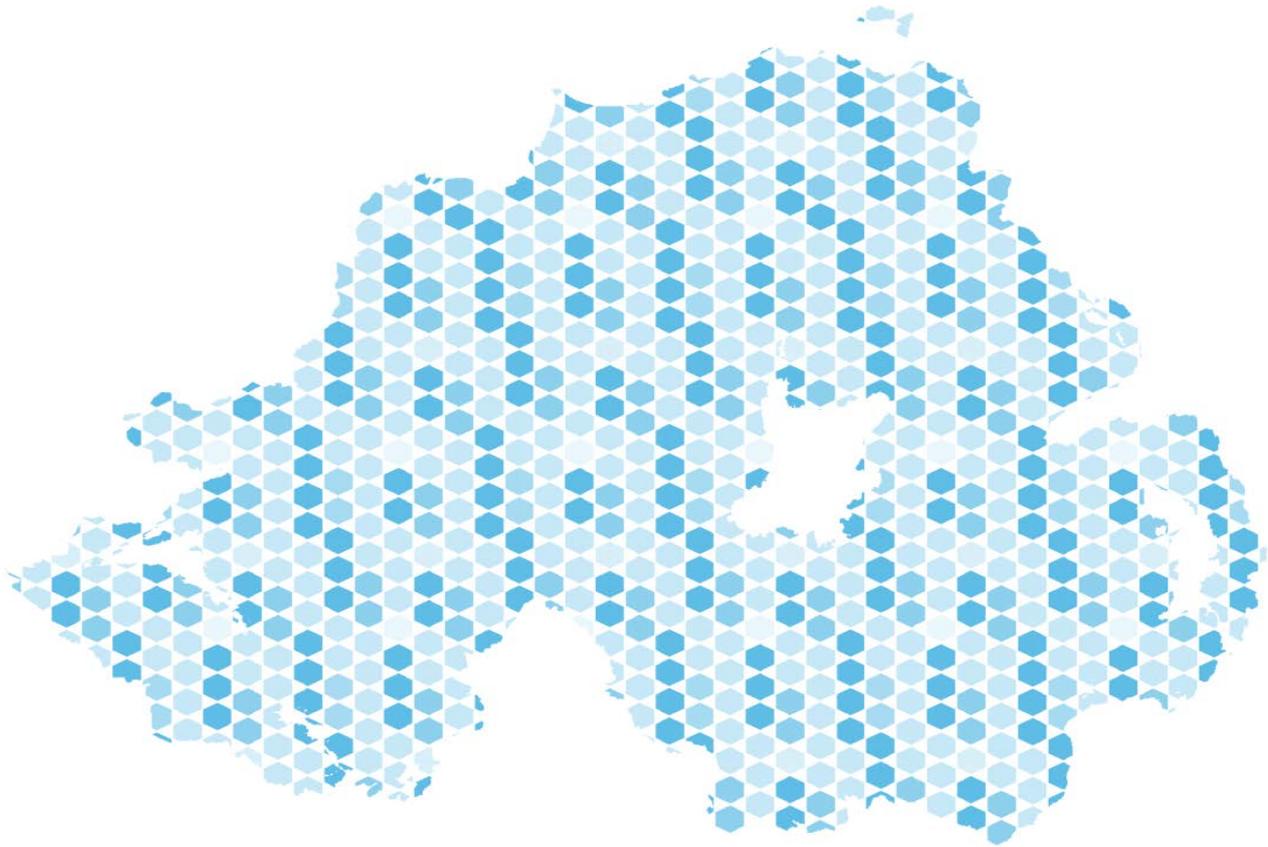


Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Currie Primary School, Belfast

Controlled, co-educational DE ref no (101-0063)

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
January 2019



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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Currie Primary School is situated on the Limestone Road in North Belfast. The school includes a Learning Support Unit, a Speech and Language Unit and a Nurture Unit. The enrolment has risen steadily since the previous inspection and almost all of the children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The number of children who require additional help with aspects of their learning has increased considerably during this same period; however, the number of children entitled to free school meals has decreased. The school has benefitted greatly through a collaborative and longstanding shared education partnership with a local maintained school. The school has been awarded a Nurture Quality Mark and achieved two Eco-Council Green Flags.

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 none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal, representatives of the board of governors 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.

Currie Primary School	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Enrolment	175	175	178	187
% School attendance	91.5	91.8	90.9	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	80.6	81.1	77.5	73
No. of children on SEN register	105	99	114	128
% of children on SEN register	60	56.6	64	68
No. of children with statements of educational need	17	19	23	26
No. of newcomer children	11	13	11	15

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Children's, parents' and staff questionnaire responses

A small number of parents and staff responded to the online, confidential questionnaire. All of the responses were very positive regarding the work and life of the school. In written comments, the parents highlighted the nurturing approach of the staff, the safe environment and the significant academic and social progress made by the children. All of the responses were shared with the principal and the board of governors.

As a result of the action short of strike, the school did not distribute the online, confidential questionnaire information to the children. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of the children through the questionnaires.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum; and
- quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- A group of year 7 children who met with inspectors expressed an enjoyment of reading and spoke knowledgeably about a range of authors and books, including literature relating to their recent classroom topics. The children read fluently and when questioned, they used a wide range of reading strategies to discuss confidently the texts.
- In discussion with the inspectors, a group of year 7 children expressed their enjoyment of mathematics. The children had a good understanding of key mathematical concepts and mental mathematics strategies, however, there was some variation in their use of the appropriate mathematical language.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the learning outcomes for the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The inspectors met with a group of year 6 children who were well-mannered and respectful of each other and the visitors. The children described: their enjoyment of school; the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them; and the opportunities they have to take responsibility for their learning. They welcomed their engagement in the shared education partnership and the chance to work in collaboration with children from another school. The children spoke enthusiastically about the opportunities to develop their leadership roles through, for example, 'playground buddies' and within the School- and Eco-Councils.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- care and welfare.

7. Leadership and management

- The leadership employs a coherent, collegial and child-centred approach to school improvement. The school development plan is informed appropriately by wide consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors and is informed through the use of the school's qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the children's learning.
- The principal reports on the extensive networking opportunities for the school to engage with the local community. Staff signpost parents regularly to appropriate support agencies and engage with a wide range of external agencies to meet the learning and pastoral needs of the children. Parents and relatives are encouraged to become involved in the children's learning through meetings with the staff and the promotion of positive parenting reminders posted on the school's active social media accounts.
- The ETI met with representatives of the board of governors who have a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the school. They report that they have opportunities to meet with both children and learning co-ordinators and, as a result, they are well informed and actively engaged in the life and work of the school.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of strategic leadership and governance;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education.
- In discussion with inspectors, a group of year 6 children described the school as a family and a place where they felt safe, well cared for and valued. They know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being and relayed very accurately, preventative measures and procedures they would follow to deal with concerns when online at school and at home. However, owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

9. Overall effectiveness

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.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website: [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observe learning and teaching, scrutinise documentation and the children's written work and hold formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for inspection include:

- a meeting with representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete an online, confidential questionnaire.

Where, owing to the action short of strike, this evidence base was not available, it has been referenced in the body of the inspection report.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with the principal to discuss the school development planning processes;
- a meeting with the principal to discuss safeguarding and child protection;
- a meeting with representatives from the governors;
- a meeting with a group of year 6 children to discuss safeguarding;
- a meeting with a group of year 7 children to discuss literacy; and
- a meeting with a group of year 7 children to discuss numeracy.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management²:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.

² And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

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