

Education and Training Inspectorate PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Patrick's Primary School, Holywood, County Down

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 403-1628

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in January 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Introduction

The previous inspection in October 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Patrick's Primary School, Holywood, as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Since then, the school has developed a shared education partnership with a local primary school. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 13 January 2020.

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 principal and designated teacher for child protection co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their leadership and safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has 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

- The school provided a range of relevant evidence to reflect well-embedded processes for self-evaluation which inform systematically the whole school improvement priorities and the planning to improve the children's outcomes. The professional development programme completed by the staff, including through the school's shared education partnership, has focused on extending and integrating learning and teaching strategies in information and communication technology (ICT), forms of writing and mental mathematical strategies to improve the children's problem-solving skills. The co-ordinators and staff monitor and evaluate systematically the impact of this development work on the progression in the children's learning across the key stages.
- A group of year 6 children spoke positively about their learning experiences across the primary curriculum. The children value their participation in a wide range of sporting and cultural extra-curricular activities and also the shared education learning opportunities with a local primary school. They report that the wider range of approaches and resources they are using in reading, mathematics and information and communication technology is motivating them, particularly when their learning contains additional challenge and opportunities to solve problems and find solutions.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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 and cared for in the school and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. They know how to stay safe online and when out and about in the local community. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

The school needs to:

- update the Anti-bullying policy to reflect the most recent guidance; and
- ensure that the risk assessments are kept under regular review.

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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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