

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St John's Primary School, Coalisland, County Tyrone

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-2729)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
1. Context	1
2. Children's, parents' and staff questionnaire responses	1
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	4
8. Safeguarding	5
9. Overall effectiveness	5

APPENDICES

- A. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- B. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St John's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in Kingsisland in the greater area of Coalisland, County Tyrone. Nearly all of the children attending the school come from the local and wider surrounding areas. Over the past four years, the enrolment has increased significantly and the school now operates at capacity for admissions. The principal was in post at the time of the last inspection and since then five new teachers have been appointed.

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 school leadership team co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their safeguarding and curricular areas of 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	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Enrolment	111	134	167	186
% School attendance	96.7	96.4	97	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	27	31	30	26
No. of children on SEN register	28	27	36	36
% of children on SEN register	25	20	22	19
No. of children with statements of educational need	6	*	6	6
No. of newcomer children	0	0	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

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

Thirty-eight percent of the parents and all of the staff responded to the online, confidential questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire were wholly positive; in the written comments, the parents praised the school leadership and the staff for the welcoming family ethos. They highlighted the value of the school within the local community. The parents also expressed their satisfaction with the approachable staff and the progress made by their children. The staff affirmed the importance of the care and welfare of the children and the positive working relationships with the children. In addition, the teaching staff referred to the effective teamwork and opportunities for staff development in the school.

All of the year 7 children responded to the online questionnaire. The children were highly positive about all aspects of learning and extra-curricular experiences provided by the school. In their responses, the children highlighted their enthusiasm for a range of sports, science competitions and a religious retreat with other schools. They expressed the importance of playing fairly and engaging in partnership with other schools in the parish for choir practice in preparation for the sacrament of confirmation.

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

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

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully 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
- 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 children, who met with the inspectors, were confident and keen to discuss aspects of their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. The children took pride in showing samples of their work, including an animated film production on the Titanic and mathematics games they had designed collaboratively in groups.
- All of the year 7 children have leadership roles as members of several school committees and the Eco- and School- councils. As a result, they are enabled to put forward their views confidently, take responsibility for organising resources, and support the younger children pastorally and with their learning.
- A group of year 7 children reflected maturely on how they apply their learning in mathematics across the curriculum and in real-life situations. They explained a wide range of strategies they use when collaborating in groups to carry out investigative problem-solving activities including their enjoyment of coding using ICT.
- A group of year 7 children read with fluency and very good expression from their class novel and had a good understanding of the historical context of the story. The children expressed their enjoyment of reading and drama.
- There is a whole-school focus on developing the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities and, as a result, the children are independent and able to make decisions and choices about their own learning, play and games.

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 provision of a well-resourced, attractive outdoor learning environment is a key feature of the school; during the inspection the children were observed in energetic activity on arrival to school, during break and at lunchtime. There is a 3-G pitch located in the school grounds and the children report their commitment to improving their football skills. A wide range of activities is available to the children to encourage an interest in planting and growing, and imaginative play experiences, open to all classes, in the role play areas. The displays of the children's work in the corridors celebrates their creativity and breadth of learning across the curriculum.
- The staff report that they plan as a whole-school team in order to ensure progression in skills and a variety of experiences. Particular focus is placed on outdoor learning to promote a broad range of sensory learning experiences for all classes that are designed to enable the children's readiness to learn throughout the school day. The planning is connected across the curriculum and differentiated for specific individuals and groups of children.
- The staff provided examples of evaluations of their planning, meetings and feedback from the children's work which support a culture of self-reflection and improvement.
- The school identifies systematically the children with additional literacy and numeracy needs and provides a range of in class support and one-to-one specific interventions to address their individual needs. The children's progress is monitored carefully and the children are encouraged to become involved in setting their own targets and to take responsibility for aspects of their learning as set out in the individual education plans. The role of the parent is clearly identified in the education plans. Evidence was provided of cohorts of children being able to move off the special needs register after receiving additional support through booster programmes.
- The children's books, digital folders and the displays in the corridors and the classrooms provide examples of evidence of the progression, breadth and balance of the curriculum and connected learning across all key stages. The samples of work provided indicate that the children present their work neatly and are marked carefully by staff to aid improvement in learning; and, there is evidence of the children's use of peer- and self-assessment strategies.

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 has a clear, child-centred vision for the strategic direction of the school. This vision is understood, shared and supported by the school community, as evidenced in the parental and staff questionnaires. The school development plan sets out the importance of the school in the community and addresses the key priorities for improvement based on consultation with all stakeholders. It is a flexible working document wherein progress to meet the targets for improvement is informed by the use and analysis of a range of data, professional judgement and feedback from children, staff and parents.
- The middle management team has a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of their action plans using a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence to track the children's progress. They collaborate as a team to share strategic information and to connect priorities for improvement. There is a culture of personal responsibility for professional development through self-initiated research and a shared whole-school responsibility for capacity building led and modelled by the senior school leadership. The middle leaders are developing their areas of responsibility beyond the school and have roles as 'curricular ambassadors' contributing to the development of a digital assessment tool.
- The board of governors monitor and evaluate the outcomes for the children including attendance and indicate that there is a focus on using evidence to ensure that each child is achieving in line with their expected level of ability. There is a range of skills within the governing body and best use is made of these through a variety of committees.
- Links with parents and the local community are valued and there are regular opportunities for parental consultations about the progress 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. A group of year 6 and year 7 children explained the important role that the Student Council plays in sharing key safeguarding messages throughout the school. The children report that they feel safe 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.

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.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with the principal;
- a meeting with the designated teacher;
- a meeting with the chair of the board of governors;
- meetings with the curricular co-ordinators for numeracy, literacy and information communication and technology (ICT), World Around Us and special educational needs;
- a discussion with year 6 and 7 children regarding safeguarding and child protection matters; and
- visits to all classrooms.

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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