

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Mary's Primary School,
Jerrettspass, County Down

Maintained, co-educational

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St Mary's Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in a rural locality north of Newry. All of the children attending the school come from the local area. The school is operating currently at full capacity. The school has been accredited as a Global Learning School, and is pursuing its second Eco-School green flag. The teaching principal has been in post for 17 months.

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	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrolment	142	137	152	145
% School attendance	97.4	97.7	98	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	10.6	15.3	11.2	15.2
No. of children on SEN register	20	28	27	24
% of children on SEN register	14.1	20.4	17.8	16.5
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Views of parents, staff and children

Fifty-six percent of parents and 80% of the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaires. All of the parents agreed that the school is well led and managed at all levels and they are very satisfied with their children's experiences at the school. All of the responses to the staff questionnaire also agreed that the school is well led and managed at all levels and there is an inclusive, welcoming and pastoral ethos for all members of the school community. Twenty-one year 7 children completed a confidential, online questionnaire and all agreed that they enjoy learning at the school, and, if they need help with their work, the teachers and other staff help them. The ETI has communicated to the principal and the chair of the board of governors the main findings, and the small number of issues arising from the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on literacy including across the curriculum;

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

- quality of provision with a particular focus on literacy; and
- quality of leadership and management.

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

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The school's internal performance data indicates that most of the children, including those who require additional support in their learning, achieve as expected in English.
- A group of year 7 children, who met with the inspectors, conveyed an enjoyment of reading and talked confidently about their favourite books and authors. They have a good understanding of genres and give well-considered reasons for their reading preferences. The children read with fluency and expression and they display good comprehension skills.

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

- In discussion with the inspectors, a group of year 6 children spoke enthusiastically about the interesting topics they study and their wider learning experiences.
- There are opportunities for children to be involved in meaningful decision making; in taking responsibility and developing leadership skills, through for example, head and deputy head roles, School Council and Eco-Council membership.

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

- In the last 17 months, there has been a reorganisation of leadership roles and responsibilities; a focus on developing middle leadership and initiation of the trusted colleague network, which is underpinned by a framework agreed by staff. The principal has established a collegial approach to shared responsibility for school improvement. The school development plan, in its second year, has been informed appropriately by consultation with children, parents, staff and governors and the use of internal assessment data.
- The school has strengthened the communication with parents through the introduction of a school application, for disseminating general school information; and through embedding the use of another application in every class, for sharing information on a regular basis with parents about their children's learning.
- During the inspection, the ETI met with a representative of the board of governors who reported that the governors bring an appropriate range of skills and experience to their role. They participated in the review and creation of the new school development plan; they provide support and challenge to promote school improvement and to manage effectively the school's resources.

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 year 6 children who met with the inspectors, reported that they feel safe in school and they know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. The children have a very good knowledge of farm safety, anti-bullying strategies and how to stay safe online. However, owing to 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.

APPENDIX A

Health and safety/Accommodation

1. The low level perimeter fence is a health and safety risk and a minor works application has been submitted to the Education Authority.

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 representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the P7 children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a 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;
- a meeting with a representative of the board of governors;
- a meeting with the designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding;
- a meeting with the information and communication technology (ICT) co-ordinator for ICT as a communication tool to parents;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the year 7 children, 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 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 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.

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

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