



# Chief Inspector's Report 2014-2016





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### Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners (for schools: It requires external support to do so). The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

## Foreword

I am pleased to present my third report as Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). This biennial report reviews inspection findings from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2016.

The report findings are underpinned by inspections and inspection activity for the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy such as surveys and district inspection work across a range of sectors including: early years; primary; post-primary; special schools; Education Other Than at School (EOTAS); youth provision; further education and work-based learning. In addition it includes work commissioned by other government departments.



The evidence in this reporting period shows that education and training provided in Northern Ireland has many positives which we should celebrate; however, ALL learners need, and indeed are entitled to, the highest quality of education and training if Northern Ireland is to aspire to being world class. I believe we have excellent capacity within and across sectors of education and training that will, if appropriately applied, help us to meet and resolve the challenges we face in order to be even better.

We have many schools and providers that demonstrate excellence with a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement<sup>1</sup>. There are many exceptional leaders and teachers/lecturers/trainers that put the learners needs and their success above all else. But this is not universally, nor even consistently, evident.

For those schools and providers that need to improve, the first step is to accept inspection findings and then work collaboratively, with the support that is available, to improve the provision. The ETI's mission is 'Promoting improvement in the interest of all learners' and we know that inspection is an important catalyst for improvement; some 77% of the organisations that have had follow-up inspections in this reporting period, improved.

The draft Programme for Government 2016-21<sup>2</sup> summarises the Executive's priorities and importantly their vision for giving children and young people the best start in life. It focuses on outcomes and recognises the importance of partnership working. For example,

<sup>1</sup> The descriptors for performance levels and the number of overall effectiveness conclusions changed in September 2015, as described in the section on the work of the ETI. For convenience, throughout this report, the descriptors and the four conclusions used from September 2015 have been applied to the findings from both years.

<sup>2</sup> Programme for Government 2016-21 out for consultation at the time of publishing this report.

there are multiple reasons for under-achievement, many of which lie outside the remit and responsibility of the classroom and which will need to be tackled by the Executive, and society as a whole.

Within and beyond education and training, we need to get better at working and collaborating together at all levels to drive improvement forward. Tackling the issues will require much more joint working across government departments and between all stakeholders if we are to be successful and really make a difference. In the commentary that follows *Working as One...with Success for Everyone*, I will outline what our education and training system is doing well but also what we need to do to get better. In facing the many local and global challenges that lie ahead, Northern Ireland's education and training system needs to continue, as I said in the last Chief Inspector's Report, to *Aspire Higher... Enable More ....Expect Better*.



**NOELLE BUICK**  
**Chief Inspector**  
**Education and Training Inspectorate**

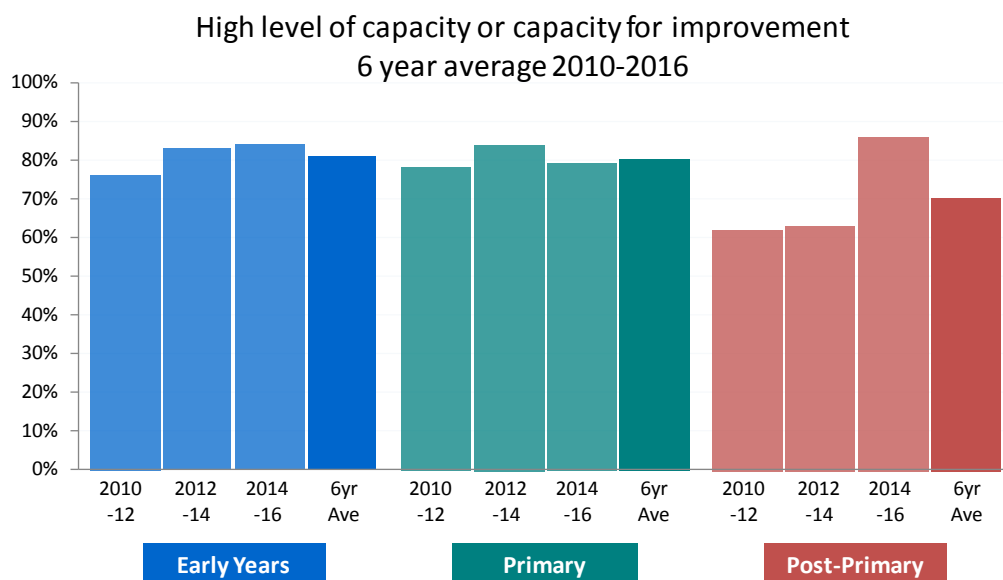
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## Working as One.... with Success for Everyone

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### Introduction

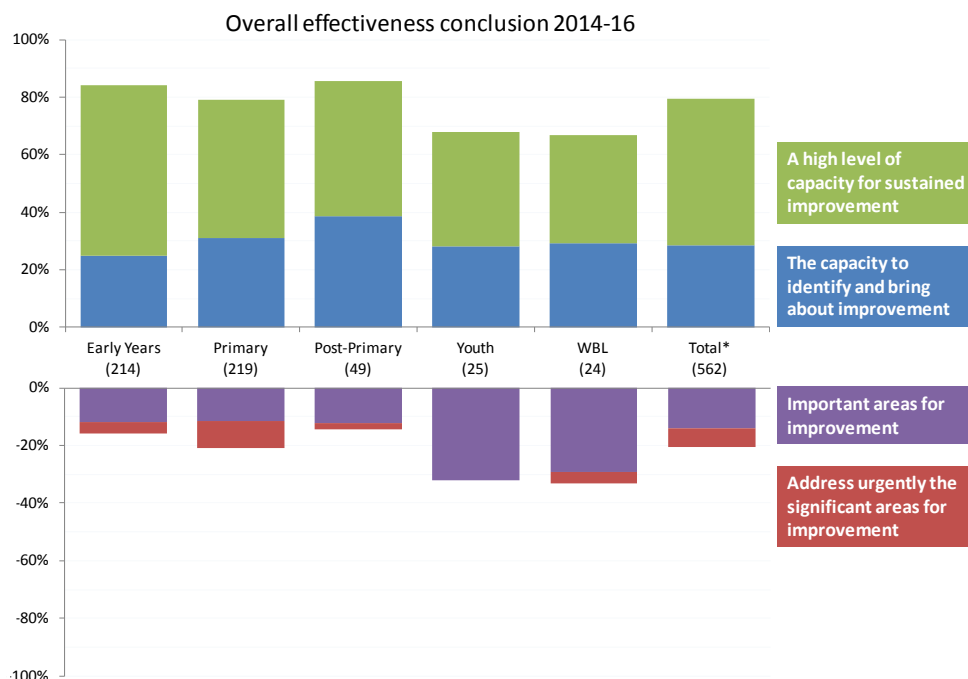
1. The purpose of inspection is to promote improvement. It is an important catalyst for raising standards through ensuring best practice is highlighted and shared; poor provision is identified, supported and improved; and contributes to building capacity for ongoing improvement.
2. Over the six year period, since 2010, that I have been reporting on the quality of education and training in Northern Ireland I have noted the sustained improvements in early years provision, which are to be celebrated. Over the six years, the average of early years settings that have a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement is 81%. We know that early childhood development lays the foundations and impacts greatly on lifelong learning, health and well-being.
3. For many children the good quality early years learning is built on effectively in the primary years. Over the six years, the average of the primary schools inspected that have a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement is 80%.
4. In the post-primary phase, while the schools inspected in this 2014-16 cohort show a more positive picture than in my previous reports, post-primary, across all six years, still has more room for improvement with only just over 70% having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement.
5. The good news is that because of this high quality education, if these figures are translated to the school population as a whole, over 11,000 early years, 128,000 primary and 100,000 post-primary children and young people have the best possible chance of success.
6. However, and persistently, approximately 20% of children across the six years in early years and primary are accessing education that is not good enough. In post-primary schools this figure is 30%. If this figure is translated to the early years and primary school population as a whole, 20% means that almost 35,000 children may not be getting a good enough education. In post-primary it would be over 43,000. In total just over 78,000 children may not be getting a good enough education.



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7. Over the six years, while the average of the special schools and inclusion provision inspected that had a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement is 77%, there has been a fall in this level of overall effectiveness since the last reporting period. Similarly, while the average of the youth provision inspected that had a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement is 77% across the same period, there has been variation in this level of overall effectiveness across the six years, with a marked drop since the last period. In work-based learning, the average of the providers inspected that had a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement across the six year period is 68%, with an improvement in the level of overall effectiveness since the last reporting period.





\*the number of inspections for Independent Schools, Special Schools, Education Other than at School and Further Education organisations are too small to show individually. The results of these inspections have been included in the total column.

8. During the reporting period 2014-16, 79% of all organisations inspected demonstrated a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement. However 21% of organisations inspected had important areas for improvement or needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement

9. All of the stakeholders in education and training have particular skills, expertise, knowledge and information. If this is harnessed with a focus on *Working as One...with Success for Everyone* we can have every chance of achieving the Executive's aim of giving our children and young people the best start in life and being a world class education system.

10. In presenting this biennial report all readers are invited to consider and action, where appropriate, the main messages in the report. The commentary highlights the main messages from inspection evidence over the past two years with more detail in the phase sections which follow.

## Achievements and standards

### A good start is essential

**Most of our youngest learners make a good start in the pre-school sector but there is too much variation in provision across the statutory and private/voluntary providers.**

11. Overall, 84% of all pre-school settings (95% of nursery schools, 91% of nursery units, 79% of voluntary and private settings and 76% of Irish medium early years settings) inspected during the reporting period were evaluated as having either a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement. There are high standards in the development of the children's attention and listening skills, self-management and social skills; almost all make significant progress in their pre-school year, most effectively in their personal development, helping them to become more independent learners.

12. The lower proportion of the pre-school settings in the voluntary/private sector being evaluated as effective, when compared with the statutory sector settings, can be attributed partly to the lower level of the qualifications required of leaders, the lack of opportunities for staff to engage in professional learning, the effectiveness of self-evaluation and the turnover of staff.

13. Overall achievements and standards are outstanding or very good in most nursery schools (91%); they are, however, less than very good in over a third of private/voluntary settings (38%) and nursery units (36%).

14. The Sure Start programme, in which Department of Education invests £25 million, targets approximately 40,000 children aged under four, and their families, living in the top 25% most disadvantaged wards. Sure Start plays an important part in the pre-school programme by providing early intervention and support to families in order to promote the development of pre-school children. There have been initial visits by ETI to plan for inspection, in the forthcoming period, of the quality of the provision and the contribution being made by Sure Start to early years education.

## But schools need to build on this good start

### **Most primary and post-primary schools have a high level of capacity or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.**

15. The Department of Education's policy, *Every School a Good School*,<sup>3</sup> sets the expectation that every school should be at least good, or preferably even better. While it is encouraging therefore to note that 79% of primary schools and 86% of post-primary schools were evaluated as having either a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement in this reporting period, too many pupils still receive an education that is not good enough.

16. For example, in primary schools where achievement is high, children manage their learning confidently by working independently and with others, employing their well-developed social and interpersonal skills. In 17% of primary schools, children do not make consistent progress in building their thinking skills and capabilities.

17. The ETI evaluation of the Nurture Unit Signature Project Pilot (2013-15)<sup>4</sup> identified positive progress in implementing nurture practice across the 20 primary schools visited. High quality lessons contributed well to the children's personal, social and emotional development and to their learning generally. The children developed effective strategies to help them integrate back into mainstream classes.

18. Action has been taken by the Department to identify at an earlier stage, challenges to learning. For example, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Literacy project<sup>5</sup> for primary teachers which ended in March 2015 developed teachers' capacity to identify and address factors that may cause children to underachieve and fail to attain appropriate literacy standards. The ETI evaluation concluded that the project provided teachers with the skills and expertise to provide effective and timely intervention.

19. As children progress into post-primary schools, achievements and standards, including performance in public examinations, are good or better in most schools inspected, but this headline hides low achievement and under-achievement for too many. Reasons include a variation in standards across individual subjects, low teacher expectations and uninspiring teaching. Evidence persists, year-on-year, of a lack of progression at transition stages, as children move from early years to primary and from primary to post-primary schools.

<sup>3</sup> *Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement*. Department of Education. 2009.

<sup>4</sup> *Evaluation of the Nurture Unit Signature Project Pilot*. ETI. February 2016. See also ETI Webinar on <http://www.esags.tv/eti-on-esagstv/nurture-unit-signature-project-pilot/>

<sup>5</sup> *Understanding Difficulties in Literacy Development: Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme* ETI September 2015

20. Across all provision, a culture where there are high expectations for all learners is essential. There is a shared sense of purpose among staff which is strongly focused on every child achieving to their best. All teachers and leaders are leaders of learning, ensuring that: learning and teaching is of high quality; pupil progress is tracked and monitored; appropriate interventions remove barriers and support learning; learners have access to an appropriate curriculum and success is celebrated.

### **While there is improvement, some pupils still struggle to attain**

**Too many pupils still receive an education that is not good enough, particularly those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. While more pupils are achieving well, the attainment gap between those entitled to free school meals (FSME)<sup>6</sup> and those not, remains a challenge.**

21. At 66%, the proportion of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, or equivalent, including GCSE English and mathematics, has increased by 2.5 percentage points since 2013-14 (63.5%) and by 6.9 percentage points since 2009-10 (59%)<sup>7</sup>.

22. In addition, and also encouragingly, the percentage of FSME school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs, including equivalents, at grades A\* to C, including GCSE English and mathematics, increased by 6.4 percentage points from 34.9% in 2013-14 to 41.3% in 2014-15<sup>8</sup>. Changes made to the free school meal eligibility criteria mean more pupils are in receipt of this entitlement. For school leavers not entitled to FSME the equivalent figure is 73.7%.

23. Credit is due to the more sharply focused provision for these disadvantaged pupils, particularly in the non-grammar sector, and to the range of initiatives targeted specifically at raising the achievement of pupils.

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6 Where FSME is used throughout the report it refers to those pupils **entitled** to free school meals.

7 Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2014/15. Department of Education.

8 Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2014/15. Department of Education.

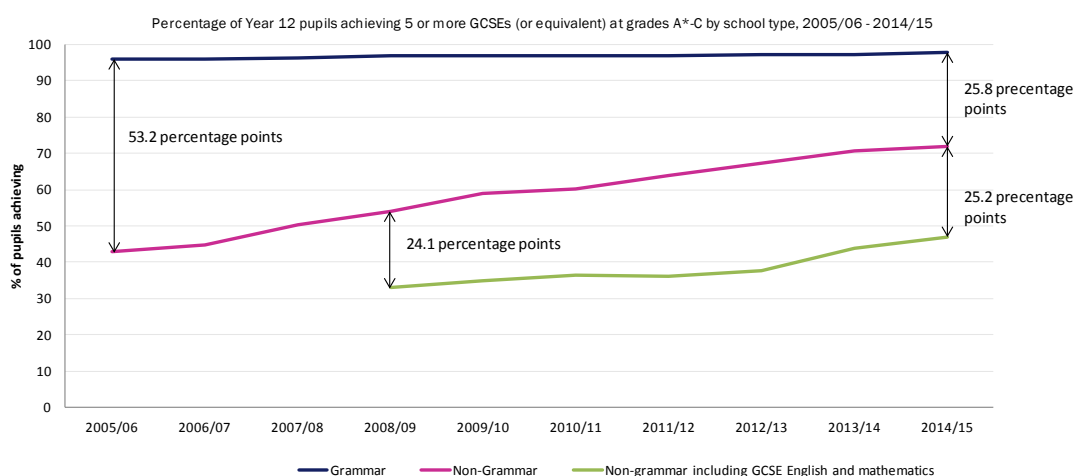


Figure 1

24. While the gap in achievement (Figure 1) between year 12 pupils in non-grammar schools and grammar schools continues its steady reduction (to 25.8 percentage points in 2015 for five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C and to 51 percentage points when GCSE English and mathematics are taken into account), it is notable that, in non-grammar schools themselves, there is no improvement between five or more GCSE grades A\* to C, without GCSE English and mathematics and the similar standard when GCSE English and mathematics are included (a 24.1 percentage point gap in 2008-09 and a 25.2 percentage point gap in 2014-15).

25. Furthermore, the gap in achievement between FSME school leavers and non-FSME school leavers achieving at level 2 or above, including GCSE English and mathematics, is not closing sufficiently. It remains around 32 to 33 percentage points (33 in 2009-10 and 32.4 in 2014-15). It should also be noted that the ambitious 2011-15 Programme for Government target of 49% of FSME school leavers achieving at this level by 2015 was not achieved, by 7.7 percentage points.

26. Going forward, all schools need to maintain the focus on ensuring these pupils achieve to their full potential so that they are able to access a broader range of educational and training pathways.

