

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

The Royal School Armagh Preparatory
Department, Armagh City

Co-educational, preparatory

Report of a Sustaining
Improvement Inspection
in April 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of The Royal School Armagh Preparatory Department, Armagh City (562-0263)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of The Royal School Armagh Preparatory Department as very good¹. The enrolment has increased significantly over the last four years and is currently at 63 children. The Head of the Preparatory Department manages a full-time teaching role. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 24 April 2018. During the SII, the ETI had an opportunity to meet with a group of representatives from the Parent Teacher Association who spoke favourably about the work of the school and shared some of their children's personal experiences. All reported parental views were shared with the Head of the Preparatory Department and senior management of the school.

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 school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The line of inquiry during the SII was:

- the development of the learning and teaching of literacy and numeracy within composite classes.

Key findings

- Across the key stages and within the composite classes, the staff use a range of appropriate teaching strategies that included targeted interventions and support programmes that enable them to meet the differing needs of the children and to help ensure positive outcomes. The quality of the teaching observed was consistently of a high standard. The best practice was characterised by: well differentiated tasks which take account of the child's ability; open-ended questioning that challenged the children's thinking; individual support when required; and, the children's active involvement in the lessons.
- The comprehensive planning highlights appropriate differentiation that guides the staff in their work; this enables the children to experience a wide range of interesting and varied activities in literacy and numeracy. The lessons develop independence and creativity, and thinking skills and personal capabilities that contribute to high standards of literacy and numeracy as indicated in the children's books and displays around the school. The regular evaluations of the planning take account of the children's individual responses and are used very well to inform future learning and teaching.
- Appropriate methods are in place to monitor and track the children's progress and very good use is made of all available data, combined with the teachers' professional knowledge, to inform the planning and teaching and to meet individual needs. The children's work is marked regularly for improvement with encouraging feedback.

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

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the Department of Education. The ETI spoke with a small number of year 6 and 7 children who responded they feel safe and secure in school and know who to contact if they have a concern.

Conclusion

The Royal School Armagh Preparatory Department continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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