

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Fivemiletown Primary School, County Tyrone

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No (501-6088)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in April 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Fivemiletown Primary School, County Tyrone (501-6088)

Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Fivemiletown Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. Since that inspection, the school has continued to engage in a shared education partnership with a local maintained primary school and a controlled nursery school. Recently the school was successful in obtaining a national grant to create a sensory garden and play area within the school grounds. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 8 April 2019.

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 principal co-operated with the inspection in relation to safeguarding responsibilities. 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 planning; and
- a line of inquiry was not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- A group of year 6 children met with the inspector and spoke enthusiastically about their learning experiences, including: opportunities to participate and compete in different sports; write imaginative stories to read to the younger children; and perform playing woodwind and brass instruments.
- The children report that they are enjoying developing their leadership capabilities through roles of responsibility in the 'Playground Pals' scheme and representation on the School and Eco-Councils. The children are very proud of their ecological activities and were awarded recently a second Eco-School Green Flag. They are currently focussed on creating a new sensory garden and play area. As representatives of the School Council, the children have had a role in decision making and can explain the various improvements made to the school through their involvement.
- The children are enjoying their shared education activities, which have included playing mathematical games and fundraising for a local air ambulance charity.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the line 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 from the Department of Education. The children say that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. They are knowledgeable about how to stay safe in a wide range of contexts including on the farm, near water and online.

However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

Conclusion

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. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

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