## And boys continue to underperform

**The performance of boys in public examinations continues to fall below that of girls.**

27. It is unacceptable that boys continue to underperform in public examinations. This trend is most marked in non-grammar schools.

*“While there has been some improvement between 2013-14 and 2014-15<sup>9</sup> (36.2% and 40.3% respectively), there is a difference of around 10 percentage points between the proportion of boys leaving non-grammar schools with five or more GCSE, and equivalent, at grades A\* to C, including GCSE English and mathematics, and the percentage of girls achieving at this level.”*

In 2014-15 40.3% of boys leaving non-grammar schools achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C including GCSE English and mathematics compared to 50.7% of girls.

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28. While there has been an improvement in the percentage of FSME boys in non-grammar schools achieving these important pathway qualifications, with an increase of over five percentage points from 2013-14 (20.7%) to 2014-15 (25.8%), the gap between these boys in non-grammar schools and those not entitled to free school meals, is still too great. Just over 70% of FSME boys in non-grammar schools do not achieve to the expected standard<sup>10</sup>. The percentage of boys in non-grammar schools not entitled to free school meals not achieving at the same standard is 57.2%.

29. While it reflects well on the support given to minority ethnic groups,<sup>11</sup> that 63.2% achieve to the expected standard (less than three percentage points below the average), it is a considerable concern however that only 25.8% of Looked After Children<sup>12</sup> achieve at the same level.

30. Furthermore, it is a persistent concern that only 26.7% (213) of FSME Protestant boys achieve five GCSEs at grades A\* to C or equivalent including English and mathematics compared to 39.9% (672) FSME Catholic boys<sup>13</sup>.

9 Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2014/15. Department of Education.

10 Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2014/15. Department of Education.

11 Note that 'minority ethnic groups' includes Irish Travellers, but not Newcomers, as most Newcomers taking GCSE level qualifications have ceased to be so categorised after two years residency. In 2015, in all schools, there were 1,012 Travellers and 11,900 Newcomers.

12 In 2015 there were 2,007 Looked After Children in all schools.

13 Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2014/15. Department of Education.

## Where pupils live, and the size of school, can both make a difference

31. The overall effectiveness of schools varies within and across geographical areas and to a certain extent by the size of school. This inequality affects the life chances of children and young people. Of all pre-school, primary and post-primary schools inspected in the reporting period, 91% of those in the district council of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon were evaluated as having either a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement. In contrast, 36% of those in the district council of Ards and North Down were evaluated as having important areas for improvement or needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement.

32. Based on the district council of pupil residence<sup>14</sup> and on achieving five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, and equivalents, including GCSE English and mathematics, those pupils with postcodes in Lisburn and Castlereagh achieve most highly. The lowest levels of achievement were in Belfast and in the Causeway Coast and Glens.

33. There is also a small difference in inspection outcomes between smaller and larger primary and post-primary schools, with larger schools tending to do better in inspections than the smallest. For primary schools, this difference only becomes meaningful at low enrolment levels and for rural primaries between those with less than 105 pupils and those above.<sup>15</sup>

34. Inspection evidence also shows that within a composite class of two primary year groups, it is possible for all children to be catered for effectively and make good progress. However, when the composite class spans more than two year groups, ensuring adequate progression in learning and planning to meet individual needs across a wider range of abilities and stages of development can be more challenging for the teacher. It may also limit opportunities for the children to develop socially and emotionally with those of a similar age and stage.

35. For post-primary schools, with more than 500 pupils, there is a small but significant difference, with larger schools performing better in inspections on average than smaller.

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<sup>14</sup> Pupils may attend schools outside their residential postcode.

<sup>15</sup> There is a similar difference for urban primary schools between those with less than 140 pupils and those over, although the sample is too small to test whether this difference is meaningful.

### Interventions and initiatives can make a difference

**The Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics (PIEM) Project, the Delivering Social Change in Literacy and Numeracy (DSCILN) Signature Project and the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative have made a difference.**

*“In schools involved in the PIEM project (an ETI initiative which took place in relatively large post-primary schools with a significant proportion of FSME pupils and evidence of under-achievement in either English or mathematics) outcomes have improved by just under seven percentage points in GCSE English or mathematics for all pupils and by 11 percentage points for FSME pupils.”*

36. The initiative developed the capacity of the middle leadership to make improvements in provision. The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister’s (OFMdFM) DSCILN (Signature) programme addressed the challenges of disadvantage by improving literacy and numeracy levels for underachieving learners. Approximately 310 recently qualified teachers were employed to support learners from 2013-15.

37. The ETI found highly effective practice in supporting pupils at risk of under-achievement in the majority of the schools visited. The overall effectiveness of the programme ranged from outstanding to satisfactory, with the impact of the programme being evaluated as good or better in 88% of schools visited and outstanding or very good in 61% of the schools.

38. Through the Department for the Economy Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative, six colleges of further education collaborated effectively with 18 post-primary schools to improve literacy and numeracy through the delivery of essential skills<sup>16</sup>. The lecturers and teachers worked to develop the pupils’ skills in literacy and numeracy and promoted a community of good practice for all of the participating teachers, with the common aim of improving outcomes for pupils. There are early indications of success with schools reporting that most of pupils are gaining greater confidence in the use of English and mathematics. They respond well to the opportunity to develop and apply their new learning and skills to relevant and meaningful contexts and benefit by achieving essential skills qualifications.

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<sup>16</sup> An evaluation of the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative Project in the six colleges of further education in Northern Ireland. ETI. June 2016.



## And making progress matters

39. Most learning organisations recognise well the importance that educational outcomes have on widening educational and training pathways.

*“However, not every learner achieves the threshold level due to a variety of reasons. For example, too many of our young people (7,608 school leavers in 2015)<sup>17</sup> still do not achieve a level 2 qualification including literacy and numeracy and, as a consequence, limit their options to access progression pathways offered by further education, training or employment.”*

Low confidence and limited independence in learning also inhibit progress.

40. What is important is that all education and training providers know exactly where each individual learner is, in terms of all aspects of their learning, and use this information to ensure that all can progress to the best of their ability. The ETI inspects how organisations use information and assessment data about progress in evaluating how well they are meeting the needs of all the learners.

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## The development of essential skills needs to improve

**In work-based learning provision, the development of essential skills remains a challenge.**

41. It is concerning that a majority (55%)<sup>18</sup> of work-based learning organisations inspected have important or significant areas for improvement in essential skills provision. In the best practice, learners have better opportunities to apply their essential skills across all aspects of their programme, including in the workplace, and to progress at least to level 2 in using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and in literacy and numeracy. More often, there are significant weaknesses in planning, in the late delivery of the essential skills training, and insufficient opportunities for trainees and apprentices to apply these essential skills within the context of the knowledge and vocational skills in their professional and technical area of learning.

<sup>17</sup> In 2014/15 there were 18,133 (81.1%) of a total of 22,361 school leavers achieved at least five GCSE at A\* to C or equivalent. In 2014/15 there were 14,753 (66.0%) of a total of 22,361 school leavers achieved at least five GCSE at A\* to C or equivalent including GCSE English and mathematics.

<sup>18</sup> Essential skills provision was inspected in 20 organisations, in the remaining four there was no delivery.

### In the youth sector, skills development is also a priority

**Priorities for Youth<sup>19</sup> is impacting positively on the strategic development of the sector.**

42. Across the youth service, much work is ongoing to build further the personal and social skills of young people, through programmes which enable them to address their barriers to learning and develop leadership skills which will help them progress in future careers and employment pathways.

*Priorities for Youth is impacting positively on the strategic development of the sector and beginning to influence youth work practice and planning at an organisational level.*

Additional resources, from the Department of Education given to the Education Authority (EA), to extend opening hours and programmes in youth centres is benefitting young people and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

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### Attend well to learn well

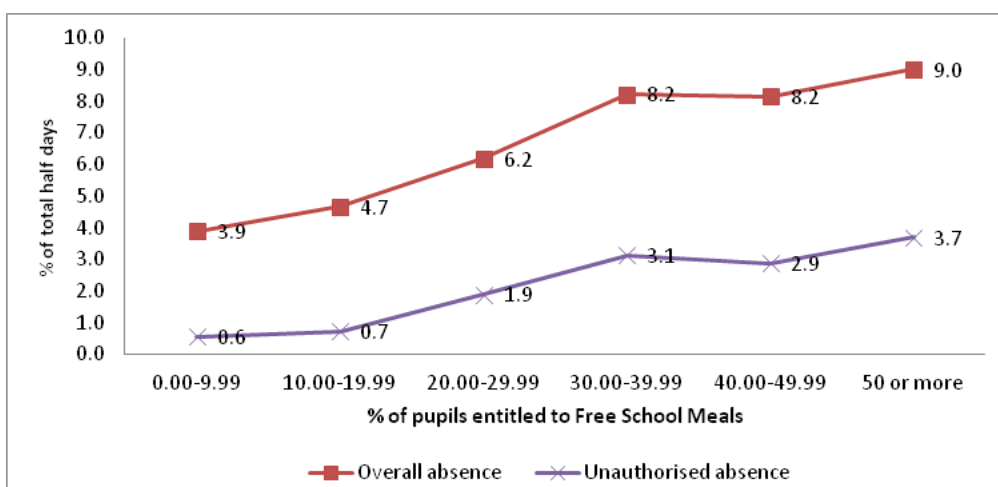
**Learners, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, need to attend in order to succeed: non-attendance rates are still too high.**

43. Non-attendance rates are still too high; for example, post-primary absences of 7.1% in 2013 improved only to 6.6% in 2015<sup>20</sup>. A pupil with 90% attendance misses around one out of ten months schooling a year. In 2014-15, 77% of school leavers with 95% attendance achieved at least five GCSEs A\* to C including English and mathematics. However, there is a steady and significant drop in the percentage of pupils achieving these grades when their attendance is lower and the poor attendance is greater (Figure 2) in schools with higher proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals.

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<sup>19</sup> *Priorities for Youth*. Department of Education. October 2013.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/pupil-attendance>.



**Figure 2: Absence rates from post-primary schools charted by FSME percentage bands.**  
 (Department of Education School Census 2014-15).

44. A relentless focus on promoting attendance helps to raise standards and improve the life chances of the learners, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

***“An ETI good practice survey of how schools are improving attendance,<sup>21</sup> confirms that there is a correlation between better attendance and improved attainment, although it is not possible to make a direct causal link due to other factors.”***

45. The case studies of effective practice illustrate that it is important for school leaders to take responsibility for ensuring good attendance, give it a high priority in school development planning and build a culture which connects attendance and attainment in the minds of staff, of learners and of parents and carers.

<sup>21</sup> Attendance in Schools: an ETI good practice report. ETI. October 2016.

## Quality of provision for learning

### Learners need to develop good thinking and personal capability skills to succeed in life and work

46. The effectiveness of educational provision can be measured only by the extent to which schools and providers enable young people to succeed. Employers value young people who, as well as being well informed and knowledgeable, are capable of thinking critically, solving problems, and making decisions. Such young people are constructive, cognitively flexible, resilient, resourceful, emotionally intelligent and cooperative<sup>22</sup>.

47. All education and training providers need to ensure that learners are equipped with such dispositions and the skills necessary for living in uncertain times. Four out of five post-primary schools are outstanding or very good at developing the necessary skills: we need all of them to be working at this high level.

### Teachers teach well, but challenges remain

48. In over 80% of lessons/sessions, the learning and teaching/training observed was good or better: pre-school (83%), primary (87%), post-primary (82%), special (86%), EOTAS (88%) and work-based learning (80%). In pre-school the quality of provision for learning was good or better in 80% of voluntary and private settings and over 90% of nursery units and nursery schools and in youth in 76% of the organisations inspected.

49. High quality learning opportunities are facilitated by highly effective teaching; the most effective teachers inspire learners.

***“This high quality learning is set in engaging and relevant contexts and provides sufficient challenge, support and opportunities which promote the learners’ independent and creative thinking skills. High quality marking for improvement, self- and peer-assessment and teachers’ use of plenary sessions consolidates the progress made by the learners.”***

50. Concerns persist in around one-fifth of lessons observed in primary and post-primary schools which were less than good in equipping the learners to contribute fully to society and the economy.

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<sup>22</sup> *Soft Skills for the Future*. M. Vandeweyer. OECD June 2016.  
*Future of Jobs Report*. World Economic Forum. August 2016.  
*The Erasmus Impact Study (on Skills Development and Employability)*. October 2014.

## Good transitions promote effective development of literacy and numeracy

**The ETI continues to stress the importance of building on learners' knowledge, skills and dispositions more effectively as they progress from one stage of education to another.**

51. Since the previous Chief Inspector's Report (2012-14), a higher priority has been given to improving the quality of transition links between primary and post-primary schools through a Literacy and Numeracy Continuing Professional Development Transitions project<sup>23</sup>. The project has another year to run and it will be important to measure independently its impact on learner experience over the coming years.

52. There is a continuing need to improve the links, partnerships, and transitions from pre-schools to primary, from primary to post-primary and from post-primary to further education, training and employment in order to allow learners to progress and achieve to their full potential.

53. At the time of writing this report, the Minister for Education issued new guidance which outlines that primary schools may support their pupils in preparing for transfer tests during core teaching hours.

54. It is for each school to determine its own admissions policy. The ETI focuses on ensuring that all schools provide a good quality education for the learners. Where this is not the case, the ETI will make its evaluation regardless of the type or structure of the school.

## Pupils progress when the curriculum supports them

55. Successful progress for learners depends crucially on their access to a broad, flexible and appropriate curriculum that can be tailored to individual needs, aspirations and interests.

56. While the quality of curriculum planning and provision varies across post-primary schools, it was very good or better in 45% of them. However, in almost 18% of post-primary schools inspected, important areas for improvement have been identified in relation to curriculum planning and the appropriateness of courses.

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<sup>23</sup> The project facilitates a community of practice for teachers in key stages 2 and 3 to improve the quality of the transition for learners. Over 500 schools have engaged in the project involving over 1,850 teachers.

*“The adverse impact of a poor curriculum perpetuates the ongoing low, or unacceptably variable, standards attained by pupils in these schools, inhibits appropriate transition, and at times restricts access to appropriate educational pathways.”*

57. Middle management in post-primary schools needs to be more effective in monitoring and reviewing the provision to ensure that the curriculum is meeting the changing needs and abilities of their pupils, year-on-year, and takes account of shifting trends in employment opportunities.

### **Collaborating with others can provide wider choice**

**Sharing educational provision between schools and within and across Area Learning Communities can benefit both learners and the community.**

58. School governors and leaders have a statutory duty under the requirements of the entitlement framework to provide their learners with a broad and balanced curriculum; it is their responsibility to bring the resources of the post-primary, special and further education providers in their respective Area Learning Community to bear in order to widen curricular choice and prioritise the needs of the learner above the interests of any individual organisation.

*“While the quality of curriculum planning varies across the schools inspected in this reporting period, the most effective practice was characterised by purposeful and meaningful collaboration within the respective Area Learning Communities (ALCs) to enhance progression pathways.”*

59. In addition, the Department of Education’s shared education strategy<sup>24</sup> promotes approaches which aim to ensure that every learner can benefit from high quality learning experiences. The Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project funded by the Department of Education, OFMdfM and Atlantic Philanthropies involves 314 schools in 134 partnerships for 22,036 learners.

60. Early ETI evidence<sup>25</sup> shows that collaborative approaches to planning and delivery are benefiting learners through improved opportunities for leadership roles

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<sup>24</sup> *Sharing Works: A Policy for Shared Education.* Department of Education. 2015.

<sup>25</sup> *An Interim Report on the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project.* ETI. (in preparation)

and responsibilities and, in the best practice, by being actively engaged in planning and evaluating the shared learning programmes. The development of the work in local communities is limited due to the initial focus on building relationships between schools themselves. As the partnerships develop, further support will be required in managing sensitive and controversial issues.

## Good careers guidance connects aspiration to progress

61. Ninety percent of post-primary schools provide well-informed, impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance alongside relevant, well-planned and challenging workplace experiences for the pupils. Where the provision was not good enough, the pupils were not provided with a sufficiently broad knowledge of alternative career pathways, in particular through vocational training and apprenticeships. Links with local employers are underdeveloped and, more generally, insufficient attention is paid to the coherent development of the skills valued by employers.

62. In work-based learning, a majority of the provision is good or better: there is an appropriate focus on establishing successful career progression pathways for the trainees and apprentices who are mostly knowledgeable, well-informed and supported with up-to-date insightful information within their sectors.

***“In March 2016, the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy jointly launched a strategy for careers education and guidance<sup>26</sup>. Both Departments are committed to taking forward this important work and have initiated actions to address the areas identified in the strategy review.”***

63. As part of the strategy the ETI contributes to the Careers Advisory Forum (CAF). The CAF was set up to make recommendations to the Ministers, of both Departments, on ways to engage employers, educators, parents and other key stakeholders more deeply in careers education and guidance, and particularly between the business and education sectors.

