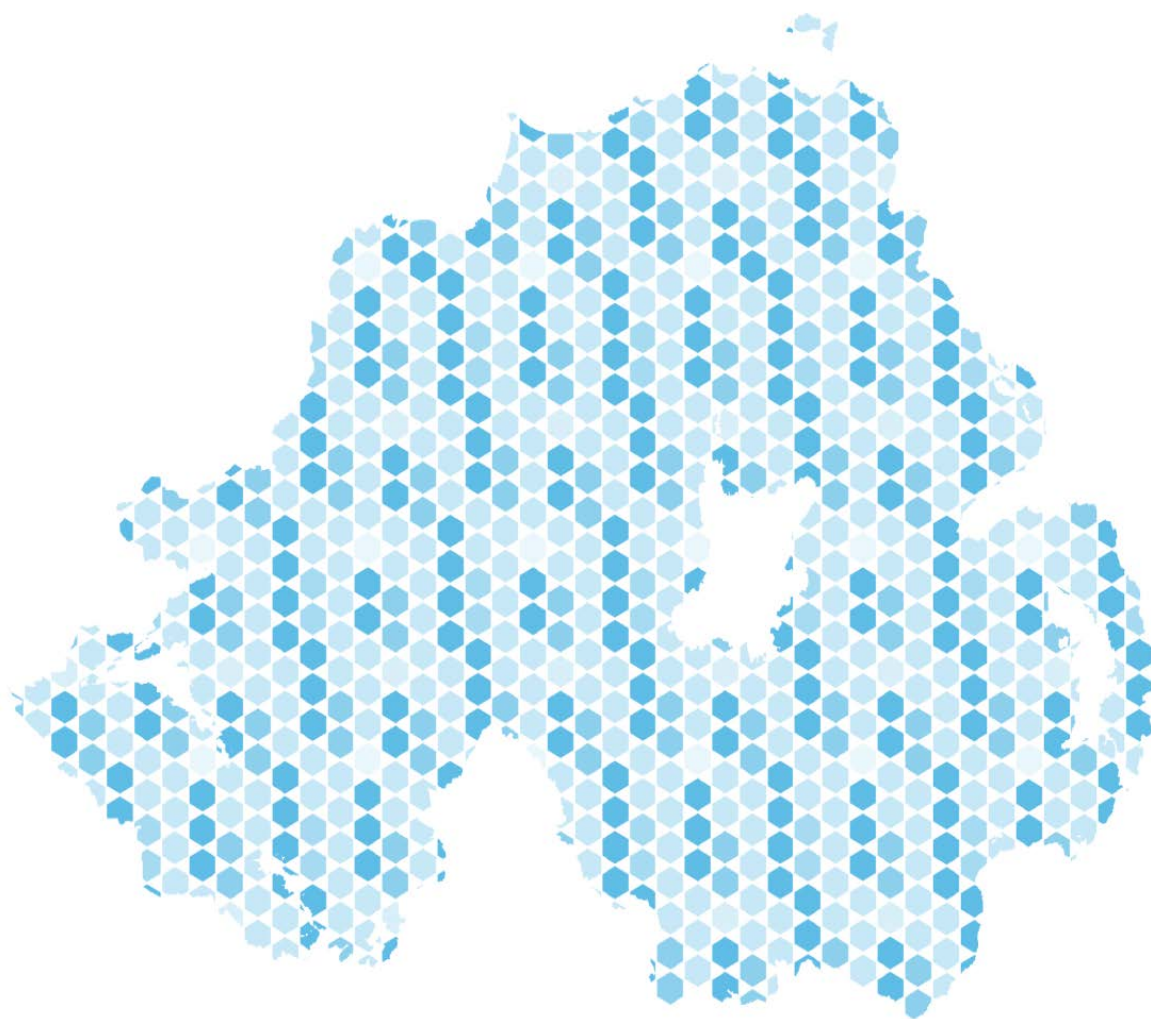


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Kieran's Primary School,
Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
April 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St Kieran's Primary School is a maintained, co-educational primary school situated in the Poleglass area on the outskirts of West Belfast. It is an area of high economic and social deprivation. Almost all of the children come from the local area. Over the past four years, the enrolment has begun to increase again and is currently 403. In the same period, the percentage of children entitled to free school meals has remained broadly consistent and the number of children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning has fluctuated slightly. The school has a learning support centre and a nurture class.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council 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 all of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. 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 limited evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

St Kieran's Primary School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Enrolment	376	391	393	403
% School attendance	92.2	92.4	92.6	93.3
% NI Primary school average	95.6	95.4	95.5	N/A
% FSME Percentage ¹	83	84	80	83
No. of children on SEN register	139	158	171	140
% of children on SEN register	36.9	40.4	43.5	34.7
No. of children with statements of educational need	15	18	20	25

2. Views of parents and staff

Twenty one percent of parents responded to the questionnaires. Most of the responses to the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the approachable and dedicated principal and the nurturing, hard-working staff, who place a high priority on meeting well the children's individual needs and interests. A majority of the support staff responded to the questionnaire and their responses were mostly affirmative; the written comments emphasised the collaborative teamwork across the school and the staff's continuous focus on the children. The ETI have no evidence of the views of the teaching staff.

The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the responses to the questionnaires and the discussions with the children.

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 including across the curriculum and how the school is addressing low attainment and underachievement where applicable;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum; and
- quality of leadership and management.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they are reported below.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure of 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

No performance level is available for the learning support unit.

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

The ETI was able to evaluate partially the outcomes attained by and the wider skills and dispositions of the children.

- The most able readers from year seven are enthusiastic about reading for pleasure and read with fluency and expression. They talk confidently about their favourite authors and are developing an understanding of the writer's choice of language. By year 7, the children have appropriate knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts and are successful in applying associated skills. They use competently a range of strategies when problem solving and explain their thinking using the correct mathematical language.
- In all key stages, the children are polite and welcoming to visitors, respectful to one another and adults and have a strong sense of belonging. They contribute positively to the life and work of the school through their active participation in the school council and other positive peer initiatives.

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 ETI was able to evaluate aspects of the care and welfare.

- The principal and staff work tirelessly to provide an inclusive and enabling learning environment; the school implements a complementary range of strategies and initiatives, including specialised counselling and well-focused nurture sessions, to develop the children's confidence, well-being and readiness to learn.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences; and
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning.

7. Leadership and management

The ETI was able to evaluate aspects of leadership and management.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors have a good range of relevant skills and carry out their roles conscientiously. They monitor the progress of the school development plan and provide appropriate support and challenge to the senior leadership team.
- The school development plan (SDP) identifies a range of whole-school priorities; the associated action plans do not always contain sufficient detail about the targets to effect and measure improvement in the children's outcomes. The action plans need to be more specific so that the staff can monitor and evaluate more robustly the impact on the quality of the learning and teaching and the children's outcomes.
- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. However, the following areas need to be addressed:
 - the designated governor for child protection needs updated training to carry out his role; and
 - the new safeguarding policy should be ratified by the board of governors.

In discussion with the inspectors, a group of children from year 6 reported that they feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their 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 ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact and effectiveness of:

- the strategic leadership;
- the middle leadership; and
- action to promote and sustain improvement.

CONCLUSION

8. 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 scrutinised a range of documentation and limited samples of the children's work in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- meetings with the principal on the pre-inspection visit and during the inspection;
- a meeting with the designated teacher;
- a meeting with a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

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

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.
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.

² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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