

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Springhill Primary School,
Belfast

Controlled, co-educational

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Springhill Primary School, Belfast (101-0307)

Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2014 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Springhill Primary School as good¹. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 4 December 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 none of the staff would be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI have 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 development planning; and
- lines of inquiry, including an area for improvement which the school needed to address from the original inspection, were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

The ETI was unable to evaluate an area for improvement which the school needed to address from the original inspection in 2014, namely to:

- continue to raise further the children's levels of attainment in English and mathematics; and
- the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory². The areas which must be improved urgently include:

- to update and review the training in safeguarding/child protection for all staff and governors; and

¹ A school evaluated previously as good has been reported as the school demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

² The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Education Authority that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

- to update and review the pastoral policies relating to the promotion of positive behaviour, addressing bullying, and relationships and sexuality education to reflect more fully the guidance from the Department of Education.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of action short of strike being taken by the teachers and the principal, 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 weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the unsatisfactory arrangements for safeguarding.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF SPRINGHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL BELFAST IN DECEMBER 2017

SAFEGUARDING

In line with the child protection/safeguarding procedures of the Education and Training Inspectorate, the district inspector from the original inspection returned to Springhill Primary School on the 25 January 2018 as a follow-up to the inspection which took place on the 4 December 2017. The purpose of the visit was to ensure that the safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory in the inspection, had been addressed.

On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements now reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE). However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding at the school.

Since the time of the original inspection, appropriate refresher training for staff and governors in safeguarding/child protection has been arranged and/or undertaken. A range of pastoral policies have been revised to reflect more clearly the guidance issued by DE. There remains a need to develop further and embed the recent revisions to pastoral documentation to ensure the care and welfare practices within the school impact positively on the learning, teaching and outcomes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY/ACCOMMODATION

The arrangements for the access control of visitors to the school are not fit-for-purpose. It is imperative that the board of governors reviews the current arrangements to improve access control to the school premises, including the visitor reception and sign-in procedures. The district inspector will monitor the progress made in addressing this area for improvement.

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