

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Blackmountain Primary School and  
Nursery Unit, Belfast

Controlled, co-educational

Report of a Sustaining Improvement  
Inspection (Involving Action Short of  
Strike) in May 2017

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The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Blackmountain Primary School and Nursery Unit, Belfast (101-6059)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in June 2014 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Blackmountain Primary School and Nursery School as good<sup>1</sup>. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 11 May 2017.

Since the time of the last inspection, the enrolment has increased steadily from 127 to 145 children. Approximately one third of the children are identified as having special educational needs, and the percentage of children with free school meals entitlement has increased since the last inspection from 75% to 86%.

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 most 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.

### **Focus of the inspection**

Owing to the school's participation in industrial action:

- the inspection was unable to focus on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning; and
- one line of inquiry was selected from the development plan priorities, namely to develop further the nurture provision in the school.

The ETI was unable to evaluate the progress being made in addressing an area for improvement from the original inspection in 2014, namely, for the short-term planning to be matched more closely to the range of ability in the classes.

### **Key findings**

- The nurture classroom provides excellent learning experiences for the children, with an appropriate focus on developing the children's ability to discuss their feelings and make good choices. The children participate positively in well-planned activities which develop their literacy and numeracy skills, and wider skills, such as, resilience and perseverance. There is an ethos of care and respect. The children contribute meaningfully to the setting of personal, short-term targets which help develop their self-esteem and confidence.

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<sup>1</sup> A school previously evaluated as good has been reported as the school demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The children reported that they feel safe in school. They know what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety or well-being. Owing to the ongoing action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

## **Conclusion**

Owing to the impact of action short of strike being taken by most of the 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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