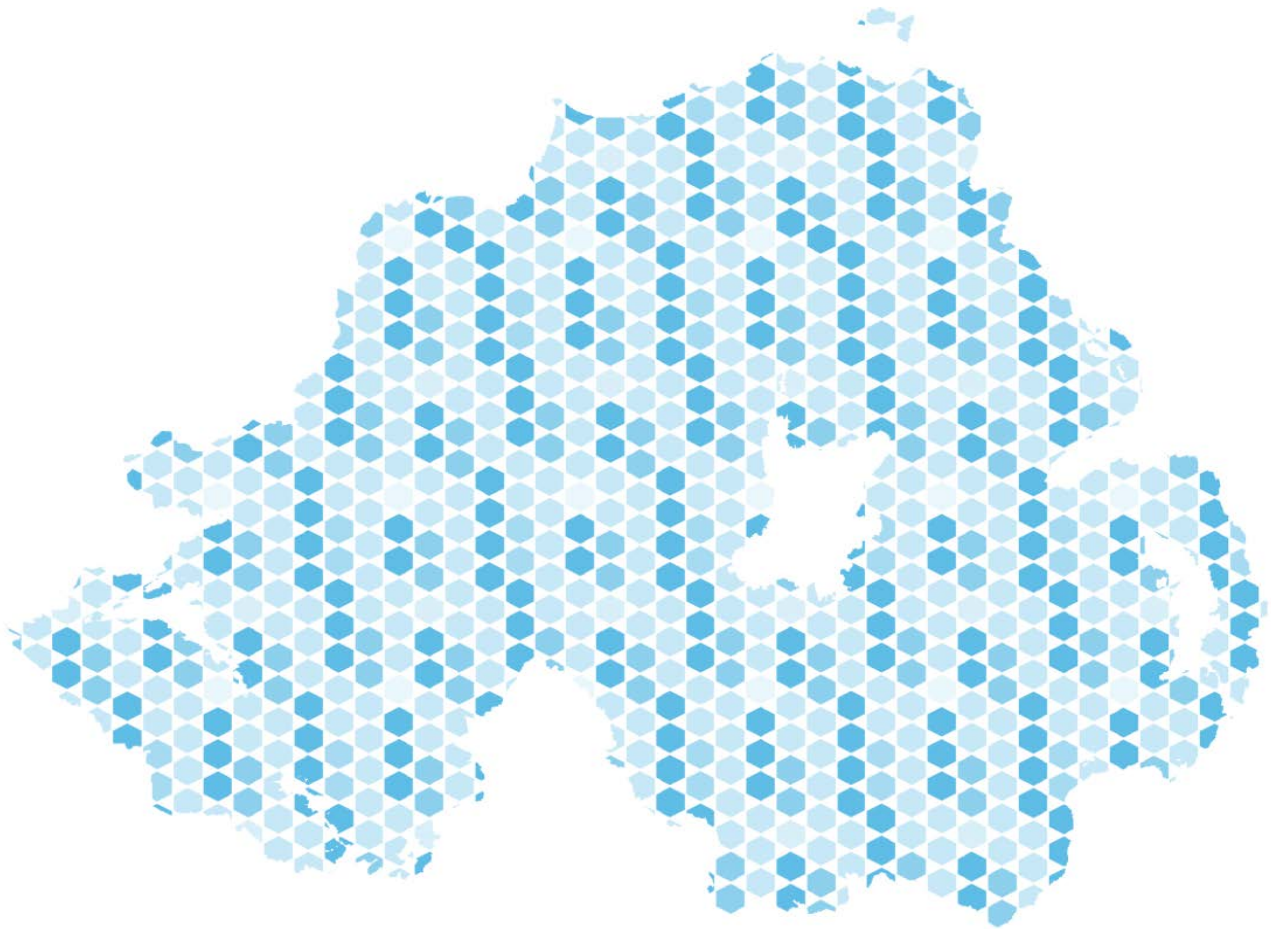


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Paul's Primary School,
Ahoghill, County Antrim

Catholic maintained, co-educational

Report of an Unannounced Inspection
in October 2016



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Introduction

The Department of Education (DE) requested that the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carry out an unannounced inspection of St Paul's Primary School, Ahoghill, in October 2016.

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 representatives of the board of governors;
- discussions about pastoral care and safeguarding with a group of year 6 and 7 children; and
- the school's completion of an audit of safeguarding arrangements.

Key findings

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the unannounced inspection, the school's arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory and do not adequately reflect the guidance issued by DE. In particular:

- the policies that guide the work of the school, including child protection and safeguarding arrangements, do not reflect current legislation or practice and are not subject to regular review by the staff and board of governors;
- key policies for a range of activities undertaken by the school are not in place including educational visits, fund raising, after-school and residential activities;
- there is no evidence that the school policies, including those relating to child protection and safeguarding, have been ratified by the board of governors;
- there are significant deficiencies in the school's information handling and recording systems, particularly in relation to parental permissions and safeguarding procedures;
- the communication with parents/carers in relation to child protection and safeguarding matters are poor including the process for seeking parental permission for children to engage in additional activities;
- the senior management team, including the principal, governors and safeguarding team do not operate appropriate risk management systems to inform decisions in relation to child protection and safeguarding; and
- inappropriate annual residential activities and regular after-school activities are organised for children off-site with insufficient safeguards in place.

In discussions with the inspectors, the group of children from year 6 and year 7 reported that they are mainly happy and feel safe in the school and are aware of what to do if they are worried or have concerns. However, they expressed their concern that the time allocated to after-school preparation for the transfer test was excessive and stressful.

Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated pertaining to safeguarding.

Conclusion

The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in safeguarding which the school needs to address urgently. This will be reflected in future inspection arrangements.

The ETI will also return to the school within six weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues.

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