

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Mary's Primary School, Cookstown, County Tyrone

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-2699)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in March 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 Mary's Primary School, Cookstown, County Tyrone (503-2699)

Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Mary's Primary School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. A new principal was appointed in November 2018 and a sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 5 March 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 none of the staff would be co-operating with the inspection. The principal co-operated in relation to her safeguarding responsibilities. 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
- a line of inquiry was not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

- A group of year six children spoke very positively about their learning experiences in school, in particular, the interesting topics they explore and their involvement with children from a local school in the shared education partnership.
- The children report that they have good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities in the School and Eco-councils, as 'playground buddies' and as 'anti-bullying ambassadors.'

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- a line of inquiry; and
- the quality of 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. A group of year six children reported that they feel safe in school and online, and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the out-workings of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

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 being provided for the children. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

© 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