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<sup>26</sup> *Preparing for Success 2015-2020 – A Strategy for Careers Education and Guidance. Department of Education and Department for the Economy. 2016.*

## Apprenticeships add to a choice of pathways open to learners

**Apprenticeships provide high quality progression routes in both professional and technical areas that fulfil career aspirations.**

64. The Department for the Economy's strategy, *Securing Our Success*,<sup>27</sup> sets out clear policy commitments for apprenticeships: the range available continues to grow, especially in new economically important areas such as financial services and computer science.

*"Inspection evidence of the current apprenticeship frameworks shows that provision is mostly well-planned and linked effectively to employment and progression opportunities."*

65. In the best organisations, apprentices develop consistently high-level occupational skills and technical knowledge. A key strength is the effective use of workplace mentors, dedicated to advising and supporting the apprentices.

20

## Provision is improving in work-based learning

**The overall effectiveness of work-based learning provision is improving when compared with inspections in the previous period.**

66. Sixty-seven percent of the work-based learning organisations inspected were evaluated as having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement. The more effective practice is characterised by good quality learning, training and teaching, matched closely to the individual learning styles and needs of the trainees and apprentices<sup>28</sup>.

67. It is a concern, however, that in the remaining organisations inspected there are important or significant areas for improvement in the provision for learning; the training is characterised by poor planning, limited challenge and a curriculum that is too narrow.

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<sup>27</sup> [www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/securing-our-success-northern-ireland-strategy-apprenticeships](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/securing-our-success-northern-ireland-strategy-apprenticeships)

<sup>28</sup> Apprentices are in employment and trainees are working towards employment.



## The further education sector is developing an innovative youth training pilot

68. The youth training pilots provide a level 2 baccalaureate style qualification, (corresponding to five GCSEs at grades at A\* to C and equivalent) that are intended to provide young people with a solid foundation of skills and experience. The qualification is recognised by employers and provides opportunities to progress toward employment. The colleges of further education piloted a small number of innovative programmes to test aspects of the Department for the Economy's strategy for Youth Training, Generating our Success,<sup>29</sup> during 2015-2016.

*"The ETI evaluation of the pilots<sup>30</sup> identified many strengths, particularly in new ways of integrating workplace learning into the curriculum through project-based learning, and in the progress made by students in achieving GCSEs in English and mathematics."*

69. The evaluation also made recommendations that informed the The Department for the Economy's implementation plan and the colleges' curriculum planning.

21

## Innovative practice is developing to tackle economic inactivity through the European Social Fund projects

70. The Department for the Economy's European Social Fund Programme, through 64 projects, aims to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and to increase the skills of the large number of young people not in education, employment or training, or those currently in work. In the early stages, and based on evaluation visits on the legacy programme (2007-13), ETI evidence is that there are many examples of innovative practice and that most projects are meeting well the needs of their target groups, with positive initial outcomes.

## Science education has more to do

**The quality of the provision for science is less than good in 33% of post-primary schools inspected.**

<sup>29</sup> [www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/generating-our-success-northern-ireland-strategy-youth-training](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/generating-our-success-northern-ireland-strategy-youth-training)

<sup>30</sup> *Evaluation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Further Education, published June 2015; A Longitudinal Evaluation of the Youth Training pilot programmes at level 2 provided by the six colleges of further education in Northern Ireland, published April 2016; and An evaluation of the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative Project in the six colleges of further education in Northern Ireland, published June 2016.*

71. There has been a modest growth in the uptake of STEM subjects, although mainly in grammar schools. The quality of the provision in 33% of science departments inspected is less than good. Pupils in non-selective schools have fewer opportunities to study science subjects at Key Stage 4 (KS4). At post-16, in a minority of non-selective schools, pupils have limited access to A level courses in biology, chemistry or physics.

72. Evidence from a range of sources<sup>31</sup> indicates that the STEM sectors of the economy in Northern Ireland find it difficult to recruit and retain employees at technician and graduate levels and there is a need to increase further the opportunities for females entering STEM careers. There is more to be done to attract further participation in STEM<sup>32</sup> and other areas that have been identified as being of particular and significant importance to Northern Ireland's manufacturing economy and where there is a particular skills deficit<sup>33</sup>.

### Digital technology is used to support teaching more than enhancing learning

**Young people may be more digitally confident than some teachers, but not all teachers and learners are sufficiently competent educational users.**

73. While the effective use of ICT-enhanced teaching is a feature of many schools inspected, too many teachers, and most learners, still lack the knowledge, skills and confidence to harness digital technologies effectively to enrich learning across the whole curriculum.

*“Encouragingly, in 54% of primary schools inspected the children now use ICT well to enhance their learning and are developing elementary coding skills. In a minority of primary schools, drill and practice applications are used excessively.”*

74. In 2014-16, 81% of lessons in post-primary ICT subject classes were evaluated as good or better (it was 63% in the previous reporting period 2012-14, and 46% in 2010-12).

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31 [www.fsb.org.uk/LegacySitePath/policy/rp/ni/assets/economic%20strategy%20response%20final%20version%20240211.pdf](http://www.fsb.org.uk/LegacySitePath/policy/rp/ni/assets/economic%20strategy%20response%20final%20version%20240211.pdf)

32 Engineering report, Engineering UK. 2016.  
[www.engineeringuk.com/Research/Engineering-UK-Report-2016/](http://www.engineeringuk.com/Research/Engineering-UK-Report-2016/)

33 Inspiring Growth: CBI/Pearson Education and skills survey. 2015.  
<http://news.cbi.org.uk/business-issues/education-and-skills/gateway-to-growth-cbi-pearson-education-and-skills-survey-2015/>

The new Advanced level course in software systems development has been a successful introduction<sup>34</sup>.

## Learners benefit from being multi-lingual

**The fall in provision and the continued low uptake of modern languages is a matter of serious concern.**

75. The continued low uptake of modern languages remains a major concern and challenge for Northern Ireland<sup>35</sup>. Learning another language contributes well to promoting mutual understanding, improving community cohesion and enabling young people to enjoy the economic, social and cultural benefits of living in a global society.

76. More needs to be done to encourage pupils in post-primary schools to study languages beyond KS3. It is regrettable that the well-received Primary Modern Languages Programme has not been built upon in a more strategic manner. Northern Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom where there is no entitlement to languages provision in the primary curriculum.

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*34 Joint Council For Qualifications provisional A level data for Summer 2016 shows pupils in Northern Ireland attaining (at grades A\* to C) in Software Systems Development A level 15.6 percentage points higher than for those taking a similar A level course in England and 24.9 percentage points higher than those in Wales.*

*35 Annual Qualifications Insight 2016 published by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (p28).*

## Some learners risk being overlooked

**A significant minority of young people<sup>36</sup> attending EOTAS centres are receiving provision that is not good enough.**

77. The majority of the twelve specialist centres inspected demonstrated either a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement. The centres report a continued increase in the numbers of young people presenting with mental health and anxiety-related conditions which highlights the need for more effective capacity building in mainstream schools to support vulnerable young people.

*“Where provision is not good enough, effective communication is lacking between the EOTAS centre and the respective home schools which impacts adversely on the re-integration of young people into mainstream education<sup>37</sup>.”*

78. It is important that the EOTAS staff have suitably high expectations of the young people, both for their behaviour and for what they can achieve, in order to raise their aspirations.

24

## All young people need to build resilience

**Given the complex challenges faced by learners, schools need to make preventative education a higher priority.**

79. The social context of relationships, values, attitudes and behaviours in which children and young people live and learn has changed significantly since the requirement to address Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) was set out in the Northern Ireland curriculum.

80. For example, both the ETI’s evaluation of preventative education and the statutory curriculum to inform the Independent Inquiry<sup>38</sup> into Child Sexual Exploitation<sup>39</sup> and the

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<sup>36</sup> Around 645 young people attend EOTAS centres.

<sup>37</sup> DE Circular 2014/24 - Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) guidance  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201424-education-otherwise-school-eotas-guidance>

<sup>38</sup> The Marshall Report was the report of an independent, expert-led inquiry. November 2014.

<sup>39</sup> An Evaluation of Preventative Education and the Statutory Curriculum to inform the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation. ETI. November 2014.

ETI's second evaluation of RSE,<sup>40</sup> including sexual development, sexual orientation, sexual abuse and the risks associated with online social environments, recommend that

***“it is timely to review the need for strengthening the resilience of children and young people at all levels through stronger and more explicit preventative education within the wider taught pastoral care curriculum.”***

81. The Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015 came into effect in December 2015. The Act places a statutory duty on government departments/agencies to co-operate with each other and other children's services providers, which includes schools and youth groups, to improve the well-being of children and young people. The Act also requires that the Northern Ireland Executive adopt a Children and Young People's Strategy setting out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people and to report on how co-operation has taken place and how their well-being has improved<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> *Relationships and Sexuality Education in Primary and Special Schools. ETI. July 2016.*

<sup>41</sup> *The Strategy will go to consultation during November 2016 with the aim of being adopted by the Executive and laid in the Assembly by March 2017.*

## Leadership and management

### Most of our schools have sound strategic leadership

**Strategic leadership at senior level is good or better in most schools, but not all.**

82. In this inspection period most pre-school (82%), primary (79%) and post-primary (86%) schools demonstrated strategic leadership that is good or better. These outcomes are in line with the findings for schools inspected in the previous Chief Inspector's Report (2012-14), with the exception of post-primary schools, where leadership was good or better in only 66% of schools inspected.

*"The quality of monitoring and self-evaluation leading to improvement remains key to addressing any shortcomings."*

83. All schools would benefit from revisiting the recommendations of the ETI review of the leadership programmes and, where appropriate, implementing changes that are identified such as developing the capacity of middle management to lead and manage for improvement<sup>42</sup>.

### And most pupils benefit from well-led schools

**The quality of leadership evaluated as outstanding or very good is similar in non-grammar schools when compared to grammar schools, but in a higher proportion of grammar schools it is not good enough.**

84. Nearly all the non-grammar schools and most of the grammar schools inspected had

*"good or better leadership, which is characterised by: high levels of expectation for all, a well-matched, enabling curriculum and well-informed actions that lead to improvement."*

85. It was less than good in 25% of the grammar schools inspected, compared with 10% of the non-grammar schools. Weaknesses were found in aspects of monitoring and evaluation, curriculum provision and in standards that were less than good.

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<sup>42</sup> Preparing School Principals to be Effective Leaders. ETI. April 2013.

86. The quality of leadership at middle management level is more variable, with around 20% of inspections identifying this aspect of leadership as either an important or significant area for improvement. While accepting that the work of many middle leaders is well-intentioned, a lack of expertise and understanding underpins the need for higher quality coaching that would give these leaders valuable help, support and the necessary leadership skills.

## Every pupil counts

### **Too many pupils are not completing post-16 courses, while many are declared ineligible and do not appear on the schools' publicly reported statistics.**

87. Based on enrolment data and evidence collated during inspections in the academic year 2015-16, it is a concern that over 2,000 year 13 pupils failed to progress to year 14. There may be genuine reasons why a small proportion of pupils may not wish to complete their post-16 study, but it is evident that too many pupils, who commence a two-year programme of study, are refused or discouraged, from progressing to year 14. Often schools are inappropriately publishing criteria for entry into year 14 which are determined more by fears over the position of the school in league tables published by the media than by the best interests of the pupils. Schools must recognise they have a responsibility to ensure that pupils, who begin post-16 study, have the pre-requisite skills and level of attainment to undertake the full two-year course, and that they are well supported to make progress in their learning.

***"In 2015, according to Department of Education data, approximately 1,600 year 12 pupils, equivalent to around 7% of the cohort, were declared ineligible from inclusion in school's reported performance in GCSE examinations."***

88. The criteria for the permitted exclusion of pupils from public examinations data, in particular the parental consent criterion, need to be the subject of further investigation and research. School leadership needs to act with integrity in order to be accurate and transparent with all stakeholders with regard to how many pupils are declared ineligible from inclusion in their statistics when they are being quoted for accountability, publicity or any other purposes.

### Self-evaluation drives improvement

#### Self-evaluation is improving in most instances.

89. When compared with the previous reporting period, most schools are becoming much better at self-evaluation. The process of self-evaluation leading to improvement is the core business of leaders in all learning organisations and thousands of learners benefit where it has a positive impact. However, it remains under-developed in a minority of organisations.

90. Schools, in particular, have access to significant amounts of pupil data, including performance outcomes and pastoral information, but shortcomings remain in using such data to bring about improvement. In the most effective instances, schools use pastoral and assessment information together in order to track and support the progress of all learners and can demonstrate to what extent they are progressing to their full potential.

91. When it is done as an exercise in itself, rather than as a catalyst for improvement, self-evaluation becomes superficial and associated actions fail to benefit the learners. In such cases, there is too much paper work and too little action. For example, where teaching gives cause for concern, failing to ensure that teachers receive accurate evaluative feedback and support to improve their practice ultimately fails the pupils.

92. Self-evaluation and quality improvement planning is used effectively by a majority of work-based learning organisations, youth centres and EOTAS providers inspected. There is increasing evidence of organisations having systems in place to collate, analyse and report on key performance indicators and this is used increasingly well to plan for progression and achievement.

93. The quality of leadership in 63% of the work-based learning organisations inspected is good or better. Where it is not good enough, there is limited involvement of key stakeholders and course teams, and tutors lack the capacity to make rigorous and evidence-based judgements about the quality of the provision.



## Strong governance works for learners

**Governance works better when it has all the information needed to answer the question: *how well are we doing?***

94. Most governors are passionate and loyal to the organisations they serve; their dedication is commendable<sup>43</sup>. Their strengths frequently include their knowledge of, and support for, the work and life of the organisation.

95. By contrast, shortcomings are commonly due to their

*“having insufficient information that allows them to understand better how well their learners are doing. Being insufficiently informed can lead to accepting lower standards in the widest sense, albeit unknowingly.”*

96. In 48% of primary schools inspected, governors were not always well enough informed about the statutory levels of progression in communication and using mathematics, and the teachers' use of internal data to establish baselines for evaluating attainment, and therefore could not fully support leadership in raising the standards.

97. In 45% of post-primary schools inspected, governors needed to be able to measure the extent to which the pupils' learning is progressing, be better informed about the effectiveness of their senior and middle managers, and exercise their challenge function more proactively, where needed.

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<sup>43</sup> The term governance applies across all schools phases, including boards of management in other settings.

## Staff development builds capacity

**Schools must continue to develop further effective staff development arrangements, with employing authorities providing more challenge where appropriate, to be at least as effective as that provided in Further Education colleges<sup>44</sup>.**

98. Given the challenges facing public sector budgets and the changes made to education support services,

*“schools must continue to develop internal capacity further for providing high quality in-house professional learning. Inspection outcomes show that there is excellent capacity already in the system and that sharing this and learning from each other will provide significant benefits.”*

99. Schools have access to an additional five days for whole-school staff development, at an opportunity cost of approximately £15 million: a considerable resource for promoting improvement which brings benefits when used well.

100. It is important that the EA and the relevant employing authorities continue to support, guide and advise. Learners will benefit from the EA and the employing authorities challenging more robustly those schools which underperform, or are at risk of underperforming, or are too slow in making the necessary changes. It is timely to recommend an increase in the pace of change for implementing the EA's role in school development and support.

*“Across the six further education colleges, the quality of the continuing professional development (CPD) provided for staff ranges from good to outstanding.”*

101. In four of the colleges there is evidence of very good or outstanding CPD arrangements that are evolving continuously to adapt to the changing needs of college workforce development planning. In these colleges, CPD has a central role in underpinning strategic curriculum planning and development, with a clear focus on supporting the Northern Ireland economy.

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<sup>44</sup> Evaluation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Further Education, published June 2015.

## But performance review in schools has a way to go

### **Performance Review: Staff Development (PRSD) has limited impact on school improvement.**

102. There is limited impact of PRSD arrangements to identify and meet individual staff development needs and, ultimately, to contribute to school improvement. The contribution of the process to school improvement is marginal at best.

103. Too many principals and senior managers report that the process of monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision within the classroom is hindered by objections and challenges that come from the teaching unions. Consequently, this constrains and undermines the capacity of senior and middle management to observe and monitor the effectiveness of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting better learning and experiences for the pupils.

## **Staff need support to meet more effectively the learning needs of the increasing number of pupils with special needs in mainstream education**

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104. Inclusion remains at the centre of the policies and procedures which emerged from the review of special educational needs (SEN) and inclusion. A new SEN Framework is to be put in place during 2017-18. This will comprise the SEND Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, SEN Regulations, a new Code of Practice and a capacity-building programme. The SEN Framework, once commenced, will give children over compulsory school age new rights and will provide reduced timescales for the statutory assessment process.

