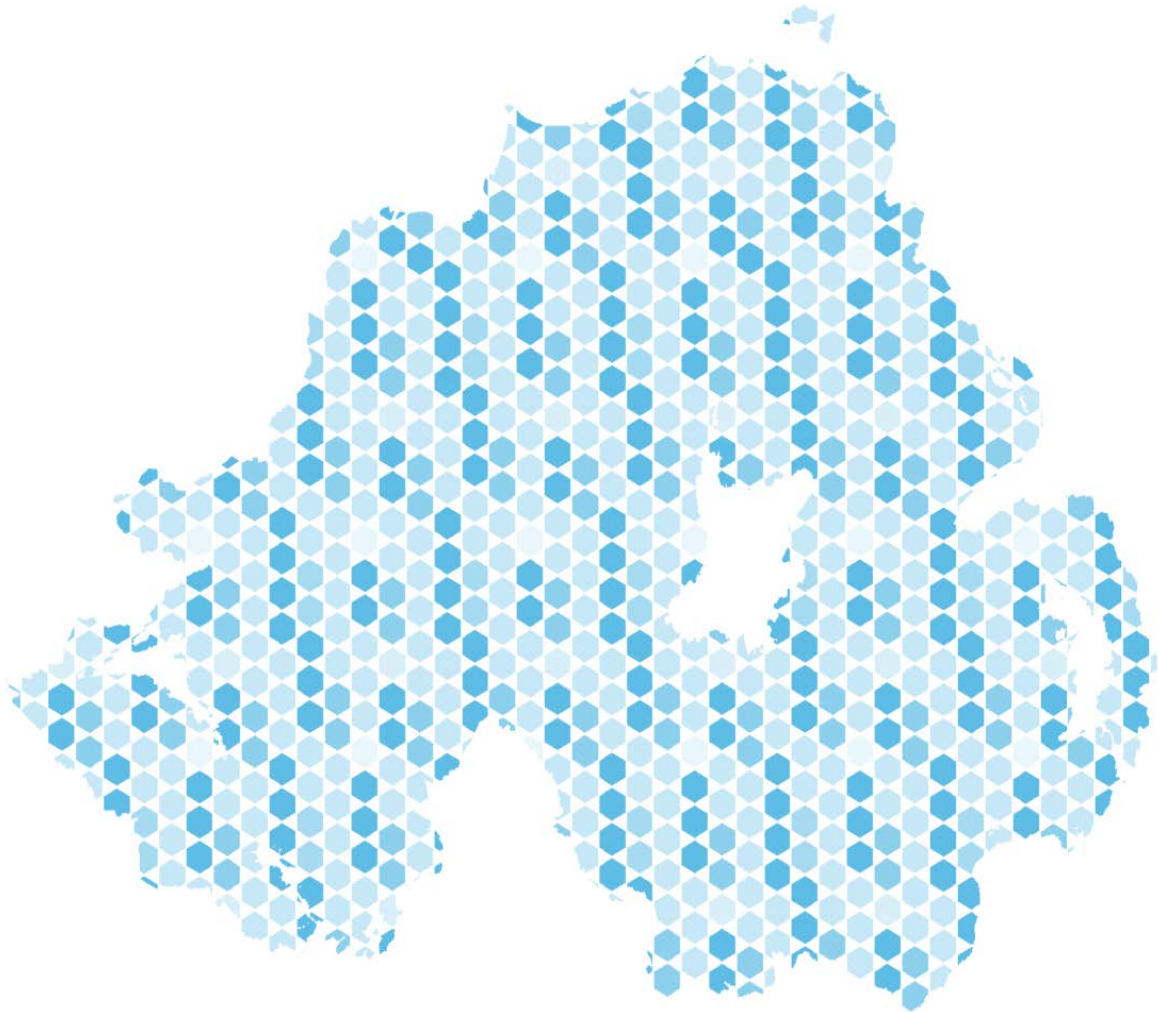


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,  
Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

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



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 Mary's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated close to the centre of the city of Belfast. Almost all of the children travel to the school from other parts of the city and further afield with only a small number attending from the immediate area. The school takes pride in the children's diverse range of faiths and traditions. Just over one-half of the school population comprises newcomer children who are mostly from the Roma community with the remainder of the children coming from the Irish Traveller community. The school operates at full capacity and the enrolment has remained steady over the past four years. While the enrolment is approximately 130, over the course of each year, up to 175 children may access the school's provision at any time. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has remained high over the past four years; the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has also remained around one-quarter to one-fifth.

The school has attained recently a number of awards for the: use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning and teaching; promotion of a healthy lifestyle; focus on enhancing the children's ecological awareness; and, its recognition of the rights of the children. The school also works in collaboration with a number of local primary and post-primary schools across all sectors to enrich and extend the children's learning experiences.

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 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 Mary's Primary School, Belfast	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrolment	132	134	132	130
% School attendance	82.5	85.8	90.6	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	69.7	91.8	77.3	87
No. of children on SEN register	28	31	34	25
% of children on SEN register	21.2	23.1	25.8	19
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomer children	66	65	65	70

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

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

## 2. Views of parents and staff

While there were no responses to the parental and staff confidential, online questionnaires, a small group of parents took the opportunity to meet with the ETI. They commented very positively on: the welcoming, inclusive ethos; the quality of the learning and pastoral support given to their children; and, their high levels of confidence in all aspects of the life and work of the school. The ETI has communicated to the principal a summary of the comments from the discussion with parents.

## 3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Unable to assure of the quality of education
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	No performance level available
<b>Quality of provision</b>	No performance level available
<b>Leadership and management</b>	No performance level available

### KEY FINDINGS

## 5. Outcomes for learners

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the learning outcomes for the children;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions.

## 6. Quality of provision

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;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- care and welfare.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The ETI was unable to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of:

- the strategic leadership;
- the middle leadership; and
- 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. In discussion with the inspectors, a group of children from year 7 reported that they feel safe, happy and cared for in school; they know what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. The children spoke positively and enthusiastically about: the opportunities they have to take on meaningful roles of responsibility and to express their ideas and views in the school; their understanding of ways to keep safe online; and, the various forms of learning and pastoral support available to them.

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 teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

## 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 parents, teaching and support staff to complete a 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;
- meetings with a small number of parents;
- a meeting with a group of year 7 children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential, online 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 management<sup>2</sup>:

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 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.

<sup>2</sup> And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

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