

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Our Lady's Girls' Primary School,
Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Our Lady's Girls' Primary School, Belfast (103-0326)

Introduction

The original inspection in March 2011, evaluated the overall effectiveness of Our Lady's Girls' Primary School as outstanding¹. The school took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII).

In the interim: the enrolment has increased by 17% to 386 children; the proportion of children entitled to free school meals has decreased slightly to 65%; and, the proportion of children identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning has fluctuated and now sits at 34.5 %. A second SII was conducted on 12 June 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 most 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:

- the further development of numeracy with a focus on mental mathematics; and
- the further development of literacy with a focus on promoting independence in reading.

Key findings

- There is evidence of appropriate, ongoing improvement work in the school. The improvement priorities around literacy and numeracy are very well-informed by the analysis and use of qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and evaluate the quality of the actions taken, and to track the children's progress. The continuing professional development of co-ordinators and teachers is an appropriate priority for whole-school improvement.
- A group of children from year 7 met with inspectors and read fluently and with expression. They were able to refer to a range of authors and give insightful views on the choice of books they enjoy. The children used competently a variety of reading and comprehension strategies to make meaning within more complex texts.

¹ 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 same group of children displayed a high level of interest in and enjoyment of mathematics. They addressed confidently a variety of mathematical challenges and justified their answers effectively using accurate mathematical language. The children displayed a very good understanding of mathematical concepts and flexibility in mental calculations and problem-solving tasks.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

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

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The children with whom the inspectors met, reported that they feel safe in school; they know what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety or well-being. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully, the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by most of 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and Safety/ Accommodation

There is a need for the school to review the security and access arrangements between the church car park and the school playground.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2017

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk