

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Kevin's Primary School,
Belfast

Maintained, co-educational

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in February 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Kevin's Primary School, Belfast (103-6565)

Introduction

The previous inspection in February 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Kevin's Primary School as very good¹. Since the time of the last inspection, the enrolment has increased steadily from 522 to 595 children. Approximately one-quarter of the children are identified as having special educational needs, and the proportion of children with free school meals entitlement has remained steady at around two-thirds of the enrolment. In the same period, the school has attained a number of awards, including for recognition of: the innovative and inclusive breakfast club provision; and, engagement with international schools, helping the children develop as responsible global citizens and preparing them for life and work in a global society. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 26 February 2018.

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 almost 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 lines of inquiry during the SII were to:

- improve the planning for numeracy to ensure greater continuity, progression and consistency in the children's mathematical learning across the school; and
- develop more shared leadership opportunities to link effectively the work of the senior leadership team and the co-ordinators to support high quality self-evaluation.

Key findings

- The improved planning for numeracy supports well the provision of a broad range of learning experiences across all key stages, promoting continuity and steady progression for each child across all areas of the numeracy curriculum. The school's approach to the development of the children's mental mathematical strategies has been supported well through high quality teacher professional learning sessions, a focus on mathematical language and the dissemination of high quality classroom practice. In discussions with a small group of children in year 7, the children are aware of the importance of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum and for a range of careers options. They have an excellent understanding of a wide range of mathematical concepts, have flexibility in their mathematical thinking and reasoning, and are able to deploy a range of mental mathematical strategies when carrying out calculations.

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school evaluated as outstanding or very good has been reported as a school demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.

- There is enhanced, meaningful engagement of middle leaders in the creation, monitoring and review of the school development plan and associated action plans, the analysis of performance data at all levels to improve outcomes, and the use of first-hand evidence of the learning experiences of the children to support school improvement.
- During the discussion with a group of children from year 6, the children spoke positively of the friendly ethos in the school and the wide range of after-school activities provided for them.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of the learning and teaching within the classrooms.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. During the discussion with a group of children from year 6, they reported that they feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or wellbeing. 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 action short of strike being taken by almost all 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.

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