

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Mary's Primary School, Pomeroy, County Tyrone

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-6118)

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



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 the village of Pomeroy. All of the children attending the school come from the surrounding rural area and the school operates almost at capacity. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has decreased steadily in the past four years, while the proportion requiring additional help with aspects of their learning has increased. The principal took up post in September 2017. The school is involved in a shared education partnership with the neighbouring controlled primary school.

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 almost 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 evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

St Mary's Primary School	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Enrolment	170	181	184	175
% School attendance	95.7	95.9	96.1	96
% NI Primary school average	95.5	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	37.6	33.1	29.9	25
No. of children on SEN register	38	42	52	58
% of children on SEN register	22.4	23.2	28.3	32.5
No. of children with statements of educational need	8	8	8	10
No. of newcomer children	6	17	18	17

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

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

Ten percent of the parents and almost all of the staff responded to the online, confidential questionnaire. The responses to the parental questionnaire were largely positive and the written comments affirmed the work of the staff in supporting the children's well-being. The responses to the staff questionnaire were wholly positive. In the written comments, the staff highlighted: the inclusive and welcoming learning environment; the support provided by the community; the opportunities for professional development; and, the positive working relationships within the school.

All of the children responded to the online questionnaire. In their responses, the children highlighted their enthusiasm for the new third-generation football pitch, the range of after-school activities and the links with other schools, and their appreciation of the support and care they receive from the staff.

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

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 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

- A group of year 7 children read with confidence and interest from a variety of books. They explained a range of strategies they use, for example, when they come across unfamiliar words. The children report that they like reading, discussed their reading preferences including favourite authors and expressed their enjoyment of accessing books in the new school library.
- A group of year 7 children discussed a range of mathematical strategies they use and explained how they apply their learning in mathematics across the curriculum. They are aware of the relevance of mathematics in real-life situations including a number of careers. The children report that they enjoy practical, investigative and problem-solving activities.

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

- There is a detailed overview of the provision for children who require additional support with their learning, which is underpinned by a thorough analysis of individual learning needs. The range of interventions in place for children who require additional literacy support, such as, reading and one-to-one support is informed by the school's rigorous analysis of data and the children's progress is monitored regularly. The school's evidence indicates that almost all of the children improve their reading skills following intervention.

- The year 6 children talked positively about their learning across the curriculum including the shared learning experiences with their peers within the shared education partnership and their enjoyment of taking on different roles and responsibilities when working in groups. They explained how they develop skills and are involved in aspects of decision-making through membership of the Eco- and School councils, and as 'anti-bullying ambassadors.'
- The provision has been enhanced through the work of 'The Friends of St Mary's' which has led to a new literacy support centre and a refurbished information and communication technology (ICT) suite. These new resources aim to support the development of the children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

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

- An effective partnership has developed with the local community which has led to improvements in the school's environment and increased resources, resulting in richer learning experiences, as highlighted in the children's and parental questionnaires.
- The senior leadership team has refined aspects of the school development plan (SDP) in order to build the capacity of staff which is supported by a programme of professional development. The actions plans within the SDP identify appropriate whole-school priorities which are informed by the thorough analysis of the school's data. There is a consistent approach to action planning across the school which includes regular monitoring of the school's progress in meeting the targets. However, self-evaluation does not focus sufficiently on the impact of the actions on the children's learning experiences and outcomes.
- The governors value the purposeful links between the school and the community which enhance the children's learning experiences. They expressed their pride in and support for the work of the school and report that their role in school improvement is developing through linking with co-ordinators in relation to aspects of the school's provision.

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. 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 school needs to:

- update the anti-bullying and educational visits policies.

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 representative(s) 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.

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 representatives of the board of governors;
- a meeting with the special educational needs co-ordinator;
- a meeting with a support teacher; and
- meetings with groups of year 6 and 7 children.

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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