

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Newtownards Model Primary School, Newtownards, County Down

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No (401-1345)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action
Short of Strike) in May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Newtownards Model Primary School, Newtownards, County Down (401-1656)

Introduction

The original inspection in May 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Newtownards Model Primary School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a shared education partnership with two other local schools. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 15 May 2019.

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 co-operated with the inspection team in relation to 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 evaluate fully the school's 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

- In discussion with the inspector, a group of year 6 children spoke confidently of their enjoyment of various learning, sporting and cultural opportunities which develop their interests and skills. The children reported they appreciate taking responsibility, progressing their views and ideas and contributing to decision-making processes through the School- and Eco-Councils. They explained the role of the 'Anti-Bullying Ambassadors' and their enjoyment of the school's system of positive rewards.
- The school monitors and evaluates continuously the impact of the safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures and actions, incorporating external guidance and best practice.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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 inspector spoke with a group of year 6 children who reported that they feel very safe and happy in school and know what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns about their well-being. They also understand how to stay safe online. 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.

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. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

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