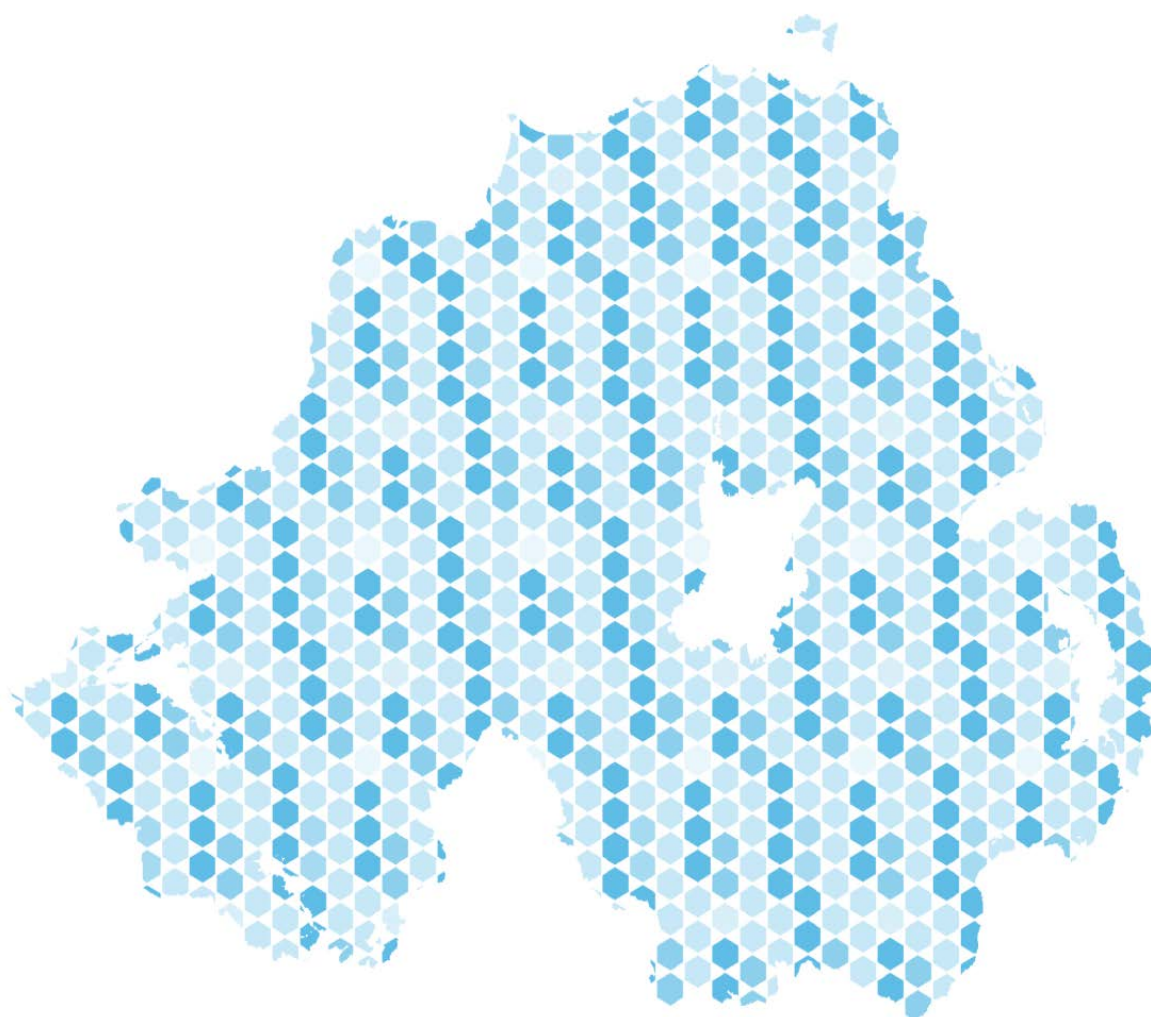


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

King's Park Primary School,  
Newtownabbey, County Antrim

Controlled, co-educational

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



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# **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of King's Park Primary School, Newtownabbey, County Antrim. BT36 ODG (301-0880)**

## **Introduction**

The previous inspection in June 2015, evaluated the overall effectiveness of King's Park Primary School as very good<sup>1</sup>. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes within the senior leadership team. A new vice-principal was appointed in September 2015, the principal retired in September 2017 and, at the time of the inspection, the vice-principal had been in the role of acting principal since the start of the academic year. There has been a slight decrease in the enrolment in line with trends in the local area. A School Council has been established with the children's representatives being elected from year 4 to year 7. The school is participating in the Family Health Initiative funded by the Northern Obesity Partnership. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on the 12 June 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 acting principal met with the ETI in her leadership capacity. 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 inspection focused 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. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The line of inquiry during the SII was:

- improved communication with parents to support the children's learning; a school connected to its community.

Owing to the school's participation in industrial action:

- the inspection was unable to evaluate fully the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school planning.

## **Key findings**

- The school is building an inclusive ethos based on effective communication and parental involvement in the children's learning and in celebrating their achievements. Parents views are sought, valued and acted on to make improvements in the provision that meets the needs of the local children and families. The sample group of parents who spoke to the Reporting Inspector were enthusiastic about the improvements in the communication between the school and the parents. Parents are involved increasingly in school life through, for example, attending workshops linked to the curriculum, volunteering with the Eco-warriors, participating in sample intervention sessions being run for their children and attending the bi-monthly programme of events. They are kept well informed through the use of technology about school events and their child's learning experiences. They appreciate the use of a telephone application to share photographs and information about

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<sup>1</sup> From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school evaluated previously as outstanding or very good has been reported as a school demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.

the children's activities in school; these are stimulating increased conversation about the children's learning at home. They value the opportunities to volunteer and attend workshops which provide practical activities to understand more fully the curriculum being taught in school. They report that their views have been listened to and acted upon, and have brought about changes and improvements within the school.

- The whole school self-evaluation and development planning processes are informed by wide and meaningful consultation with staff, parents, children and governors. The action plans have clear success criteria that are focused on building staff capacity, raising the outcomes for all children and developing high quality learning experiences. There are good processes in place for the regular review and evaluation of the school's developmental work. The school 'Improving Outcomes' programme for children and young people in collaboration with four local primary schools and one post primary school to deliver a joined-up approach to school improvement within a whole community context.
- A sample group of children from year 2 talked enthusiastically about their learning linked to the theme of pirates. They read confidently from their own work about pirates and explained their use of phonics to support their independent writing. They referred to photographs to describe their model making and to explain their thinking during problem solving activities linked to pirate boats.
- A sample group of children from year 7 performed very competently a range of musical items including playing a range of instruments; and, they talked maturely about their enjoyment of music and their performance in the school play. They described the wider skills and attitudes they apply during these activities, such as, group work, respect, working as a team and confidence.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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. A sample group of children from year 6 report that they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have a concern.

## **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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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