

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Colman's Primary School, Dromore, County Down

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-6000)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in April 2019



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 St Colman's Primary School, Dromore, County Down (503-6000)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Colman's Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 8 April 2019.

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, including the principal, 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

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 report that they have very good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through their roles in the School- and Eco-Councils, organising competitions and fund raising activities. The children spoke positively about their learning activities; in particular, they value their mathematics and literacy learning journals which help them to remember key concepts and information. They report that they feel safe in school and when on school outings.
- 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 did not provide evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect or reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education¹.

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 weeks to evaluate and report on the arrangements for safeguarding.

¹ The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2019

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