

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Michael's Primary School,
Finnis, Dromara, County Down

Maintained, co-educational

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Michael's Primary School, Finnis, Dromara, County Down (503-3006)

Introduction

The previous inspection in May 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Michael's Primary School as good¹. In the interim, there has been an increase in enrolment to 83. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 6 June 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 none of the staff would be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal and chair of the board of governors met with the inspector in their leadership roles. 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.

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

- In discussions with the inspectors, a sample of children from key stage 2 expressed their enjoyment of the learning activities. Their work is displayed and celebrated throughout the school and is of a high standard.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the lines of inquiry; and
- the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

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.

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

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 reported that they feel safe in school. They know what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety or well-being. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully with staff the outworking 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, and 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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