

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Victoria Park Primary School,
Belfast

Controlled, 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

Victoria Park Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in the Sydenham area of East Belfast. The school opened ten years ago as a result of the amalgamation of four schools, and moved to a new building in December 2014. Most of the children attending the school come from the surrounding area, with a small number travelling from a much wider catchment area. The enrolment has risen steadily over the last four years and the school operates almost at capacity. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals has increased steadily from 25% in 2008 to the current 56%. There has been a significant change in the teaching staff, with the majority of the current teaching staff having taken up their posts since the last inspection.

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, with the exception of the principal, 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.

Victoria Park Primary School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrolment	335	390	395	401
% School attendance	93.0	93.3	93.6	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	95.5	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	57	57.2	53.2	56
No. of children on SEN register	86	119	123	122
% of children on SEN register	25.7	30.5	31.1	30
No. of children with statements of educational need	10	13	11	9
No. of newcomer children	24	27	18	31

Source: data as held by the school.

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

As a result of the action short of strike, the school did not distribute the confidential, online questionnaire information to parents. There were no returns for the questionnaires distributed to the staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of parents and staff.

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.

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

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

- A group of year 7 children who met with the inspectors had a very good level of understanding of the key concepts across all areas of the mathematics curriculum. They carried out the mathematical calculations accurately and worked flexibly in their mathematical reasoning.
- A group of year 7 children read from a variety of books with fluency and expression. They talked confidently about their favourite authors and their access to a wide range of genre from the school library and the after- school literacy club. They spoke enthusiastically about the good opportunities they have to read to younger children in the school.

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 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 current school development plan is comprehensive and is informed by appropriate consultation with key stakeholders. The associated action plans need to focus more on improving further the learning experiences for, and outcomes attained by, the children.

- During the inspection, the ETI met with representatives from the governors. They reported that the governors have a good range of complementary skills, are very well informed about the life and work of the school, and carry out their support and challenge roles.

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 (DE). The group of year 6 children, with whom inspectors met, report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. 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. It will be important that the school reviews the anti-bullying policy to ensure it reflects DE requirements.
- The school employs a parent worker who provides a wide range of support for families and has been instrumental in organising whole-school health and well-being events such as 'Sun Safety' and 'Digital Detox' programmes.

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;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the 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 representatives from the board of governors; and
- meetings with year 6 and year 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

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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