105. The emphasis on securing inclusion in education has resulted in 67,082 pupils with special educational needs being educated in mainstream schools; an approximate 4% increase since the last reporting period. Similarly, over the same period, there has been a 7% increase in the numbers of pupils with a range of special educational needs attending special schools. Pupils' individual learning needs are not met sufficiently in one-sixth of the post-primary schools inspected.

***“Meeting the needs of these pupils is challenging for staff in both mainstream and in special schools. This requires a clear strategy for CPD to equip staff to deal more effectively with the increased complexity of learning needs.”***

106. In addition, more work needs to be done to provide these most vulnerable pupils with access to a curriculum that is suited to them, including increased access to skills-based training.

### **Safeguarding all learners must come first**

**It is unacceptable that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not comprehensive in all schools.**

107. Across most pre-schools, primary and post-primary schools there is a better understanding and a closer alignment of the pastoral and academic aspects of the school's provision, resulting in better support for pupils' welfare. It is concerning that, in 24% of pre-school settings and primary schools and almost one in five post-primary schools inspected, the arrangements for safeguarding the pupils are not comprehensive and do not reflect adequately the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

***"The most common shortcomings are in failing to provide updated training for staff and governors, reviewing policy and practice in line with Department of Education Circulars, and implementing robust risk assessments."***

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108. It is imperative that schools and governors recognise that they are ultimately responsible for securing the safety of children in their care. Being unaware of what is expected for securing high quality safeguarding is no defence and presents significant and unacceptable risks to children and young people.

## Inspection leads to improvement

### The follow-up inspection process works well in most instances

#### Inspection leads to improvement across all phases.

109. The ETI's follow-up inspection process is a key driver of school improvement. During this reporting period, there were in 131 follow-up inspections in total across all phases. Of the 123 organisations<sup>45</sup> that had follow-up inspections 77% were able to demonstrate improvement and 21% stayed at the same performance level. Two organisations regressed and need to address urgently significant areas for improvement.

110. Across pre-school, primary, special and post-primary schools, of the 95 that were in the follow-up process, 78% improved sufficiently to exit, which has resulted in better provision for an average of more than 15,000 pupils.

**“Too many schools, where the pace of improvement is too slow, are still being followed up to ensure that they provide a high quality education for learners.”**

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### Progress in improvement remains too slow for certain groups of schools

#### Many of the post-primary schools subject to follow-up and/or in formal intervention are from the controlled sector.

111. It is concerning that of the 27 post-primary schools<sup>46</sup> subject to a follow-up inspection during the reporting period, only 48% improved and now have the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Of the 27 post-primary schools, 55% (15) were controlled, 26% (seven) integrated and the remaining five were either catholic maintained or voluntary grammar schools.

<sup>45</sup> A number of organisations had more than one follow-up inspection in the reporting period.

<sup>46</sup> Of the 27 schools one had two follow-up inspections.

112. Furthermore, four controlled post-primary schools were evaluated as needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement and were deemed eligible by DE for tailored support through the formal intervention process (FIP) <sup>47</sup>.

**Many of the primary schools subject to follow-up and in formal intervention were from the catholic maintained sector.**

113. During the reporting period, 19 primary schools, 74% (14) of which are maintained schools, were evaluated as needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement. The quality of leadership in these schools also had significant shortcomings.

**There are 26 schools in FIP and significant improvements are still necessary.**

114. By the end of the reporting period, 26 schools (19 primary; four post-primary; and three special schools) were deemed eligible for tailored support through the FIP process by DE, including seven which entered the process during the previous reporting period. Eight schools left the FIP in the reporting period, which has resulted in a marked improvement in provision for those pupils.

## 34 **Inspection is also leading to improvement in a wider range of learning organisations.**

115. There were follow-up inspections in one further education college and in five work-based learning organisations. Five of the six improved sufficiently to exit the follow-up process. Of the seven youth organisations in the follow-up process, six improved sufficiently to exit the process.

## **Where there is commitment, improvement can happen**

116. Sustained improvement occurs when governors, leaders, managers, and teaching and support staff understand and accept that improvement and external support are required. As a consequence, they engage openly in professional development to change pedagogy and working practice to improve the quality of learning experiences and the standards the learners achieve.

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<sup>47</sup> *Every School A Good School. Department of Education. 2009.*

## The work of the Education and Training Inspectorate

### Fulfilling the role of the representative brings significant benefits

#### **Participating in inspection team meetings and in joint lesson observations improves transparency and benefits the organisation being inspected.**

117. The ETI invites organisations being inspected to nominate a representative of their senior management team to attend and contribute to the inspection team meetings and the final moderation meeting to hear all of the discussions.

*“This makes the process of inspection much more transparent and supports the organisation’s quality improvement process. The role of the representative has been very well received.”*

118. Moreover, the ETI offers joint lesson observations, where a senior leader in the organisation undertakes observations jointly with an inspector in order to develop a common understanding of what effective teaching looks like.

### What to expect when inspected

#### **The ETI values and promotes effective engagement with its stakeholders.**

119. The ETI provides a range of comprehensive inspection guidance materials which are available to the management and staff of schools and other organisations. In addition, the ETI held a major engagement conference in September 2015 to which all organisations likely to be inspected over a two-year period were invited and at which the inspection process was explained in detail.

### **New inspection models and other changes are in response to feedback**

#### **The ETI takes feedback seriously, responds appropriately and strives continually for improvement.**

120. Following extensive consultation, the descriptors used for evaluating performance levels in achievement, provision and leadership changed in September 2015. The terms 'outstanding', 'very good' and 'good' have been retained; the terms 'satisfactory', 'inadequate' and 'unsatisfactory' have been replaced by 'important area(s) for improvement', 'requires significant improvement' and 'requires urgent improvement'.

121. Furthermore, the overall effectiveness conclusions were reduced from six statements to four, which now highlight the extent of the capacity, or lack of capacity, of the organisation to identify the next steps, to improve and to sustain improvement.

122. The pilot Sustaining Improvement model of inspection for organisations previously evaluated as outstanding and very good, is now extended to those previously evaluated as good. The inspection focuses on the organisation demonstrating to inspectors that they have the capacity to sustain improvement.

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### **The ETI contributes to capacity building**

#### **Internal self-evaluation supported by external scrutiny promotes improvement and gives strong assurances to the wider community.**

123. The ETI is supportive of all education and training organisations that seek to use a wide range of robust self-evaluation processes to promote improvement in the interest of the learners. Effective internal self-evaluation supported by external evaluation, through inspection, is important for improving the quality of education and training.

124. In carrying out its work in the public interest, the ETI seeks to work at all times in ways which build the capacity of those in the organisations being inspected.

125. The ETI does this through: professional dialogue during inspections; the supportive way in which inspectors work with organisations in their district inspector role; through running its own dissemination events and contributing to many capacity building events run by other organisations; and through the production of videos of best practice in hand with ESaGS.tv.



*“and most significantly of all by the recruitment and training of many hundreds of senior and middle managers from all types of organisations inspected to work alongside inspectors on inspections and evaluations as Associate Assessors.”*

## **The ETI is strongly committed to the scrutiny of its own work**

126. The ETI represents the interests of the learner and provides a strong, independent and external challenge to any poor practice, including deficiencies in internal self-evaluation. The independent professional view brought by the ETI strengthens accountability, providing assurance about quality and effectiveness both to the learning organisation and to the community it serves.

127. In order for continuous improvement and increased transparency, a post-inspection evaluation is conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to evaluate the performance of the ETI and Inspection Services Team (IST) during the inspection process. All teaching staff in a school/organisation have the opportunity to respond to the survey. The outcomes of this evaluation are analysed and monitored to inform directly the ETI’s corporate planning and continuous improvement of the inspection process.

## Conclusion

In the previous Chief Inspector's Report (2012-14), I identified a number of key challenges to ensure all learners in Northern Ireland receive high quality education and training and fulfil their potential. These included improving outcomes for learners; building on high quality provision; ensuring high quality leadership and management; reducing the variability of access to good provision; urging parents, carers and other stakeholders to get more involved; ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum; raising the ambition and aspiration of learners; developing capacity and high quality professional development for staff and, building on The Sharing in Education programme. Progress, which is outlined in Appendix 1 which follows, has been made in many of these areas.

However, challenges remain.

### Key challenges for education and training in Northern Ireland

There is a need to:

- improve achievements and standards for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and for boys and Looked After Children in particular;
- become more effective in early identification and supportive intervention for individuals with learning challenges;
- collaborate to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which is better adapted to the needs of learners and takes account of the current economic restraints;
- provide preventative education which strengthens the resilience of young people without diminishing their initiative and independence;
- continue to build the capacity of teachers and leaders at all levels to act as leaders of learning and be more effective in evaluating and continually improving provision and practice; and
- ensure more effective support and more rapid resolution of issues for schools and providers in challenging circumstances.

It will be important that these challenges are addressed for the benefit of all learners.



# Pre-school education



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**84% of pre-school settings inspected were evaluated as having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement**

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## Going well

Highly effective provision in a greater proportion of nursery units, and in the voluntary and private pre-school settings, when compared with the settings inspected in the previous reporting period.

Children's good or better progress across all aspects of the pre-school curriculum.

Improvements in early identification and effective intervention for children with special learning needs.

The quality of immersion in the Irish language in Irish-medium settings.

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## Going forward

Principals in primary schools with nursery units need to provide consistently high quality leadership; early years specialists need to provide more consistently effective support to leaders in pre-school settings.

Greater collaboration is required, within and across the sectors (particularly for transition to the foundation stage) to share best practice and build effectively upon the progress in learning that the children have already made.

## The effectiveness of provision in pre-school settings

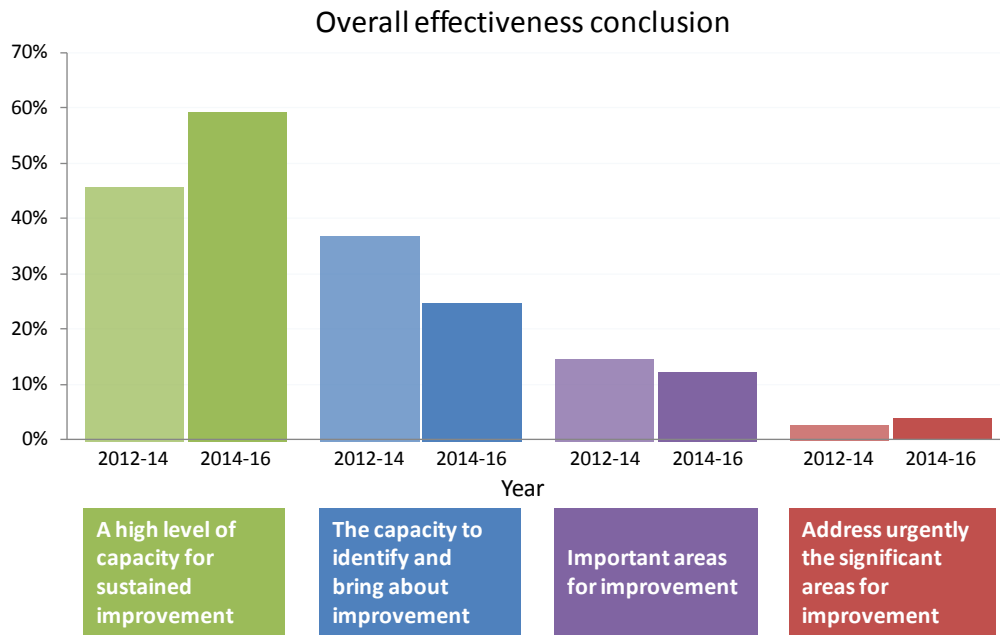
### Context

128. The number of children in funded pre-school provision has continued to grow, rising from 23,507 in 2013-14 to 24,173 in 2015-16, an increase of almost three percentage points. Three-quarters of that growth was in the voluntary and private sector. There are 803 pre-school settings (an increase of 23 in the past two years), comprising: 96 nursery schools, 235 nursery units (an increase of 7), 67 classes with 241 reception children and 405 private and voluntary settings (an increase of 16). Almost 66% of pre-school children enrolled attend in statutory settings.

Pre-school inspection evidence 2014-16	
<b>Total pre-school inspections</b>	<b>223</b>
Voluntary/private settings*	127
Nursery schools	21
Nursery units	66
Reception classes	9
<b>Number of follow-up inspections</b>	<b>36</b>
Voluntary/private settings*	24
Nursery schools	2
Nursery units	8
Reception classes	2
<b>Number of baseline inspections</b>	<b>21</b>
Voluntary/private settings*	17
Nursery units	4

\* including funded places in playgroups and nurseries.

### Overall effectiveness (across all early years settings)



43

129. The Pre-School Education Programme (formerly Pre-School Education Expansion Programme)<sup>48</sup> is 18 years old; over that time there has been a steady improvement in the overall quality and effectiveness of early years provision, with that in nursery schools and nursery units in primary schools being the more effective overall.

130. Of all the pre-school settings inspected in 2014-16; 84% were evaluated as having a high level of capacity or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. There is a larger proportion of nursery units, nursery schools and voluntary and private pre-school settings, where there is highly effective provision, when compared with the settings inspected in the previous reporting period.

<sup>48</sup> The Pre-school Expansion Programme extended early years provision beyond nursery schools to units in primary schools and to the voluntary and private sector.

*Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning (DE, 2013) is now the policy framework for early years education and learning, including pre-school provision.*

### Overall effectiveness<sup>49</sup>

<b>Nursery units</b>	2012-14	44%	46%	9%	2%
	2014-16	61%	30%	5%	5%
<b>Nursery schools</b>	2012-14	79%	13%	8%	0%
	2014-16	90%	5%	5%	0%
<b>Voluntary/private pre-school</b>	2012-14	39%	38%	19%	4%
	2014-16	54%	25%	17%	4%

A high level of capacity for sustained improvement	The capacity to identify and bring about improvement	Important areas for improvement	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
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131. Almost all of the provision in nursery schools (95%) and nursery units (91%) was evaluated as having a high level capacity or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement compared with 79% of voluntary and private settings. This means that one in five of the voluntary and private playgroups were evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

132. Nine of the twelve Irish-medium voluntary and statutory naiscoileanna inspected were evaluated as having a high level capacity or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

133. Overall, variation across pre-school settings in the quality of provision, the standards achieved and the leadership and management, including the effectiveness of the management group, remains too wide.

### Achievements and standards

134. Most children across all pre-school settings are making good or better progress in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum. There are high standards in the development of the children's attention and listening skills, independence, self-management and social skills.

<sup>49</sup> Percentages in tables may not add up to 100 due to rounding.





135. Almost all children make significant progress within their pre-school year, most effectively, (in 90% of all settings) in their personal development, motivating them to become more independent in their learning. Their overall achievements are at least good or better in all nursery schools, in almost all nursery units (95%) and in most voluntary and private settings (87%).

136. It is a general concern that they do not continue to make the same progress in making independent choices, especially during play-based learning, in the foundation stage.

137. In nursery schools, the children's achievements are mostly outstanding or very good in all areas, except in the use of ICT. Furthermore, overall achievement evaluated as outstanding in the nursery schools, compared with those inspected in the previous period, has more than doubled from 29% to 67%. However, in all settings, even where achievements were evaluated as outstanding, there is a need to improve achievement in numeracy and early mathematical skills.

138. Of voluntary and private settings inspected in the period 63% were evaluated as outstanding or very good, a significantly larger proportion than those inspected during the previous reporting period (45%); this is now comparable with the standards being achieved in nursery units.

### Achievements and standards

<b>Nursery units</b>	2012-14	18%	39%	39%	5%	0%	0%
	2014-16	20%	44%	30%	3%	3%	0%
<b>Nursery schools</b>	2012-14	29%	50%	21%	0%	0%	0%
	2014-16	67%	24%	5%	5%	0%	0%
<b>Voluntary/private pre-school</b>	2012-14	16%	29%	39%	14%	3%	0%
	2014-16	20%	43%	24%	13%	0%	1%

Outstanding	Very good	Good	Important areas for improvement	Requires significant improvement	Requires urgent improvement
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139. The development of physical movement and skills is less effective for young children: in 80% of settings inspected the children's response to music and dance was under-developed.

140. Despite an observed increase in the number of children entering pre-school with language delays, in 87% of settings inspected the children make very good or outstanding progress in developing their oral communication skills. However, their progress in developing their listening skills through the regular use of song, rhymes and rhythms is not consistent.

#### Effective Practice

Improvement is evident in early science, such as in the development of the children's observation and investigative skills. The children make close observations confidently, express their own ideas and create representations of the world around them.

In naíscoileanna, improvements are evident in very good quality immersion in the Irish language, based on a high level of staff proficiency, and consequent improvement in the children's understanding and early production of Irish.

