

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Primary School,
Cookstown, County Tyrone

Maintained, co-educational

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Joseph's Primary School, Cookstown, County Tyrone (503-6108)

Introduction

The previous inspection in January 2014, evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Joseph's Primary School as good¹. In the interim, the learning environment has been extended and enhanced through a minor works programme; and the enrolment has fallen from 132 at the time of the inspection to 108. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 23 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-cooperation 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 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. The ETI met with a representative of the governors and a group of children from year 6.

Focus of the inspection

The governors provided documentation and information in relation to school improvement and safeguarding.

Owing to the school's participation in industrial action:

- the inspection was unable to focus on 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 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.

Safeguarding

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

Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully, or discuss with staff, the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school. However, the children reported 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.

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

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the principal and 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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