

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Knockbreda Primary School, Belfast

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 401-1674

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in February 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Knockbreda Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 10 February 2020.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute, and also workload and other management issues. 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 inspection. The leadership, designated teacher and governors co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their 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

- The group of year 6 children, who met with the inspector, reported that they enjoy their learning, the range of extra-curricular activities and the residential trips in which they participate. They enjoy contributing to the 'House System', have good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through the eco-council and are proud of achieving their fifth Eco-Council Flag Award.
- The children 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.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

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

Safeguarding

Relevant governors have not completed the necessary initial and refresher safeguarding training, the Child Protection and Anti-Bullying policies fail to comply with regulatory and legislative requirements and there is no Relationships and Sexuality Education policy. Consequently, based on the evidence presented at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory.¹

¹ The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Education Authority that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

The areas which must be improved urgently include:

- ensuring governors complete the relevant safeguarding training;
- updating the Child Protection policy to reflect the Department of Education's Circular 2017/04;
- updating key associated safeguarding policies to ensure they reflect fully the Department of Education's guidance and the school's current practice; and
- developing a Relationships and Sexuality Education policy in consultation with staff, children, parents and governors.

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 and safeguarding being provided for the children. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

The ETI will return to the school within six working weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF KNOCKBREDA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN FEBRUARY 2020

SAFEGUARDING

In line with the child protection/safeguarding procedures of the Education and Training Inspectorate, the ETI returned to Knockbreda Primary School on 3 March 2020 as a follow-up to the inspection which took place on 10 February 2020; the purpose of the visit was to ensure that the safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory in the inspection, have been addressed.

On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements now reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

During the interim period, the governors have completed the necessary safeguarding training; the relevant policies have been amended and now reflect the Department of Education's guidance and the school's current practice; and, a draft Relationships and Sexuality Education policy has been produced for consultation with staff, children, parents and governors.

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.

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