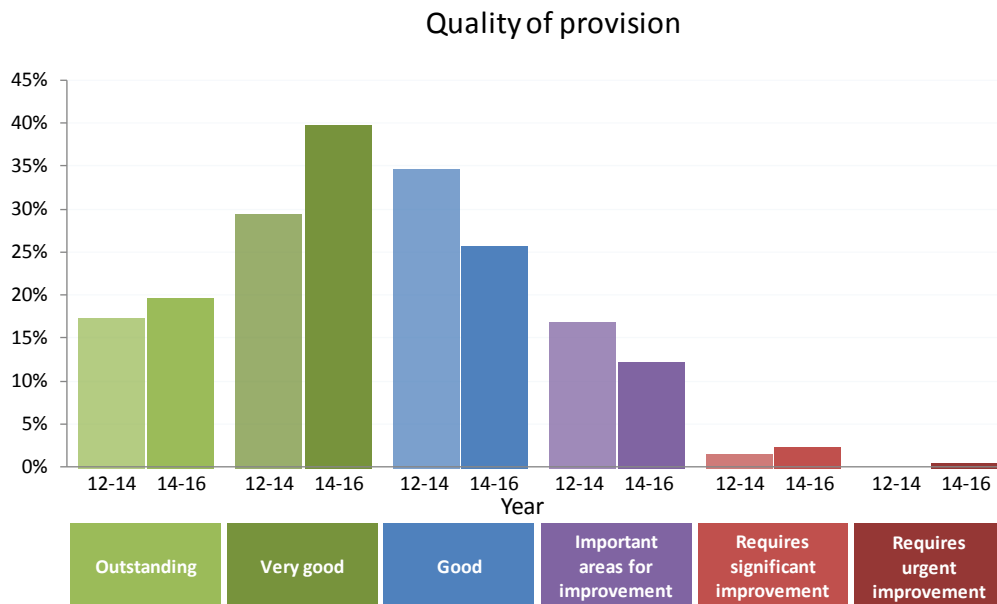
141. Pupils are less competent in their use of technological tools to enhance their learning in early science.

142. Inspectors note a less than positive impact on learning, through fewer opportunities to engage socially, where there are small numbers of pre-school children in

reception groups in primary school settings and in very small playgroups, especially in rural areas. There is a need for children in small pre-school settings, including for pre-school children attending a reception class in a primary school, to progress further in learning, and in particular through play.

**Quality of provision for learning**

143. The quality of provision for learning is high and has improved in all settings inspected compared with those inspected in 2012-14. It was evaluated as good or better in 80% of voluntary and private settings, in 91% of nursery units and in 95% of nursery schools.



144. Over half of both voluntary and private pre-school (55%) and nursery unit (58%) settings inspected in the period were evaluated as outstanding or very good, a significant change from those inspected in the previous period (an increase of 14 percentage points for voluntary and private pre-schools and 11 percentage points for nursery units). Of the nursery schools inspected, 57% were outstanding compared with only 18% of nursery units and 14% of voluntary and private settings.

### Quality of provision

<b>Nursery units</b>	2012-14	16%	30%	42%	11%	2%	0%
	2014-16	18%	39%	33%	6%	3%	0%
<b>Nursery Schools</b>	2012-14	38%	42%	13%	8%	0%	0%
	2014-16	57%	33%	5%	5%	0%	0%
<b>Voluntary/Private pre-school</b>	2012-14	14%	27%	36%	22%	2%	0%
	2014-16	14%	41%	25%	17%	2%	1%



145. Pre-school settings report growing numbers of children presenting with complex learning difficulties and development delay. In the private and voluntary sector, effective early identification of additional needs, identified as a weakness in settings inspected in the previous period, has improved. Better planning and the improved ability of staff to support such learners is, in part, attributed to the impact of high quality training through the special educational needs capacity-building programmes for staff, provided by the EA<sup>50</sup>. There is a need to improve the breadth and quality of provision and of the learning experiences in Irish medium pre-schools.

146. The provision for children to engage productively in indoor and outdoor play, especially with the use of natural and authentic resources is better in the settings inspected over the last two years. Children are engaged in higher quality creative and investigative learning, use mathematical language more confidently and are more independent overall. This learning needs to be built upon more effectively when the children make the transition into the foundation stage.

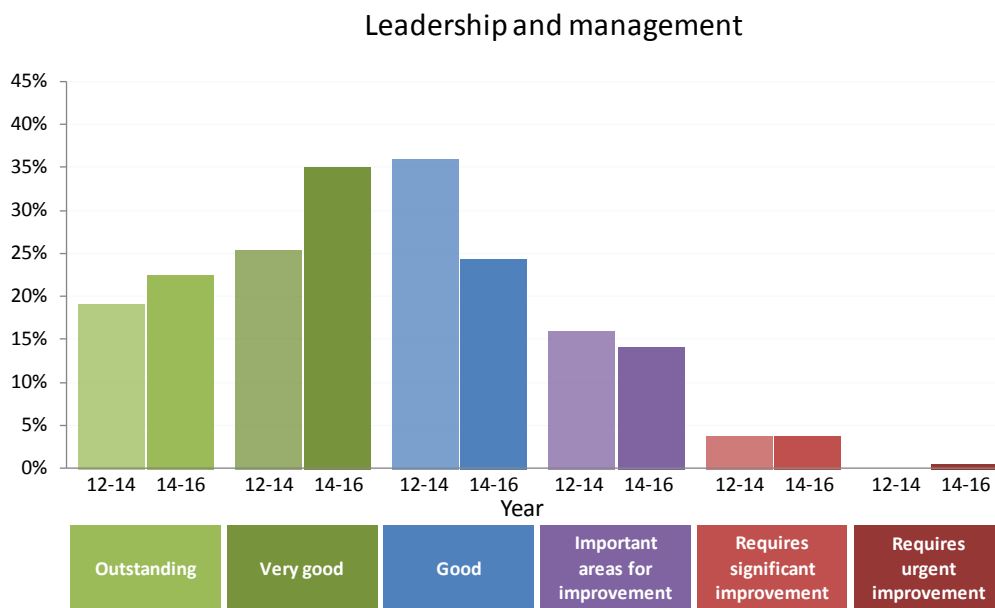
147. Since the beginning of the pre-school expansion programme, DE has intended<sup>51</sup> to phase out reception groups. Since 2012-14, the proportion of children attending reception class provision has fallen by almost 30 percentage points to 1% of all pre-school children. Despite the reduction, inspection evidence continues to indicate that, where the provision is organised as a composite arrangement with year 1 children, a majority do not benefit from an appropriate pre-school curriculum. Furthermore, it also detracts from teaching the older children in the groups as well as from the funding provided to the pre-school providers.

<sup>50</sup> *An Evaluation of The Early Years Special Educational Needs Capacity Building Pilot. ETI. April 2015.*

<sup>51</sup> *Learning to Learn: a framework for early years education and learning, Para 1.16 page 7.*

## Leadership and management

148. The quality of leadership and management is good or better in 82% of all settings inspected, and while there has been significant improvement since the previous period, there is also variation across the sector. More needs to be done to close the gap and ensure that all settings are being led and managed effectively.



149. Leadership and management is good or better in 80% of private and voluntary settings and in 82% of nursery units, whereas it is outstanding or very good in 90% of the nursery schools inspected. When it comes to leadership evaluated as outstanding, 67% of nursery schools were evaluated at this standard. However, the leadership of nursery units, provided by the primary school principal, is outstanding in only 26% of settings inspected.

### Leadership and management

<b>Nursery units</b>	2012-14	16%	23%	45%	13%	4%	0%
	2014-16	26%	32%	24%	15%	3%	0%
<b>Nursery schools</b>	2012-14	50%	25%	17%	8%	0%	0%
	2014-16	67%	24%	5%	5%	0%	0%
<b>Voluntary/private pre-school</b>	2012-14	14%	27%	36%	19%	5%	0%
	2014-16	13%	39%	28%	15%	5%	1%



150. In the náiscoileanna, links and partnerships with parents, other providers and the wider community to identify and meet the current and future needs of learners, are becoming more effective. Improvements may be due to better continuity in staffing, better qualifications of leaders, and better use of evaluation evidence. However, important areas for improvement remain in the understanding of the process of self-evaluation leading to improvement through effective observation and assessment in five of the twelve Irish-medium settings inspected.

151. The continuing high turnover of staff management committee members and early years specialists within private and voluntary settings often leads to rapid changes in the quality of provision and restricts the capacity for staff development. The processes of self-evaluation leading to improvement are not good enough in 24% of such settings. The overall quality of leadership in 20% of voluntary and private settings requires significant improvement.

152. Safeguarding is less than comprehensive in 24% of pre-school settings where, more often than not, training on child protection is not up-to-date and safeguarding policies are not being revised regularly in line with guidance from the relevant Departments.

153. The quality of the support provided by the early years specialists to voluntary and private settings is important to help build leadership capacity, but requires improvement. It is only outstanding or very good in a significant minority of settings (37%). As the early years sector continues to grow, develop and evolve, there are wider and longer-term issues which need to be addressed, such as adequate resources, staff qualifications and continuing professional development. The requirement for new leaders in the voluntary and private sector to hold leadership and management qualifications at level 5 standard, and the impact of this on the role of the early years specialist, requires urgent guidance from the Department of Education.

154. There is a need for a more strategic, co-ordinated approach to improve leadership and management and a more consistent understanding of the cycle of development planning and self-evaluation leading to improvement. Staff, as a whole, need better opportunities for ongoing training and professional development and especially for the sharing of best practice across the whole pre-school statutory and private and voluntary sector.



# Primary education



52

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**79% of primary schools were evaluated as having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement**

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## Going well

Achievements and standards, including English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy, in most schools are good or better.

The children's reading and comprehension skills, when compared with the schools inspected in the previous period.

The quality of provision for learning, and leadership and management, in most schools are good or better.

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## Going forward

Governors need to be better informed about standards and progress, have more strategic oversight of the quality of provision and, with the employing authorities, address instability in senior leadership where necessary.

Children need more meaningful opportunities for mathematical problem solving and investigation, and for the development of their writing skills across the curriculum.

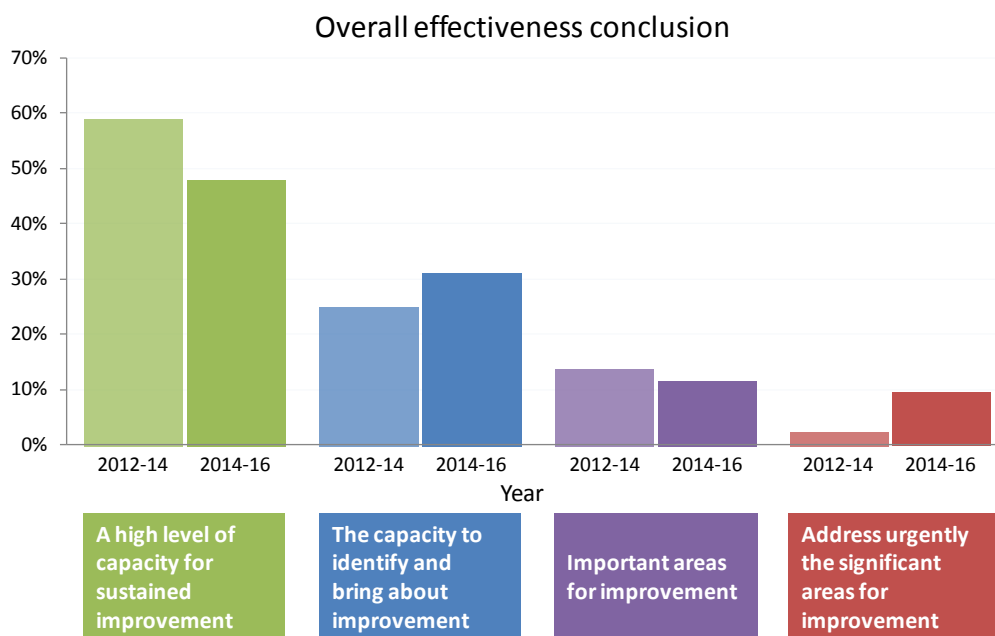
### The effectiveness of provision in primary education

#### Context

155. There has been an increase of 6,674 children in primary schools between 2013-14 and 2015-16. In 2015-16, there were 827 primary schools, a decrease of twelve since 2013-14; this includes a slight reduction in the number of preparatory departments. The number of children educated in Irish-medium schools or units has grown slightly, to just over 2% of the primary school population of 178,222 children. In 2014-16, 19 primary schools were placed in the Department of Education's formal intervention process<sup>52</sup>.

Primary inspection evidence 2014-16	
Total primary inspections	219
Number of follow-up inspections	43
Number of primary lessons evaluated	5,563

<sup>52</sup> *Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement includes a requirement to provide focused support for schools which, as a result of inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), are evaluated as needing to address urgently significant areas for improvement. This support is provided through the Formal Intervention Process (FIP).*



## Overall effectiveness

156. Of the primary school provision inspected in this period 79% was evaluated as having either a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement. This is slightly lower than the comparable figure for the previous reporting period at 84%. Eight Irish-medium primary settings were inspected, with five having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement effectively; and, similarly, eight integrated schools were inspected, with seven demonstrating the capacity to bring about improvement. Eleven percent of primary schools were evaluated as having important areas for improvement; a further 10% needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement.

## Achievements and standards

157. The quality of the children's achievements and standards, including of those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, remains good or better in 88% of the schools inspected. In 56% of schools, the achievements and standards are outstanding or very good. In 17% of schools, children do not make consistent progress in line with their expected stage of development and commensurate with their abilities. They do not build sufficiently on the children's achievements at the transition stages from pre-school to year one and at the end of KS2.



56

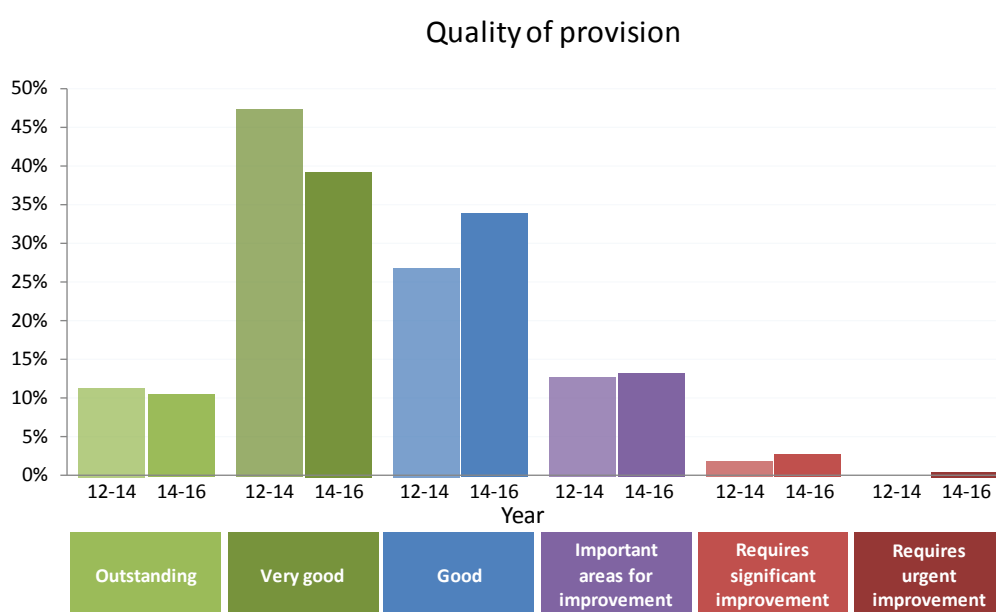
158. In English and literacy, achievements and standards were good or better in 91% of schools (86% in the foundation stage). In 91% of schools, the children's acquisition of higher-order reading and comprehension skills was good or better; 61% of schools are outstanding or very good in this area, an improvement when compared with the schools inspected in the previous period. However, in nine percent of schools, the development of reading remains an important area for improvement. Overall, standards in writing were less consistently good, particularly in the foundation stage. In 20% of the schools inspected, the standard of the children's writing was less than good; as was their ability to develop their writing through other areas of learning, in particular, the World Around Us.

159. Achievements and standards in mathematics and numeracy were good or better in 89% of schools; similarly, in the foundation stage, the standards in mathematics were good or better in 86% of schools. The children have a thorough knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts, explain their thinking using accurate mathematical language and draw upon a wide range of mental mathematics strategies to perform calculations and provide logical reasons for their choices. In almost 17% of schools, the children experienced difficulty in transferring and applying their mathematical skills to other areas of the curriculum.

160. In more than 54% of schools, the children employ skilfully ICT as a medium for learning, which includes the development of coding skills. In 10% of schools, an unmonitored use of applications (apps) for drill and practice acts as a barrier to the development of children's language, learning and social skills.

