

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Mary's Primary School Greenlough, Draperstown, County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 303-2275

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Introduction

The previous inspection in February 2013 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Mary's Primary School as good. The school took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII) in September 2016. In the interim, there has been a change in senior leadership. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 5 December 2019.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute, and also workload and other management issues. The industrial action includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspection. The senior leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice among teachers 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

- The group of year 6 children reported that they enjoy the wide range of learning and extra-curricular opportunities including Spanish, Gaelic games, music and STEM¹. They enjoy participating in the newly introduced 'House System' and have very good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through the newly formed school- and eco-councils and the prefect system.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the lines 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. The children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of who to speak to and what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. In particular, the children are well informed about keeping safe online. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

¹ STEM activities involve **S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering and **M**athematics.

The school needs to:

- maintain its schedule of policy review, ensuring the policies reflect the Department of Education's current requirements.

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.

Health and safety/Accommodation

1. The school has identified a health and safety matter which has been progressed with the relevant stakeholders.

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