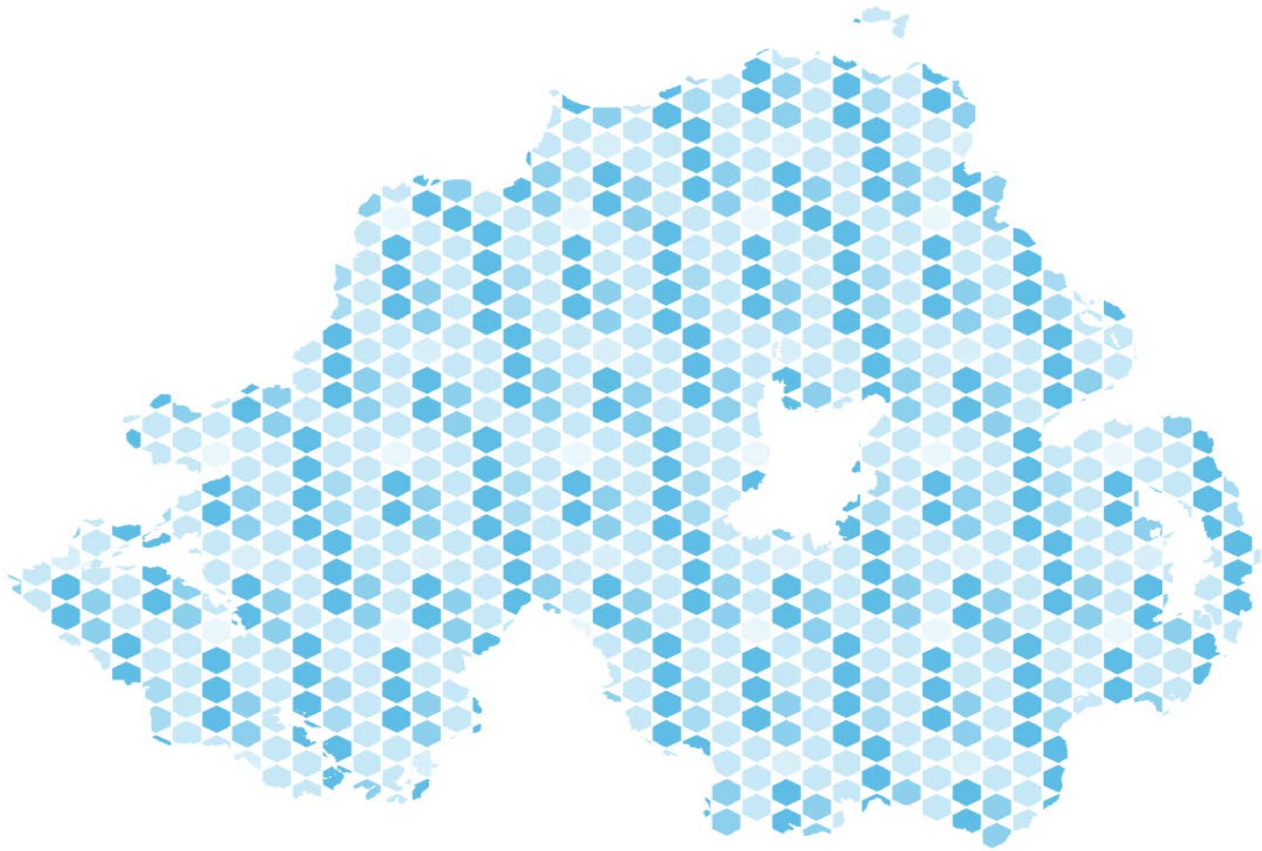


Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



St John's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Middletown, County Armagh

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 503-6622

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St John's Primary School and Nursery Unit is a maintained primary school situated on the outskirts of Middletown in County Armagh. The school has a long standing tradition for nurturing and developing the children's interests and capabilities in sport, drama and music. All of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area. The school is involved in a cross border shared education partnership with a national school in Monaghan.

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 inspection in relation to classroom observations. The senior leadership team co-operated with the inspection in relation to their leadership roles 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.

St John's Primary School	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Enrolment	196	199	201	197
% School attendance	96.8	97.2	97	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	94.9	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	18.4	19.6	16.9	16.2
No. of children on SEN register	32	31	27	29
% of children on SEN register	16.3	15.6	13.4	14.6
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	5	7	8
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

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

Seven percent of the parents and most of the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire were very positive and indicated very high levels of support for and satisfaction with the work of the school. The written comments acknowledged the welcoming ethos in the school, the excellent provision for the children, the dedicated, approachable staff and the very good working relationships that exist between the staff and the children. The teachers' written comments highlighted the very good working relationships in the school, the positive, holistic learning environment created for the children and their enjoyment of working in the school.

All of the year 7 children responded to the online questionnaire. In their responses, the children highlighted their enjoyment of learning, the caring, helpful staff and their appreciation of the extensive range of extra-curricular activities provided for them.

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

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 the:

- 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 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 year 7 children who met with inspectors talked positively about their learning experiences in literacy and numeracy. The children display a high level of interest in, and enjoyment of, reading. They are competent readers and read with accuracy, expression and understanding of the text. The children have a very good understanding of mathematical concepts, use a wide range of strategies to answer accurately mathematical problems and are confident in using their mathematical knowledge when attempting unfamiliar tasks.
- The school's internal performance data indicates that nearly all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, make expected or better progress in English and mathematics.
- Representatives from the school council, the eco - committee and 'digital leaders', who met with the inspectors, spoke with enthusiasm about their leadership roles and responsibilities. They reported that their views are listened to, valued and acted upon, thus enabling them to make meaningful contributions to the life and work of the school. The children participate and achieve well in a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting and musical events.

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 teacher's planning in literacy and numeracy shows that the children are provided with a range of meaningful opportunities to make connections in their learning, within and across the curriculum. The children have access to a wide range of resources to consolidate and extend their learning.
- The planning for the nursery unit has been revised appropriately to meet the requirements of the Curricular Guidance for Pre-school. It indicates that the children have opportunities to engage in a broad range of learning experiences in the indoor and outdoor areas. There are a range of policies in place to guide the work of the nursery staff; a range of newsletters and booklets are provided for the parents to help them to understand and support their children's learning.
- The school identifies promptly the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning and individual education plans provide specific, measurable targets for improvement. Tailored individual provision involving school staff and appropriate external agencies ensures the children make expected progress.
- The inspectors met with a group of year 6 children. The children are courteous, respectful to one another, welcoming to visitors and very proud of their school. They enjoy learning, engaging in problem solving activities and working with their peers particularly when the tasks are set in real-life contexts.
- The children's work across the curriculum is valued and celebrated; evident through the numerous high quality displays in the classrooms and corridors 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 leadership and management of the school is highly effective, there is a shared vision for school improvement and clear strategic direction for future developments in the school and nursery unit.
- There is an embedded culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement in the school. The holistic development of the children and a commitment to their well-being are central to the school improvement process. The school development plan is well-informed by consultation with parents, children, staff and governors and the effective analysis of the school's qualitative and quantitative data. The associated action plans focus clearly on improving further the learning experiences provided for the children and the outcomes they attain.

- The governors have a good blend of complementary skills and experience. They are informed about the life and work of the school and have a good knowledge of the school's place within the community. The governors understand well the challenges and opportunities facing the school and are very supportive of the children and staff.

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 report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware 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 representatives 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, including in the role of the representative;
- a meeting with representatives of the board of governors;
- a meeting with the numeracy co-ordinator, literacy co-ordinator and special educational needs co-ordinator; and
- meetings with groups of year 6 and 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:

<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>

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