### Quality of provision for learning

161. The quality of provision for learning remains good or better in most (84%) of the schools inspected; in 50% of the schools, it was outstanding or very good. Better practice is characterised by learning opportunities set in engaging and relevant contexts which promote the children’s independent and creative thinking skills, and provide sufficient challenge and progression in their learning.



162. The quality of learning and teaching was good or better in 87% of primary schools inspected, in just over half (56%) it was very good or outstanding. While teachers are becoming more adept at using performance data to identify potential underachievement and low achievement at whole-school, class and individual level, there is inconsistency in the effective use of the data to meet the children’s specific learning needs at classroom level. In 23% of schools inspected, the quality of marking for improvement, the quality of self- and peer-assessment, and the use of plenary lessons all continue to require improvement.

163. In the foundation stage, 50% of the play-based lessons were very good or outstanding. However, 20% of such lessons had important or significant areas for improvement. In these lessons, the children’s play did not build upon their pre-school experiences and did not develop their investigative approach to learning. In 20% of foundation stage lessons observed, the children have limited opportunities to develop

and express their creative and artistic abilities. Moreover, physical education programmes including energetic play, games, responding to music and engaging in dance are under-developed.

164. The quality of the provision for English and literacy is good or better in 86% of the schools inspected; around 55% were outstanding or very good in fostering the children's enjoyment of talking, reading and writing, and making effective and creative use of ICT for learning. More creative and relevant contexts for the development of literacy skills across the curriculum are needed in 20% of the schools inspected. Shortcomings include an over-emphasis on writing in a limited range of forms, such as autobiographies and instructional writing, and insufficient opportunities for the children to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.

165. The provision for mathematics and numeracy remains good or better in 83% of the schools inspected; 47% were outstanding or very good. The learning programmes incorporate the statutory elements of the mathematics and numeracy curriculum and reflect the crucial emphasis on the development of the children's mathematical skills. The development of problem solving and investigative skills, through both planned and incidental opportunities, was not good enough in 25% of schools. Inspection evidence points to a lack of understanding of the difference between problem solving and investigative work.

166. In the Irish-medium settings inspected, the children benefit from meaningful learning opportunities which support and develop their interests and needs through both Irish and English.

167. A key strength of primary provision is the high quality Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) teaching in almost all of the lessons observed during the ETI evaluation<sup>53</sup> of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

168. The provision in the World Around Us was good or better in 84% of lessons observed. Planning for progression in the children's skills, knowledge and understanding across the contributory strands of history, geography and science and technology remains insufficient, as reported in the ETI's evaluation of the Implementation of the World Around Us in Primary Schools<sup>54</sup>. There has been no significant improvement in this area of learning during the reporting period.

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53 <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/relationships-and-sexuality-education-primary-and-special-schools>

54 <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/evaluation-implementation-world-around-us-primary-schools>

### Effective Practice

In 96% of the schools inspected, the pastoral care provision is good or better. Regular opportunities to contribute meaningfully to school development planning enable the children to effect change in classroom and playground practice directly to the benefit of themselves and the school community.

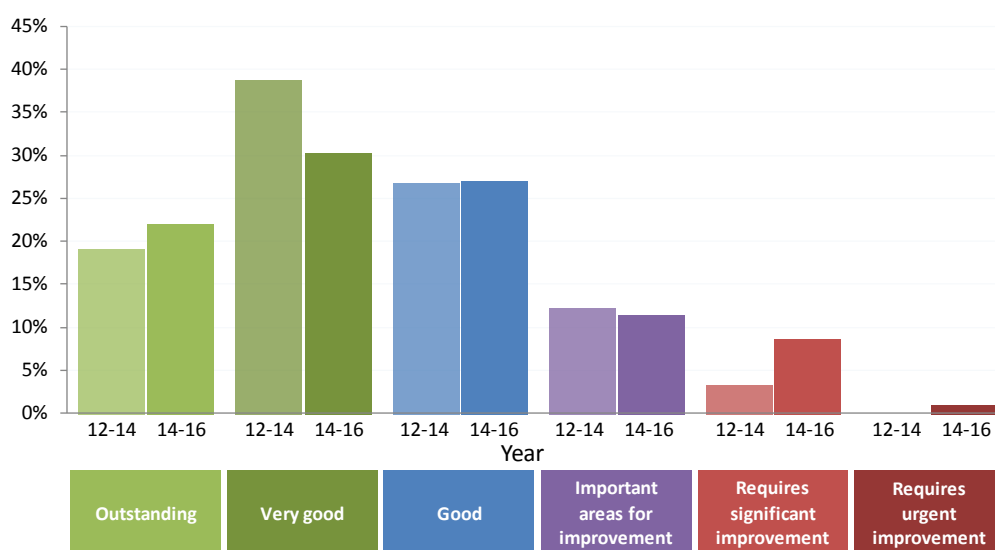
The quality of the provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning remains good or better in most schools. This high-quality provision is characterised by differentiated planning which incorporates a wide range of effective strategies delivered by well-trained teachers and skilful classroom assistants who work in close partnership with parents.

169. The quality of the provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning was not good enough in 11% of the lessons observed. Schools do not track adequately the children’s progress, evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention strategies in place or involve the children and the parents in writing and reviewing education plans.

### Leadership and management

170. The overall quality of leadership and management was good or better in 79% of the schools inspected. The effectiveness of the leadership provided by the senior management was evaluated as good or better in 82% of the schools inspected, with 62% being outstanding or very good. In 22% of schools, the quality of the middle management was not good enough.

Leadership and management



171. Where there are shortcomings at middle management levels, the capability of the learning co-ordinators to evaluate the impact of actions for improvement and make more effective use of qualitative and quantitative information is insufficient. In order to address these shortcomings, it would be beneficial to adopt a strategic approach to using expertise and mentoring within the school, clustering with other schools and sharing good practice, informed by research and a teacher professional learning model.

172. In 77% of schools, the quality of school development planning was good or better, with an appropriate focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching. In 23% of schools, where development planning is less than effective, there is a lack of rigour in identifying the priorities through meaningful consultation with the children, parents, staff and governors and through the effective use of internal assessment data. Too often, the action planning process addresses operational matters rather than focusing on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. In a small number of these schools, ineffective communication and poor working relationships across the school and within its community compound the weaknesses in leadership.

173. An important area for improvement in primary schools is the quality of governance; in 48% of schools inspected, governors are not well enough informed about assessment information and the teachers' use of internal data. As a result, they are unable to ask the appropriate questions about the children's attainment and the extent to which they are making sufficient progress in their learning.

174. It is a concern that in 24% of schools, the arrangements for safeguarding are not comprehensive and do not reflect the Department of Education's guidance. The most pertinent issues are out-of-date policies, procedures adopted with little or no consultation with children and parents, out-of-date training for school staff and governors, inappropriate storage of confidential information and an absence of risk assessment processes. Furthermore, in these schools governors did not have sufficient oversight of procedures for safeguarding.





## Post-primary education



62

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**86% of post-primary schools were evaluated as having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement**

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## Going well

The proportion of post-primary schools with the capacity to identify and bring about improvement, including raising standards.

The performance of non-grammar post-primary schools.

The quality and impact of senior and middle leadership.

The quality of learning, teaching and assessment which was mostly good or better.

## Going forward

All schools need to close further the performance gap in the achievements and attainment of pupils from FSME and non-FSME backgrounds.

Controlled post-primary schools need to improve their overall effectiveness, especially those schools in the follow-up inspection process.

### The effectiveness of provision in post-primary education

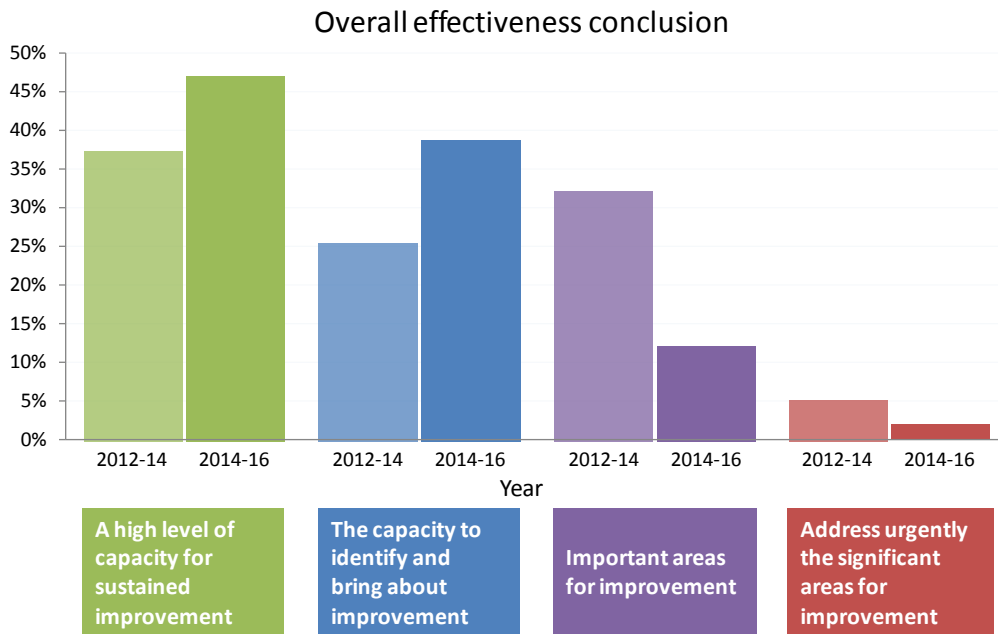
#### Context

175. The number of post-primary schools has declined slightly, from 208 in 2014 to 202 in 2015-16<sup>55</sup>. The decline is accounted for by a reduction in the number of non-grammar schools, largely as a result of mergers and amalgamations. There has also been a small decline in the number of pupils enrolled in the post-primary sector, to 141,110 pupils in 2016. This reduction of around 1,500 pupils is largely from the non-grammar schools.

Post-primary inspection evidence 2014-16	
Total post-primary inspections	49
Number of follow-up inspections	28
Number of post-primary lessons evaluated	3,462



<sup>55</sup> Annual enrolments at grand-aided schools in Northern Ireland 2015/16 (Department of Education Statistical Bulletin 8/2015).



**Overall effectiveness**

176. During this period, 86% of the schools inspected were evaluated as having either a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement. This is considerably higher than the 63% achieved by schools inspected during the previous reporting period. Of the schools in this reporting period identified as having important areas for improvement or needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement, four of the seven were selective grammar schools.

**Achievements and standards**

177. Achievements and standards, including performance in public examinations, were good or better in 88% of the schools inspected. It is noteworthy that achievements and standards were good or better in all of the non-grammar schools inspected, with around 60% being outstanding or very good.



66

178. Achievements and standards were also evaluated as outstanding or very good in 60% of the grammar schools inspected. However, achievements and standards in a further 30% of the grammar schools inspected were evaluated as less than good, all of which came from the controlled, or state voluntary, grammar sector. Reasons for this low and underachievement include: too wide a variation in standards across the individual subjects; insufficiently high expectations of the pupils; insufficient building on the pupils' prior learning; limited progression in learning; poor tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress; and poorly planned and insufficiently stimulating classroom practice, which is failing too many pupils.

179. The headline outcomes at KS4 have improved in non-grammar schools. In 2015, 72% of pupils achieved five or more GCSE or equivalent passes at grades A\* to C, an increase of five percentage points since 2013. Importantly, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE passes or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, improved from 38% in 2013 to 44% in 2014 and to almost 47% in 2015<sup>56</sup>; this equates to around 700 more pupils achieving at this important benchmark. It is still not good enough, however, that too many pupils do not achieve at this standard. The percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A\* to C remained steady at around 65% over the same period.

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/publications/statistical-bulletin-92015-year-12-and-14-examination-performance-post-primary-schools>

180. The achievements and attainments of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds remain lower than those of their peers. In 2015, 45.6% of year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals attained the expected standard of five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics; this is a considerable improvement from the 2013<sup>57</sup> figure of 33.9%. It is unacceptable, however, that too high a proportion of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils are not achieving at this standard.

181. Other evidence<sup>58</sup> shows slower improvement for the most disadvantaged pupils, attending those schools with the highest proportion of FSME pupils, where current interventions lack sufficient scope and are too short-term to make a marked difference.

182. The performance of boys in controlled non-grammar schools remains an area of concern. It is vital that the gap in attainment between the most disadvantaged pupils and their peers is tackled more coherently and effectively, with a greater focus on steady year-on-year progress for all pupils.

183. Each year, too many pupils are declared ineligible from inclusion in schools' reported performance in public examinations (around 7%, equating to 1,600 pupils, which is akin to a large post-primary school); the numbers of ineligible pupils can vary considerably across the schools. It is also of concern that a significant number of pupils, most of whom commenced a two-year programme of study, are discouraged or prevented from progressing to the final stage of their studies in year 14.

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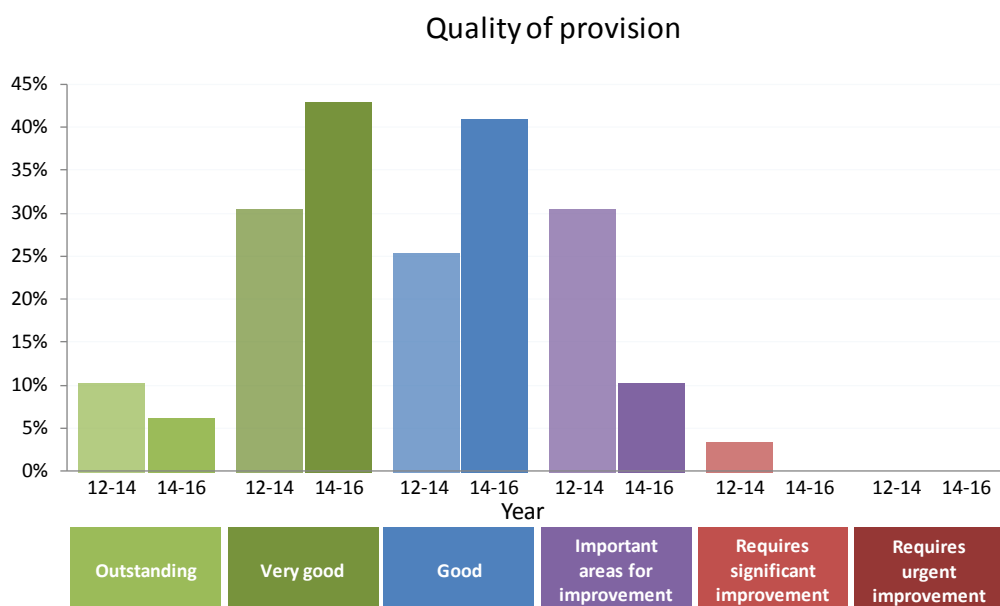
### Quality of provision for learning

184. The quality of provision for learning remains good or better in 90% of the schools inspected; in around 50% of the schools, it was outstanding or very good.

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*57 The percentage of free school meal pupils in the year 12 cohort in 2015 increased to 25.5%, due to a widening of the criteria; 35.2% of all pupils in non-grammar schools are entitled to free school meals as compared with 11.8% in grammar schools.*

*58 Education Authority Post-Primary Schools Annual Area Profile (June 2015).*



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185. The quality of learning and teaching was good or better in 82% of the 3,462 lessons observed, a clear improvement on the equivalent figure of 78% for the previous period. While the quality of learning, teaching and assessment was a strength in many schools, it is a concern that almost 20% of lessons remain less than good in promoting sufficiently the pupils' learning. It is also concerning that this important shortcoming is not being monitored or addressed adequately by the senior leaders in schools. As a result, too many pupils are exposed to significant mediocrity in their learning experiences.

186. In 83% of the schools inspected, the effectiveness of the provision for English and literacy was good or better; it was outstanding or very good in 47% of them. In mathematics and numeracy, the effectiveness of the provision was good or better in 86% of the schools inspected; it was, however, outstanding or very good in just 29% of them.

187. The provision for those children who require additional support with their learning was evaluated as good or better in 83% of the schools inspected. The good use of assessment to identify early the pupils' learning needs, effective planning to enable integration, inclusion and appropriate well-monitored intervention strategies are impacting positively on the pupils' learning and progress. There remain important areas for improvement in 17% of the schools inspected, where the pupils' individual needs are not met sufficiently. All schools need to monitor closely the progress of the pupils on the special educational needs register, to ensure this tracking is used to provide more appropriate and individualised learning support.



188. Pastoral care and the safeguarding of pupils are strong features of the schools inspected; the arrangements for the pastoral care of the pupils were very good or better in most schools. In 81% of the schools inspected, there were comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils; the arrangements were satisfactory in the remainder.

