

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Springfield Primary School,
Belfast

Controlled, co-educational

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

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Springfield Primary School, Belfast (101-0221)

Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2014, evaluated the overall effectiveness of Springfield Primary School as very good¹. Since the time of the last inspection, enrolment has increased steadily from 158 to 179 children. In 2015, an extension was added to the school building to improve the school's accommodation. The school is working in partnership with a maintained primary school on a community-based initiative which aims to address the support needs of the children and their families. The children have also won numerous awards in literary and sporting competitions. A new principal was appointed in September 2017. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 3 May 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 almost all of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. 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
- a line of inquiry were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

Key findings

The children spoke very positively about the caring ethos of the school, the support provided by the staff, the wide range of learning opportunities available to them and the many positive ways in which their work and progress are recognised and celebrated.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the line 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 reported that they feel safe in school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

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.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, 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.

Health and Safety

1. There is insufficient provision for staff and visitors' parking.
2. The current arrangements for vehicular access impacts adversely on the safety and security of the school site and does not meet the building handbook guidelines of the Department of Education.

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