

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Mary's Primary School, Rathfriland, County Down

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No (503-3004)

Report of an Unannounced Inspection in June 2019

Introduction

The Department of Education (DE) requested that the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carry out an unannounced inspection of St Mary's Primary School, Rathfriland, in June 2019.

The focus of the unannounced inspection was to evaluate the nature and adequacy of the arrangements for safeguarding and pastoral care.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a review of pastoral care and safeguarding policies;
- a scrutiny of relevant documentation;
- interviews with senior leaders, including a representative of the board of governors;
- discussions about pastoral care and safeguarding with a selection of children across the key stages;
- the school's completion of an audit of safeguarding arrangements; and
- classroom visits across the key stages.

Key findings

- The school has a range of policies and procedures in place related to pastoral care, safeguarding and child protection; they guide well the work of the school and are subject to ongoing review by the staff and governors. There has been extensive consultation with the children, parents and staff in the review of the anti-bullying policy. A detailed policy for school closure in extreme weather conditions has been added to the suite of policies and the school has reviewed recently the process for contacting and informing parents in emergency situations.
- There are appropriate arrangements in place for the recording, retention, storage and sharing of information pertaining to child protection and safeguarding issues.
- Inspectors met with three groups of children from across the key stages. The children talked positively about their experiences in school. They highlighted, in particular, their enjoyment of learning; the opportunities they have to participate in a wide range of actives both in and beyond the classroom; and, the support and care they receive from all the staff.
- In all of the lessons visited the working relationships between the children and the staff were very positive. An inclusive, supportive environment conducive to learning is evident in all of the classrooms. The children are highly motivated and have a positive disposition to learning. Their work is valued highly, evident in the numerous attractive displays around the school. The children's views are sought and acted upon, thus enabling them to make meaningful contributions to the life and work of the school.

Conclusion

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the unannounced inspection, the school's arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the Department of Education.

The children reported that they feel safe in the school and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their safety or well-being.

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