189. The quality of the curriculum planning and provision varied across the schools inspected. It was very good or better in 45% of schools, as characterised by: an innovative, pupil-centred approach to curriculum planning across all key stages; a sharp focus on meeting all of the pupils' needs and aspirations; and meaningful collaboration within the Area Learning Community to broaden choice, enhance progression pathways and ensure a good balance across academic and vocational courses.

190. The quality of curriculum planning and provision was less than good in 18% of the schools inspected and there were areas of the curriculum planning and offer requiring attention in a further 37%. Common shortcomings include: a school-centred as opposed to a pupil-centred curriculum, leading to some pupils taking inappropriate courses with limiting pathways; small, unviable sixth forms with restricted subject choices; and some sixth form pupils undertaking inappropriate level 2 courses which often unnecessarily delay their progression to a more relevant pathway.

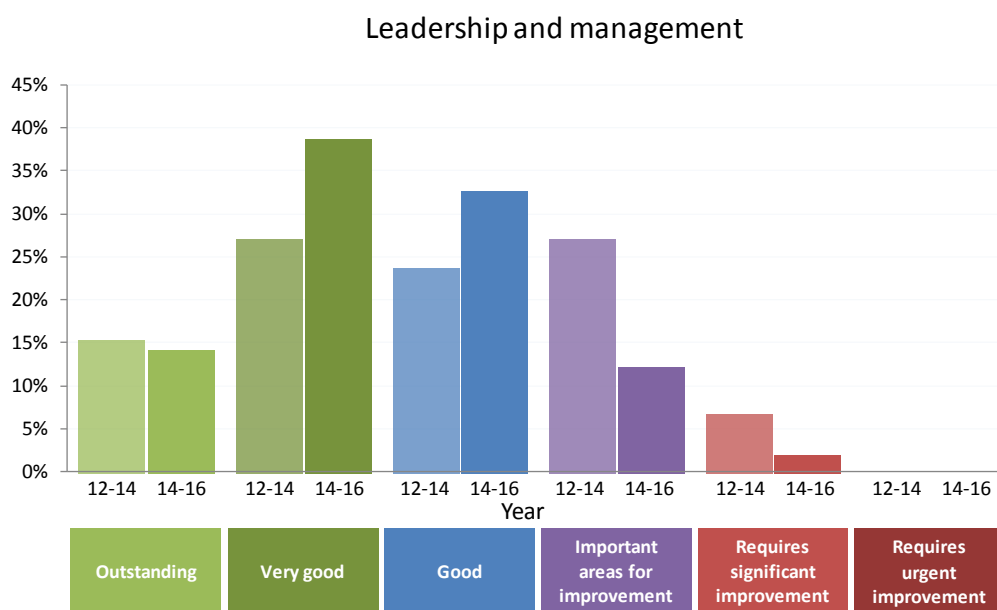
191. Over the reporting period, the quality of provision related to careers was good or better in 90% of the schools inspected; it was outstanding or very good in 49%. The most effective careers provision was characterised by well-informed, impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance and relevant, well-planned and challenging workplace experiences for pupils which enhance their employability and inform individual career planning. In the less effective practice, insufficient attention is paid to the coherent development of the skills and attitudes valued by employers, including resilience, resourcefulness, team-working and the ability to communicate effectively.

192. The position of languages in the post-primary curriculum is increasingly vulnerable. Too many young people leave school with limited exposure to learning languages. The low uptake of languages at KS4, particularly in non-grammar schools, but also increasingly in grammar schools, is a concern. The viability of languages on the post-16 curriculum is adversely impacted by the small uptake.

193. While the effective use of ICT-enhanced learning is a feature in many of the schools inspected, too many teachers (even within these schools) still lack the skills, knowledge and understanding to harness the technology effectively to extend and enrich learning as an integral feature of their pedagogy. The use of technology is sufficiently well embedded in only a minority of the schools inspected.

### Leadership and management

194. Leadership and management was evaluated as good or better in 86% of the schools inspected; this is notably higher than the leadership outcomes (66%) for the cohort of schools inspected during the last reporting period.



70

#### Effective Practice

Where the capacity and effectiveness of strategic leadership was outstanding or very good: principals and senior leaders set high expectations, underpinned by shared values; there are caring relationships at all levels; and communication is open and responsive. Self-evaluation and school development planning processes are well developed and lead to a better informed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, which lead to strategic action. In such schools, learning and teaching is monitored closely and weak practice is challenged swiftly. This high quality leadership includes well-informed governors, who support and challenge appropriately.

195. The catholic voluntary grammar schools inspected perform highly; the leadership and management in all ten of them was evaluated as outstanding or very good. The quality of leadership of the other ten controlled and voluntary grammar schools evaluated as outstanding or very good was 10%, with 40% evaluated as less than good. The

reasons for this include: a tardiness in making the necessary curriculum changes that reflect the needs and aspirations of the school's intake, rather than the traditional skill set of the teaching workforce; a failure to challenge, particularly by governors, standards that are not good enough; and a lack of awareness of effective learning and teaching which impacts most positively on the progress and standards attained by the pupils. The effectiveness of leadership and management was outstanding or very good in 48% of non-grammar schools inspected.

196. The effectiveness of middle leadership was evaluated as good or better in 84% of the schools inspected. It is encouraging that the effectiveness of middle leadership was outstanding or very good in around 40% of the schools inspected. This is characterised by: a capacity to identify strengths and areas for improvement through effective self-evaluation and use of collated data; flexible curriculum planning; coherent integration of literacy, numeracy and ICT into planning for learning; rigorous monitoring of the quality of the pupils' work and progress; and a sharp focus on consistent and effective learning experiences for pupils.

197. In too few schools, the Performance Review: Staff Development (PRSD) process complements other forms of monitoring and evaluation. In these schools, lesson observations, including those for the purposes of PRSD, support effective monitoring and evaluation of the pupils' learning. Regrettably, when PRSD is disconnected from self-evaluation, the school's understanding of the core business of any school, namely the quality and impact of learning and teaching in classrooms, is underdeveloped.

198. In 55% of the schools inspected, there was a high degree of confidence in aspects of governance evaluated. When governance is effective: there is pro-active challenge of poor practice and low outcomes; governors are well informed about the work and performance of the school, which includes analysing detailed and relevant benchmark data (both qualitative and quantitative) to measure the extent to which the pupils' learning is being progressed and understanding how well pupils are performing compared with their peers across Northern Ireland.

199. Around 10% of the post-primary schools have important or significant areas for improvement and are in the follow-up inspection process. It is a concern that, of the 27 schools subject to a follow-up inspection over the reporting period, only 48% of them improved sufficiently to demonstrate the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Those schools that did not demonstrate the required improvement come from the controlled (ten schools) or integrated (four schools) sectors. The common reasons for this overly slow cycle of improvement include: insufficient capacity of senior and middle leaders to lead and effect the necessary change at the pace required; the inability to turn planned actions into a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve; and an acceptance by governors and local communities of achievements and standards which are not good enough. This lack of pace in improvement is impacting adversely on the life chances of too many pupils.

# Special educational needs and inclusion



72

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**6 of the 8 special schools and 7 of the 12 EOTAS centres were evaluated as having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement**

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## Special educational needs

### Going well

In three of the special schools inspected, leadership and management is very good or outstanding.

Of the lessons observed, 86% were good or better, with 57% very good or outstanding.

In two of the schools, there was a notable positive impact of assessment leading to appropriate and challenging learning targets.

Rigorous tracking of pupil progress across all areas of the curriculum by teachers, co-ordinators and leadership, and the subsequent planning and provision, has led to sustained, positive outcomes.

73

### Going forward

The quality of strategic leadership and middle management needs to improve in two of the schools.

The quality of planning and differentiation for learning to meet the needs of all the pupils, in two of the schools, needs to improve.

### The effectiveness of provision in special educational needs

#### Context

200. There are 40 special schools in Northern Ireland. They provide education for 5,173<sup>59</sup> pupils with moderate, severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties aged from four to 19 years. The number of pupils in special schools has risen from 4,832<sup>60</sup> in the previous Chief Inspector's Report.

Special education inspection evidence 2014-16	
Total special education inspections	8
Number of follow-up inspections	2
Number of special education lessons evaluated	384

74

#### Overall effectiveness

201. In 2014-16, three special schools had a high level of capacity and an additional three the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Two of the eight schools inspected were identified as needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement, and there were significant or urgent areas for improvement in outcomes and in leadership and management.

#### Achievements and outcomes

202. The outcomes for pupils in six of the special schools inspected were good or better; pupils demonstrate high standards of behaviour, social skills, and independent living skills. In a minority of schools inspected, however, the pupils display significant and challenging levels of behaviour. Where there is a lack of effective strategies to support pupils with challenging behaviour, it has an adverse impact on the ability of other pupils in the classroom to engage in the learning activities. These levels and examples of challenging behaviour, and the risk posed to other pupils and staff, are unacceptable.

<sup>59</sup> NI school census October 2015.

<sup>60</sup> NI school census October 2013.

203. The pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy are good; they engage well, for example, in highly effective paired and group work. This is particularly evident in the development of the pupils' talking and listening skills, and through fun activities in mathematics matched well to their learning needs. The effective development of communication skills enables the majority of pupils to participate in a wider range of work placements and further education opportunities.

### Quality of provision for learning

204. In six of the schools inspected, the quality of provision was evaluated as good or better, with four outstanding or very good. Eighty-six percent of the lessons observed were good or better, with just over 57% being outstanding or very good.

#### Effective Practice

In the lessons observed, the characteristics of the best practice include teachers, classroom assistants and therapists working collaboratively, using a range of appropriate strategies and resources to progress learning. There is effective differentiation throughout the school and pupils' life skills are developed well through the use of practical and relevant learning experiences. The staff have high expectations for learning and behaviour, and set correspondingly challenging targets for the pupils.

205. Where less effective practice was observed: the pace of lessons is slow; learning activities are insufficiently differentiated; there is a lack of practical learning experiences; and there is a restricted range of strategies and resources, including an over-reliance on worksheets.

206. In the schools with outstanding or very good provision, there is a coherent and cohesive whole-school approach to the arrangements for planning, teaching and assessment of learning. Importantly, the teachers' planning incorporates both baseline assessments and a thorough reflection on the pupils' previous learning experiences and achievements.

207. In the majority of special schools inspected, there is effective and well-informed provision for the pupils with autism and for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The curriculum provision focuses on the individual needs and strengths of the pupils, with a strong emphasis on practical skills, supported by the effective use of ICT to motivate the pupils and consolidate their learning. The curriculum provision for senior pupils has a highly effective focus on employability skills and innovative programmes of careers education, information, advice and guidance.

208. In a minority of the schools inspected, there is insufficient tracking of the pupils' progress to inform effective learning. This is reflected in the lack of attainment by the pupils, which impacts adversely on them gaining appropriate opportunities to move on to post-school provision. In a minority of schools, staff expectations for the overall outcomes and progression of the pupils are too low.

209. Outreach provision, whereby teachers appointed to special schools support pupils in mainstream schools for a period of time defined by the pupil's educational psychology assessment and is available from a minority of the special schools inspected, is of a high quality and valued by the mainstream schools involved. Almost all of the referring mainstream schools involved engage very well with the outreach teachers, and implement suggested strategies and resources consistently, which results in successful learning outcomes for the pupils

210. The highly effective pastoral care and support in five of the special schools is characterised by a strong sense of teamwork and purposeful learning which builds the pupils' self-confidence. There is a strong correlation between the quality of the pastoral care and support and the pupils' engagement in, and enjoyment of, learning.

### **Leadership and management**

211. In six of the schools inspected, the quality of leadership and management was evaluated as good or better; in three schools it was outstanding or very good.

212. In the best practice, there is a clear strategic vision for the school that has been shared and agreed with staff, parents and governors. The targets in the school development plan are suitably prioritised and action plans are detailed and of good quality. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are well embedded and the school leadership monitor and evaluate learning and teaching effectively.

213. Where the quality of the strategic leadership and the role of middle managers need to be improved, a clearer focus on rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning is required.

214. In five of the schools inspected, there is a high level of confidence in the governance. In the best practice there are very effective working partnerships between the principal and school staff; the governors join school curriculum team meetings and provide excellent support and appropriate challenge for the work of the school. There is scope for further involvement of the governing body in effective and rigorous action planning for the improvement of learning.





### Education other than at school

#### Going well

The overall effectiveness of seven of the EOTAS centres inspected was good or better; five were evaluated as outstanding or very good.

Strategic leadership and the quality of provision for learning and teaching were good or better in seven of the centres inspected.

The quality of the pastoral care, guidance and support provided for the young people was good or better in eleven of the centres inspected, and in six it was outstanding.

78

#### Going forward

EOTAS staff need to raise their expectations of what the young people can achieve in relation to their academic attainment and levels of acceptable behaviour.

Schools need to work more closely with EOTAS centres to plan the objectives of the placements and contribute to the learning opportunities the young person receives within their EOTAS placement.

## The effectiveness of provision in education other than at school

### Context

215. There are 33 EOTAS centres in Northern Ireland for young people in KS3 and KS4. They provide for the needs of vulnerable children and young people aged from five to sixteen years. In 2014-15 approximately 645 young people were registered in the October census as attending EOTAS centres.

EOTAS inspection evidence 2014-16	
Total of EOTAS inspections	12
Number of follow-up inspections	4
Number of sessions evaluated	188

### Overall effectiveness

216. Twelve centres were inspected during this reporting period, with seven evaluated as having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement. The number of young people referred to EOTAS has increased slightly. The centres report a continued increase in the numbers of young people presenting with mental health and anxiety-related conditions; this continues to highlight the need for more effective capacity building in mainstream schools to support vulnerable young people.

### Achievements and outcomes

217. In seven of the centres inspected, the young people achieved good or better outcomes. The young people's attendance improved; they demonstrated higher literacy levels and gained accreditation in a range of appropriate academic and vocational courses. In the most effective practice, the EOTAS centres monitor and evaluate extensively the progress made by all of the young people in their academic subjects, as well as in their emotional well-being and self-esteem. The young people gain confidence through studying an appropriate range of subjects which facilitates their transition to work-based learning organisations or further education colleges. Relevant assessment data is used to plan appropriate and thorough personal programmes to inform the young people and their schools of progress and success.

218. Where the practice was less than good, it is too often characterised by poor attendance and the young people do not achieve to their full potential. In addition, too few young people re-integrate into their mainstream school and aspects of the provision

require significant improvement if the young people are to make progress. In these centres, the young people who are capable of studying to GCSE level are not provided with the opportunity; tutors' expectations of what the young people can achieve are too low, resulting in low attainment.

### Quality of provision for learning

219. The quality of the provision for learning in seven of the organisations inspected was good or better. Where provision was outstanding, the programmes are structured well, with a clear emphasis on achievement. Such programmes have a therapeutic element and engage the young people effectively, building their confidence; resulting in high levels of attendance.

220. Learning and teaching in 88% of the lessons evaluated were good or better and in 60% were outstanding or very good. In this best practice, the staff plan effectively for the lessons and make good use of themes and topics that interest and engage the young people. Effective strategies are used to manage the behaviour of the young people, build their self-esteem and help them to learn more effectively.

221. In five centres where the quality of provision was less than good, the curriculum is limited and the teaching is not planned effectively enough to engage the young people. The young people are held back by a lack of opportunities to undertake work-related learning and by a lack of appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance. In addition, the referring schools have a poor understanding of the EOTAS guidance<sup>61</sup>, with regard to their retained responsibility to contribute to the education of young people in EOTAS settings.

#### Effective Practice

Where there is effective implementation of the EOTAS guidance, the school, parents, young people and EOTAS staff all agree the intended outcomes for the EOTAS placement at an initial planning meeting. These outcomes form the priorities for each young person to focus on, and teachers devise strategies to empower the young person to achieve by the end of their placement.

The quality of the provision for pastoral care was evaluated as good or better in eleven of the centres, with six outstanding. The key characteristics are an inclusive and caring ethos with sensitive and effective support provided by staff for the young people, and similarly for parents experiencing particular periods of stress.

The quality of accommodation and resources in almost all centres is good or better.

61 Circular 2014/24 Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) Guidance.

## Leadership and management

222. The quality of leadership and management was evaluated as good or better in seven of the centres inspected. In the best centres, management works hard to gain the respect and confidence of the young people and their families. They provide a clear strategic direction and vision for the centre with a strong culture of self-evaluation, underpinned by the effective use of data and assessment practices that involve the views of young people. All of the staff are reflective practitioners and are committed to continuous improvement in the interests of the young people.

