

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



St John's Primary School, Gilford, County Armagh

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 503-1669

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St John's Primary School is situated on Castle Hill in Gilford. The enrolment has increased over the past four years and currently stands at 130 children. Almost all of the children come from the village and its surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, 20% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 14% of the children were identified as requiring help with aspects of their learning: both figures representing a notable decrease over the last four years. The children benefit from a well-established shared education partnership with a controlled primary school, enabling them to improve their mutual understanding and develop friendships which they value. The school has been awarded an Eco-School Green Flag.

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. The senior leadership 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.

St John's Primary School	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Enrolment	121	123	128	130
% School attendance	96.5	95.8	N/A	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	94.9	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	35.5	30.9	27.3	20
No. of children on SEN register	37	31	25	18
% of children on SEN register	30.6	25.2	19.5	13.8
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	4	2
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

Around 10% percent of parents and all of the teaching and support staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaires. All of the responses to the parental questionnaire affirmed well the life and work of the school. A small number of written parental comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with the care and support for the children, the approachability of the staff and the quality of communication with parents. The responses to the staff questionnaires were wholly positive. The staff reported high levels of contentment emphasising very good working relationships, which exist within a supportive and welcoming ethos.

All of the year 7 children responded to the confidential, online questionnaire. Their responses were wholly positive. The children identified a good range of exciting learning opportunities, including shared education provision, which they enjoy. They recognise how the school provides them with appropriate opportunities to have their voices heard through, for example, the school council and its outworking.

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:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on literacy;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on 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

- An inspector met with a group of year 7 children who read fluently, confidently and with appropriately high levels of interest. They were attentive, contributed well to the group discussion and had very good listening skills. The children spoke enthusiastically about their enjoyment of reading and how they have developed their learning through wider independent reading through books written by their favourite authors. They gave examples of good strategies which improve their comprehension skills.
- The year 6 children who met with an inspector expressed great interest and enjoyment in learning. They are developing well as individuals with their own interests and opinions; they ask thoughtful questions and are keen to converse. The children speak confidently in the presence of their peers and use a very good range of vocabulary; they are polite and listen well and respond appropriately to what others have to say.

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 groups of children from year 6 and 7, who met with an inspector, spoke positively about the range of learning experiences available to them including Irish dancing, choir, Gaelic tournaments and swimming galas. They were particularly enthusiastic about participating in the after schools clubs.
- The children have the opportunity to play a musical instrument and sing in public venues; they consider music as being important to their happiness and well-being. They enjoy having guest speakers in the school, and value the school trips related to the topic work. The children report that they are given the opportunity to express their views and they are listened to, describing their school as 'a listening 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 plan is informed well by good consultation with all stakeholders, along with the school's own internal performance data and appropriate targets are set. There is an appropriate three-year overview of the school's priorities, which maps a clearly defined improvement programme. The evaluative sections of the plan are expressed too broadly and lack incisive summation of the monitoring and evaluation of the actions to bring about improvement.
- The representative of the board of governors is very supportive of the life and work of the school and knows well the school's strengths, challenges and areas for development. He affirmed good communication and working relationships with the staff and reported the community holds the school in good regard.

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. An inspector met with groups of year 6 and year 7 children who reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. In addition, they were well informed about how to stay safe online. 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;
- meeting with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete an 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 principal, including in the role of a member of the school's Safeguarding team;
- a meeting with the chair of the board of governors in relation to safeguarding responsibilities;
- a review of documentation pertaining to safeguarding;
- a review of documentation pertaining to planning, including the school development plan and the development plans for literacy and numeracy;
- a discussion with a group of year 6 children;
- a discussion with a group of year 7 children;
- a walk of the school, including its immediate outdoor surroundings;
- access to the responses to the school's own survey of staff, parents and children; and
- access to the responses from the staff, parents and children's to ETI's confidential, online questionnaires.

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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