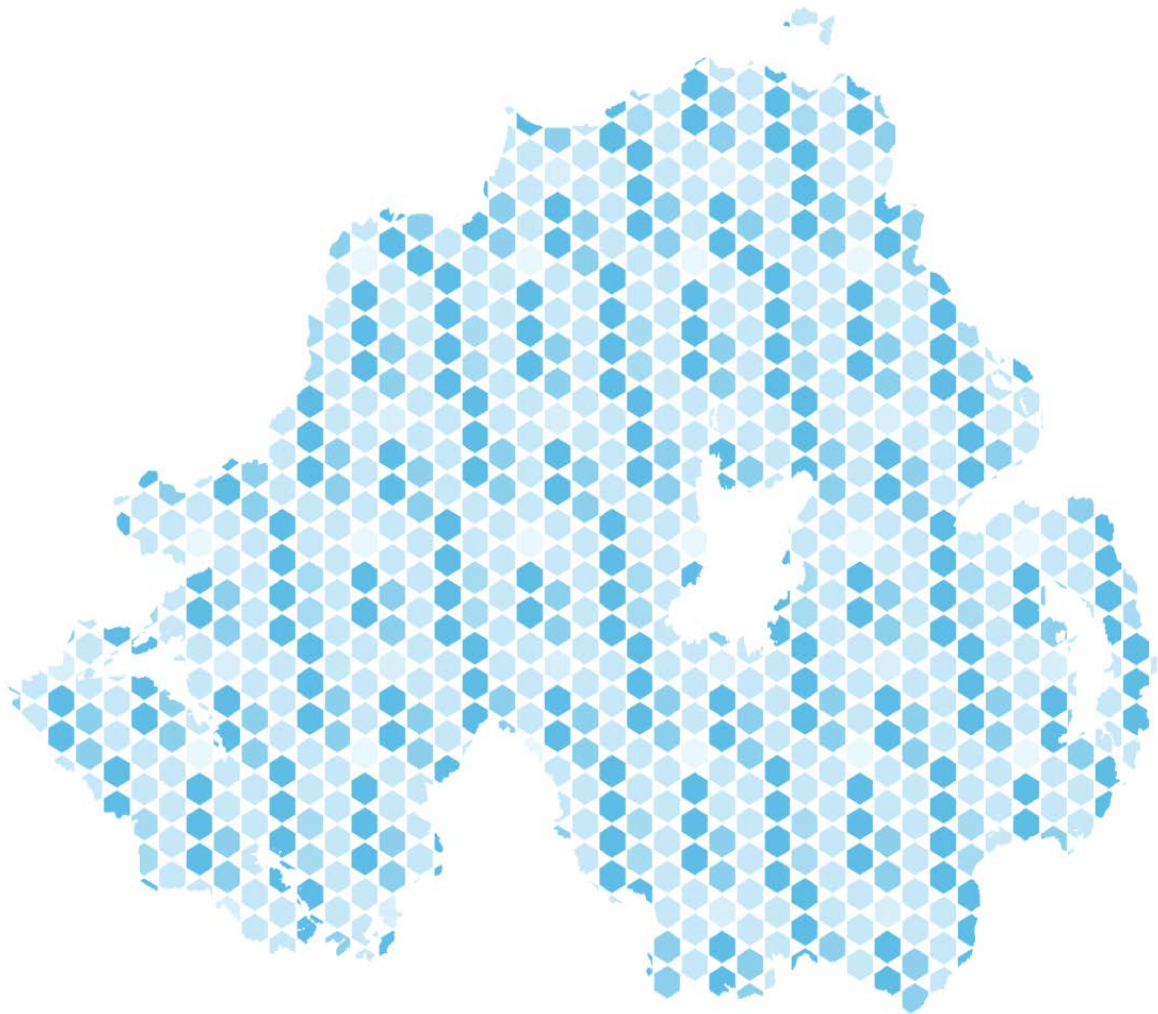


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Mount Saint Catherine's Primary
School, Armagh

Maintained, co-educational

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
November 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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CONTENTS

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

APPENDICES

- A. Health and safety/accommodation
- B. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Mount Saint Catherine's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated on Windmill Hill in the City of Armagh. Almost all of the children attending the school come from the City and the remainder from the surrounding rural areas. The enrolment has fluctuated over the past three years and the school operates at around 50% capacity. The proportion of newcomer children has increased from 44% to 55% in the past four years while the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has decreased. Over the same period, the proportion of children requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has decreased to just under one-quarter.

