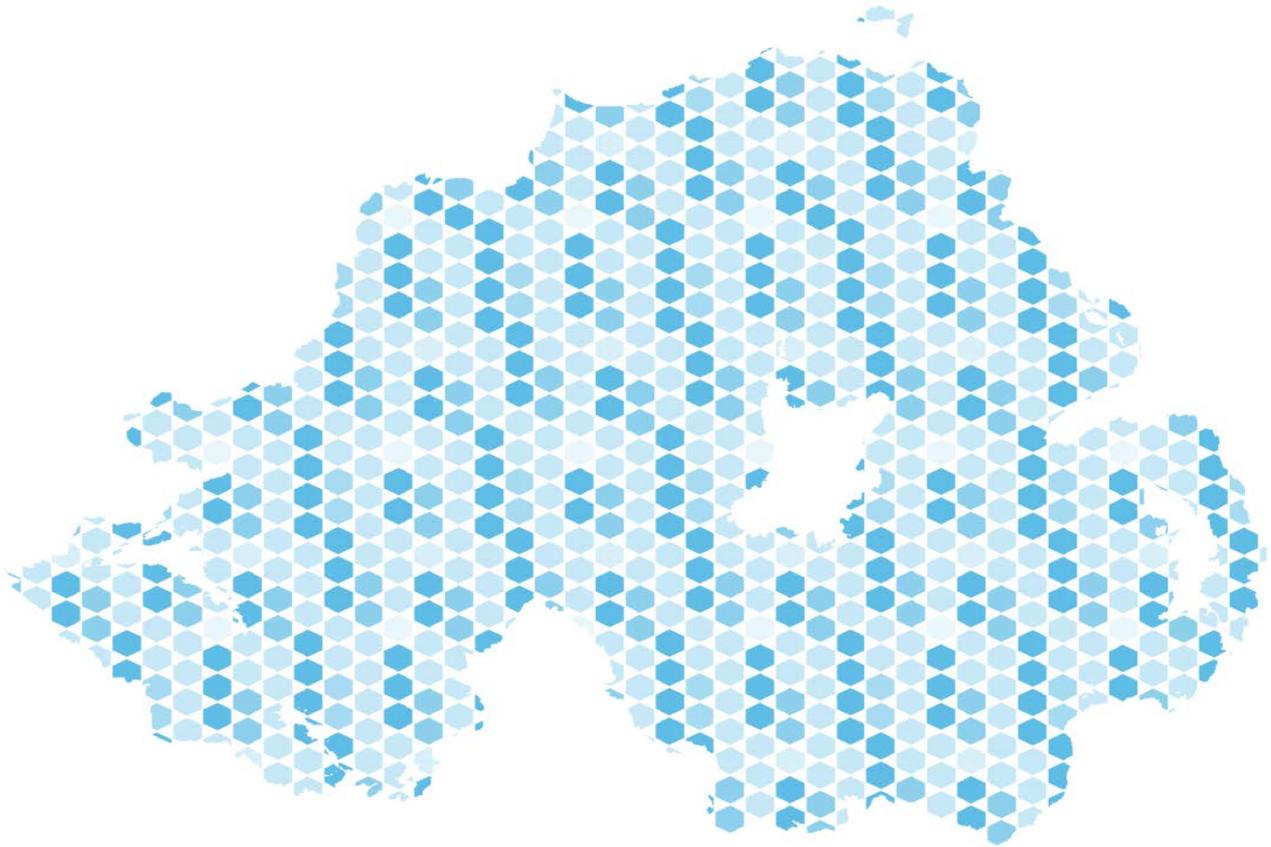


Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



Newtownhamilton Primary School, Newtownhamilton,
County Armagh

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 501-1137

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

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Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Newtownhamilton Primary school as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 4 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. The industrial action includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that teaching staff would not be co-operating with the inspection. The senior leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to safeguarding. 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
- lines of inquiry were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- A group of year 6 children reported that they enjoy their learning experiences including the topics covered in the World Around Us which are enhanced by educational trips and extra-curricular activities. The children discussed the school's motto, 'Hand-in-hand, we learn together' and reported that the focus on working collectively, and the school's approach to promoting positive behaviour encourages them to respect others and value their own work.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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 from the Department of Education. The year 6 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 school places high importance on e-safety and the children are knowledgeable about how to stay safe 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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