

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Holy Trinity Primary School and Learning Support Centre,
Belfast

Maintained, co-educational DE Ref No: 103-6623

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



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Introduction

The previous inspection, in April 2016, evaluated the overall effectiveness of Holy Trinity Primary School and Learning Support Centre as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has attained the '360 Degree Internet Safety Award' and is the first school in Northern Ireland to be awarded the 'Digital Schools' Special Recognition Badge for Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety.' In addition, it has received the 'Gaelfast Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) '5 Star Centre' Award.' The school has a well-established shared education programme with a controlled school in Clough and St Andrew's School in Uganda. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 23 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 senior leadership team co-operated with the inspection in relation to their leadership and safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education and professional practice among teachers 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

The inspection focused on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were:

- the whole-school focus on improving the children's knowledge, understanding and skills in the responsible and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT), including how to stay safe online; and
- the further development of the provision for reading.

Key findings

- Through highly strategic leadership and effective self-evaluation, informed by meaningful consultation with all stakeholders, the school has brought about significant improvement in the areas under focus, literacy and ICT. A range of qualitative and quantitative data is used well to identify strengths and areas for improvement at a whole-school, key stage, class and individual level. It is also used well to allocate investment into high quality resources and for building the capacity of staff and parents to support the children's learning; plan effective interventions for children at risk of under achievement; and, monitor closely the progress in the children's learning.

- The school is highly proactive and responsive to the children's ever-changing needs in relation to their safe and effective use of ICT, including social media platforms. Based on the evidence provided by the school, a targeted, coherent and comprehensive taught programme has been developed with the active involvement of the children which helps them to make informed and responsible decisions. This programme infuses all aspects of school life, including its ethos, a wide range of school policies and all aspects of the curriculum, and promotes a consistent learning experience across all key stages. In discussion with a group of children, they have an excellent knowledge, understanding and skills development across all areas of the ICT curriculum, including how to stay safe online, and can transfer these skills to other areas of learning. The children play a key role in raising awareness of how ICT can be used safely and effectively throughout the whole school, to parents and the wider community.
- In literacy, the school's internal data indicates that almost all of the children in key stage 2 are achieving at or above their expected level in literacy; the level of underachievement in literacy has been halved over the past three years. Significant work has been undertaken to improve the children's learning experiences and outcomes in reading including: improved planning and evaluation; the successful introduction of a new reading programme; and, the use of a wider range of interventions to help the children to progress. The group of year 7 children engage wholeheartedly in their reading and discuss, using sophisticated terminology, many aspects of their reading material, such as authorial technique and style of writing. They read with fluency and expression and talk with enjoyment about their favourite authors and genres.
- The group of year 6 children, who met with the inspectors, spoke highly of: the care and support of the teachers and other adults in the school; the wide range of learning activities on offer during and after school which they enjoy; and, the many opportunities they have to gain leadership skills and express their views on aspects of school life that affect them.

Owing to the industrial action, 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 children report that they feel safe in school and that they are aware of who to speak to and what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. They are very secure in their knowledge about how to keep 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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