The school has a longstanding collaborative working relationship with a local controlled primary school and both schools have recently embarked on the shared education programme, 'Collaboration and Sharing in Education'.

The school is a member of the Sacred Heart Network of Schools. The distinctive child-centred ethos accords to the Sacred Heart values of faith, personal growth and intellectual value, building community, active social awareness and concern for others. The school has achieved the Welcoming Schools Award and has recognition as a Rights Respecting School. The historic school building is maintained to an excellent standard.

The children, the staff and governors with whom inspectors met take a great pride in their school, its rich history and the legacy of its founding religious order.

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, designated teacher and deputy designated teacher co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their 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.

Mount Saint Catherine's Primary School	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Enrolment	219	227	240	224
% School attendance	92.1	90.9	90	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	53.9	44.5	43.8	41.1
No. of children on SEN register	62	56	57	54
% of children on SEN register	28.3	24.7	23.8	24.1
No. of children with statements of educational need	6	*	6	*
No. of newcomer children	96	115	130	123

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

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

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

A small number of parents and one-quarter of the staff responded to the online, confidential questionnaire. The responses to the parental questionnaire were highly positive and the small number of written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. All of the responses to the staff questionnaire endorsed the school's inclusive, welcoming ethos and the effective working relationships at all levels therein.

The ETI has communicated to the principal and the chair of the board of governors the main findings from the questionnaires.

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

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

5. Outcomes for learners

- The school's internal qualitative and quantitative data shows that almost all of the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make progress in literacy and numeracy and achieve as expected.
- A group of children from year 7, who met with the inspectors, have a high level of interest in and enjoyment of reading. They read with fluency and understanding of the text and engaged meaningfully in discussions with inspectors about their favourite books and authors. A particular strength of the children's literacy is their knowledge and application of grammatical features and their ability to decode unfamiliar, complex vocabulary.

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 inspectors met with a group of year 6 children. The children are considerate, welcoming and respectful to one another and to visitors to the school. They spoke very enthusiastically about the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available to them and of their enjoyment of learning at school. The children also told inspectors about the many opportunities they have to develop their leadership skills through, for example, participation in the School Council, the Ethos Committee, the Eco Committee and as peer mediators.
- The provision for special educational needs is focused on the holistic development of the children in an inclusive and caring environment. The children who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early and intervention strategies identified. The staff have participated in relevant training, which has enabled them to develop multi-sensory provision plans. The staff maintain close contact with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies to augment the school's provision. The action plan for special educational contains appropriate targets.
- The children's work across the curriculum is valued and celebrated through high-quality displays around the school.

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 school development planning processes and associated actions for improvement flow from a culture and ethos of collegiality, inclusion and community.
- The children's voice is harnessed and acted upon to inform the school development plan and improve further the quality of the children's experiences in school.
- The school's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement are well developed. The senior leadership team and governors identify accurately and address collectively the areas for improvement. There are arrangements for extensive consultation and ongoing review of the school's progress informed through the highly effective use of the school's qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and evaluate the children's progress in their learning.

- The governors are kept fully informed about, and are actively involved in, the life and work of the school. They have an excellent strategic overview of the school and knowledge of the school's place within the community. They collaborate effectively with the principal and staff and they support and challenge the progress of the actions which are carried out in the implementation of the school development plan.

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, with whom the inspectors met, reported that they feel safe in the 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 being provided for the children. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and safety/Accommodation

1. The school has an appropriate risk assessment in place for access to the school grounds. Access arrangements would be enhanced further with controlled access at the front and rear gates.

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:

- a meeting with the principal on the school development planning processes;
- a meeting with the designated teacher and deputy designated teacher for safeguarding and child protection;
- a meeting with members of the senior leadership team;
- a meeting with a group of year 6 children; and
- a meeting with a group of year 7 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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