. The enrolment has increased steadily over the past four years. The school is oversubscribed and currently applies entrance criteria for admission. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has declined from one-third to one-fifth of the total enrolment while around 20% of the increased roll require additional help with aspects of their learning. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant number of staff changes, resulting in the recruitment of a vice-principal and six teachers: consequently, the school has embarked upon a period of restructuring with appointments to co-ordinator and senior leadership positions.

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 and designated teacher for child protection co-operated with the inspection team in relation to leadership and 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.

Mill Strand Primary School and Nursery Unit	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Enrolment	187	218	248	273
% School attendance	94.1	94.1	94.5	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	32.6	32.5	28.2	22.4
No. of children on SEN register	31	39	42	47
% of children on SEN register	16.6	17.9	16.9	19.73
No. of children with statements of educational need	7	6	10	10
No. of newcomer children	*	7	8	13

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.

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;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum and the nursery unit; 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
Nursery Unit	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

- In discussion with inspectors, a group of year 6 children spoke positively and confidently about their experiences in school, their work and aspects of learning and school-life. They described with enthusiasm how they were rewarded for attaining good independent and group-work and how they are taught various strategies that support their pastoral and academic needs. Furthermore, they talked about the pastoral support they receive in school and how they are able to benefit from using techniques, such as mindfulness, to help deal with any stressful situations both in school and at home. The children also described how they develop their leadership and inter-personal skills while engaging in various roles within the school, such as, playground mentors, Eco-club representatives or through participation in the extra-curricular opportunities provided for them.

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 ETI met with a group of year 6 children who reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and 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 school needs to:

- carry on the process of updating and ratifying the suite of pastoral care policies in line with the current DE Guidance; and
- continue to approach the Education Authority to ensure that the newly appointed chair of governors is provided with the appropriate safeguarding training.

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. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

Health and safety/Accommodation

1. Ensure that there is a vision panel on the door of the small group learning and sensory rooms.

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) of 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, vice-principal and a representative of the board of governors;
- meetings with designated teachers for safeguarding and a group of co-ordinators; and
- discussions with children from year 6.

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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