

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Castleroe Primary School,
Coleraine, County Londonderry

Controlled, co-educational

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in April 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Castleroe Primary School, Coleraine (301-2288)

Introduction

The previous inspection in October 2010 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Castleroe Primary School as outstanding¹. In May 2014, the school took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII). In the interim, a new principal was appointed in September 2017, while the key senior and middle management co-ordinators have remained the same. A second SII was conducted on 12 and 13 April 2018.

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.

Focus of the inspection

The purpose of the SII was to evaluate the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were:

- to assess improvements made within the school's reading programme; and
- to evaluate the impact of initiatives which are aimed at involving the children and their parents more fully in the life and work of the school.

Key findings

- Appropriate and systematic self-evaluation processes are in place, including effective use of internal data, to monitor closely the school's reading programme and identify areas for improvement, such as, under-achievement and reading for pleasure. Consequently, the group of key stage (KS) 2 children who spoke with inspectors about their literacy experiences talked positively about their enjoyment of reading and were able to read with good levels of fluency, appropriate intonation and have sound understanding of what they are reading. The school's internal data indicates that, by the end of KS2 over each of the last three years, most children achieve at the expected level in literacy and these outcomes are similar outcomes to previous inspection findings.

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as outstanding has been reported as the school demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.

- In response to a survey of parents which took place in September 2017, the school has initiated targeted improvements, such as, broadening the after-school provision and introducing new ways to engage with parents. Another group of children who spoke with inspectors reported positively about the newly formed school council; they have a say in what is taking place in school and feel that staff listen to them. The children were positive about other opportunities they have to: improve their leadership skills; and, take on responsibilities and participate in school and community life, such as, the 'Buddy' system for the playground and being able to participate in community based events. The school has improved its engagement with parents through providing a new app (software application for mobile devices), which 94% of its parents have downloaded, and by organising a range of community based events, which are attended by a majority of their families; they have also introduced a well-produced, appealing and informative newsletter.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the lines of inquiry; and
- the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

Safeguarding

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the children stated they are happy in school and valued the positive working relationships they have with the staff. They reported that they feel safe and 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 arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of 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 education provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and Safety

There are clear safety inadequacies at the front of the school where the fencing adjacent to the main playground is too low and where there are risks for the safe dropping-off and picking-up of children due to the cramped parking bay, which adjoins a main road.

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