

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Our Lady and St Patrick Primary  
School, Downpatrick, County Down

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Sustaining Improvement  
Inspection (Involving Action Short of  
Strike) in January 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Our Lady and St Patrick Primary School (403-6693)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in January 2014, evaluated the overall effectiveness of Our Lady and St Patrick Primary School as good<sup>1</sup>. In the interim there has been a change in senior leadership with the appointment of a principal in September 2015 and the appointment of four permanent teaching staff. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 18 January 2017.

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 all of the teachers would not 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 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 lines of inquiry during the SII were:

- ensure that the teachers plan for, implement and evaluate the use of a range of learning strategies in order to meet more effectively the needs of all of the children and realise further the standards that they attain; and
- develop further the role of senior leaders and co-ordinators in order to ensure that there is a sharper focus on evaluating the quality of the learning and teaching and effecting sustained improvement.

### **Key findings**

- The strategic leadership is reflective and evaluative. The priorities in the new school development plan have been identified through wide consultation with children, staff, parents and governors and outline clearly appropriate areas for development. School improvement is underpinned by well-conceived staff development opportunities linked to these priorities. The senior leadership team continues to make good use of the school's internal assessment data to identify underachievement and monitor the children's progress.
- The children in key stage 2 have a good knowledge of their strengths and aspects of their learning which require further improvement; they draw well on this knowledge to set personal learning goals.

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<sup>1</sup> From September 2015, a school previously evaluated as good has been reported as the school demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

- During the discussion with a group of year 6 children, they demonstrated clearly empathy for others and a disposition for welcoming new children in to the school community, particularly those from a different culture and tradition.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the lines of enquiry; and
- the quality of the work in the children's books, the quality of learning and teaching within the classroom and have discussions with relevant co-ordinators.

### **Safeguarding**

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding reflect<sup>2</sup> broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

In discussion with a group of year 6 children, they reported that they enjoy school and feel safe.

### **Conclusion**

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, 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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<sup>2</sup> From January 2017, arrangements previously evaluated as comprehensive are reported as reflect the guidance.

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