223. Where there are important areas for improvement, these include poor strategic leadership and a lack of vision for the development of the centre. The senior management has low expectations of the young people, resulting in a culture of acceptance of poor behaviour with low levels of achievement in external examinations. There is insufficient planning for the re-integration of pupils into mainstream schooling and, subsequently, few if any young people transition back to their school. Young people leave the centres with few qualifications or effective strategies to manage their behaviour or cope with the pressures in their lives.

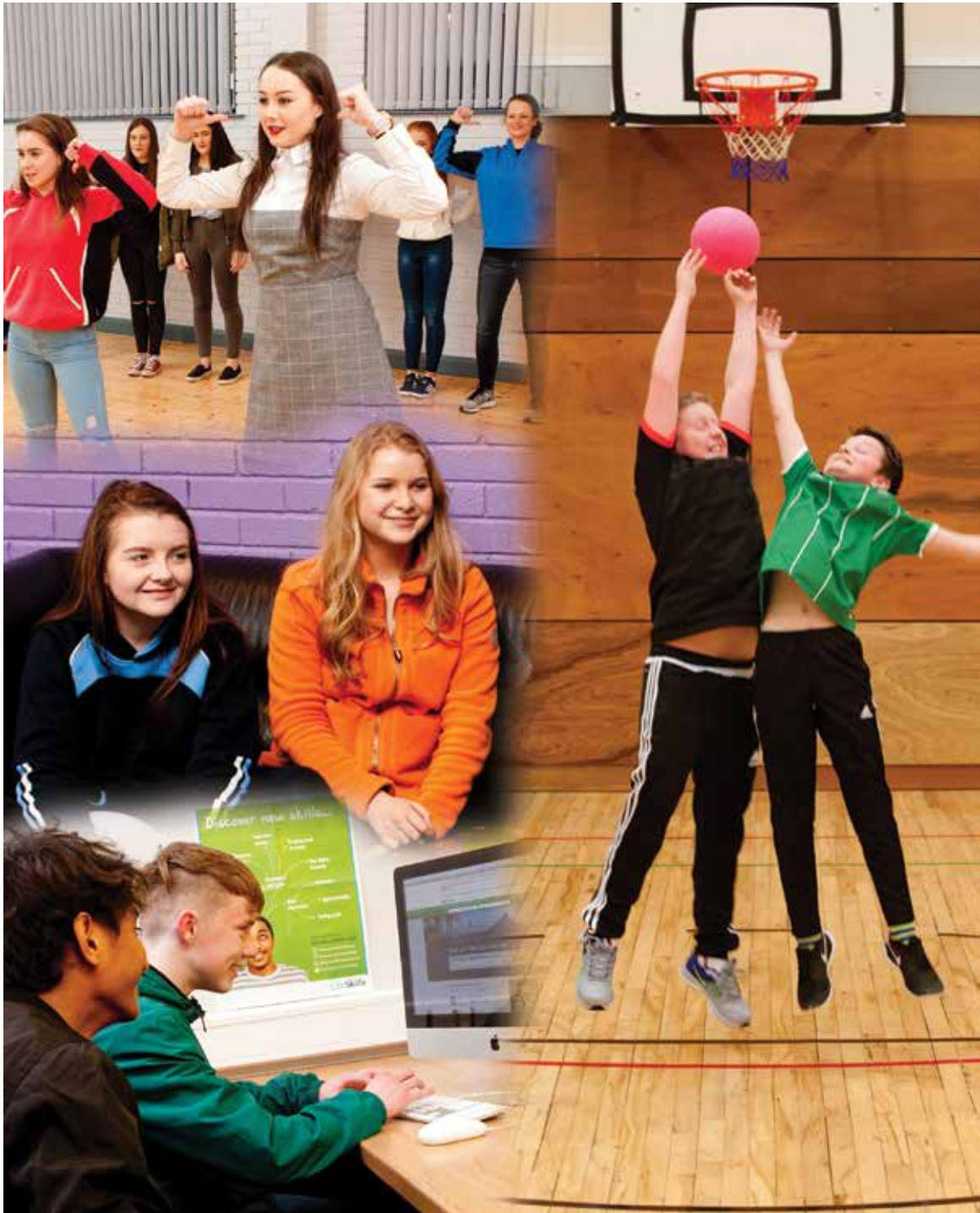
224. The most effective provision has a clear development plan created in consultation with all stakeholders and a governance group that represents local schools, the community and parents. Aspects of governance are well developed and management groups are well informed and actively involved in the life and work of the centre. Systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision.

225. While links between the centres and the mainstream schools have improved, there is a continuing requirement for more collaborative working in the interest of the young people. The challenges for EOTAS providers remain significant, with high levels of Looked After Children attending the centres.

It is important that schools remain responsible for each young person on their register and maintain regular contact with them to ensure their pastoral and academic needs are being met.



# Youth



82

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**68% of the organisations inspected were evaluated as having a high level of capacity, or capacity to identify and bring about improvement**

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## Going well

High levels of participation and progression into leadership roles amongst young people within their youth organisations and local communities.

A well-matched curriculum that provides young people with an engaging range of contemporary and valuable experiences to support their mental health and well-being.

High levels of voluntary commitment by youth workers across the service, to improve the life experiences of the young people.

83

## Going forward

More accredited professional development opportunities are needed for full-time and part-time youth work staff.

Leadership and management need to have a clearer focus on the development of staff skills in managing group work effectively.

## The effectiveness of provision in youth

### Context

226. The youth service consists of provision managed directly by the EA and the voluntary youth sector, which includes community and church-based youth centres, outdoor education centres, voluntary youth organisations and uniformed organisations. In 2014, there were approximately 180,670<sup>62</sup> young people involved in registered youth organisations in Northern Ireland.

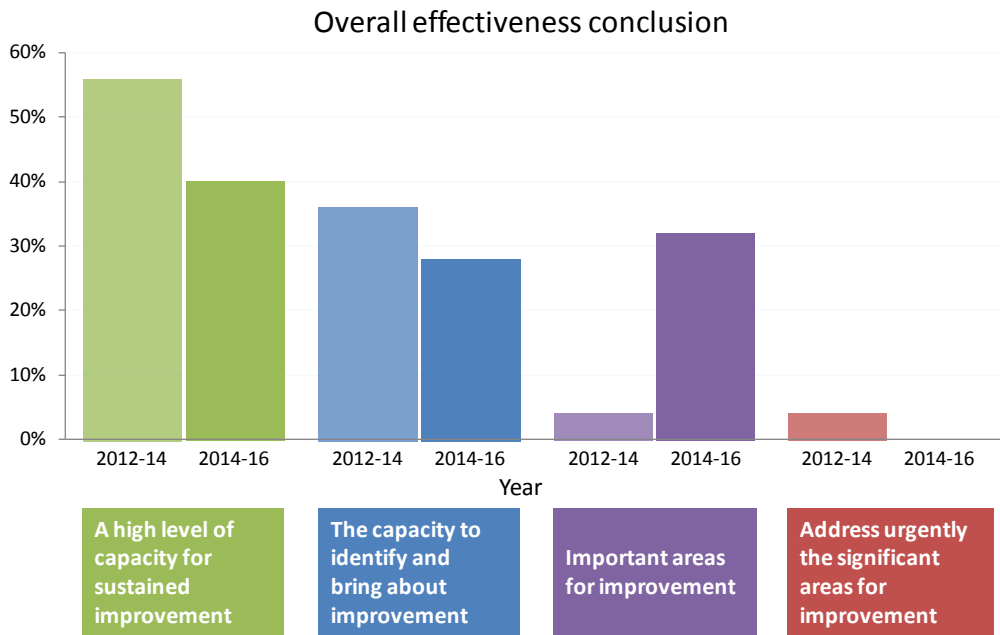
Youth inspection evidence 2014-16	
Total youth inspections	25
Youth centre inspections	21
Headquarter organisation inspections	3
Outdoor education centre inspections	1
Number of follow-up inspections	9
Number of youth sessions evaluated	288

<sup>62</sup> Youth Council for Northern Ireland, *The Youth Service In Northern Ireland: A Statistical and Geographic Report of the Registered Youth Service in Northern Ireland, 2014 data cycle.*



**Overall effectiveness**

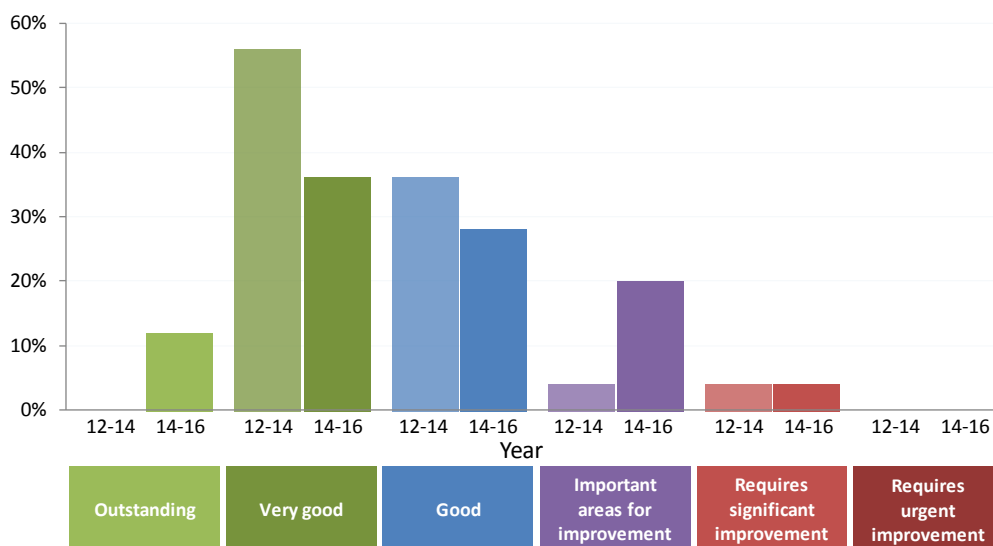
227. Sixty-eight percent of the organisations inspected were evaluated as having a high level of capacity, or capacity to identify and bring about improvement; 40% were performing at the highest level. The most effective practice was predominantly in youth organisations within the voluntary sector, where highly effective leadership and management worked successfully through strategic partnerships to meet the needs of young people. Similarly, there was a very clear focus on learning outcomes for the young people, facilitated through highly effective formal and informal group work.



**Achievement and standards**

228. The quality of the achievements and standards is good or better in 76% of the organisations inspected. In the best practice, the young people engage in the planning, facilitation and evaluation of their own programmes and there is notable progression in their leadership skills. In a majority of the organisations inspected, the young people are respected role models for their peers, demonstrating the application of a range of appropriate life skills including team working, communication and effective organisational skills.

Achievements and standards



86

229. In 24% of the settings evaluated, the young people have limited understanding of how they are benefitting from their learning experiences within their organisations and cannot articulate the connections to their learning in schools or colleges.

230. In a majority of organisations, the young people participate enthusiastically and develop well their personal and social skills. The participation of young people in relevant programmes supports their physical and emotional development and encourages them to adopt more healthy lifestyles.

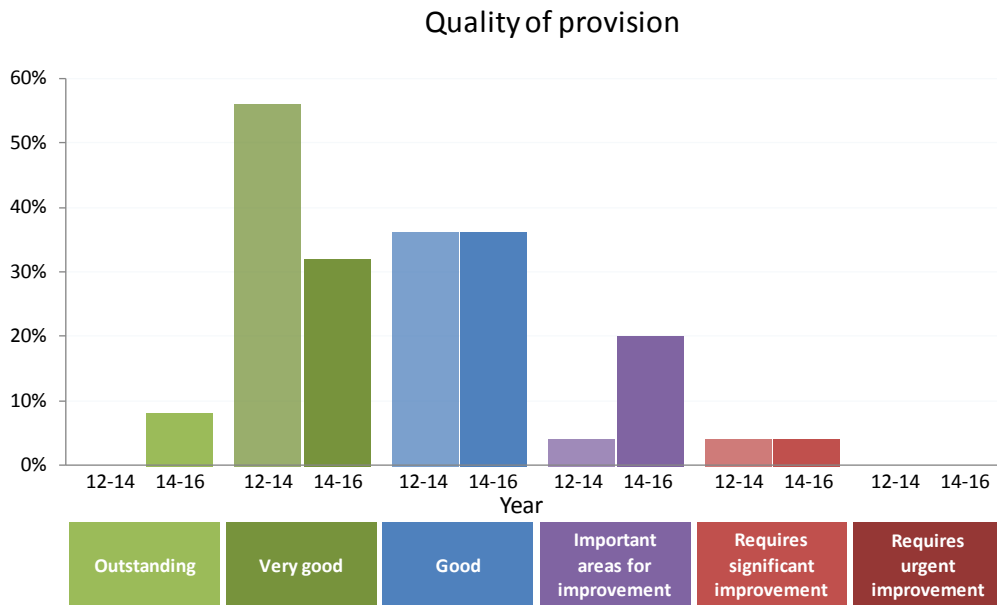
**Effective practice**

The progression of the young people into leadership and volunteering roles remains a particular strength. The young people take on responsibility and work together confidently to effect improvements in their youth provision and local community. They demonstrate confidence, maturity and a strong sense of pride in their organisation. There has been a significant increase in the recognition of young people’s volunteering contributions, through accreditation or other achievement programmes.

231. The young people use their youth leadership skills to help them make progress in other education and training provision. They are prepared well for employment in the youth and community sectors through a range of personal development and youth work accredited courses. Practice that is less than effective was characterised by a lack of understanding of the value of the programmes to their personal and social development.

**Quality of provision for learning**

232. The overall quality of the provision was good or better in 76% of the organisations inspected; the staff teams, including volunteers, create a safe and secure environment for the young people, many of whom have a range of complex social and personal needs. A particular strength is the inclusive ethos, which permeates most of the work with young people; in particular, those who have moved to the area from other countries are accepted, integrated and supported well.



233. Across the sector, the curriculum provision is matched closely to the needs and interests of the young people, giving them an engaging range of valuable and contemporary experiences which support well their mental health and well-being. The young people particularly enjoy international exchanges, outdoor adventure activities and opportunities to meet their peers from differing cultures and other communities.

234. While there is a small number of accredited youth courses for part-time and volunteer youth workers, there are too many courses which are non-accredited, thereby

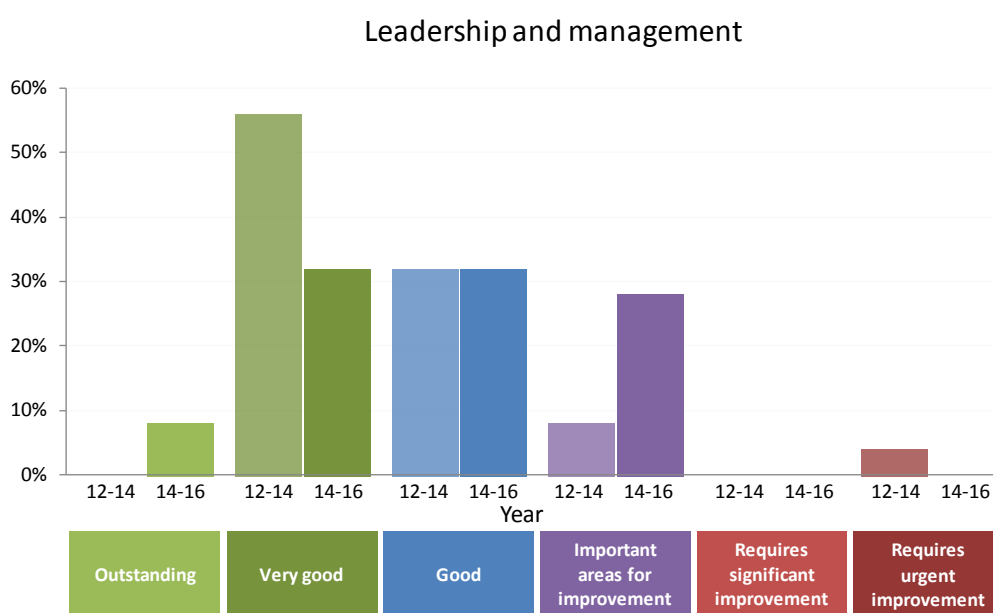
limiting the career opportunities for staff to progress; in particular, through the qualifications framework.

235. In the less effective practice, the quality of the provision for younger members needs to improve by providing more challenging, innovative programmes which have a sharper focus on improving educational outcomes. The development of staff skills in managing group work effectively needs to improve in a significant number of centres, with additional training required to develop their capacity to meet the personal and social developmental needs of the young people. In a minority of the organisations inspected, the staff did not plan for and evaluate sufficiently the learning outcomes identified for the young people.

236. In a significant number of the organisations inspected, the quality and use of daytime provision was underdeveloped, inadequately planned for and requires improvement.

### Leadership and management

237. The quality of leadership and management was evaluated as good or better in 72% of the organisations inspected and outstanding or very good in 40%. Importantly, the planning was strategic and coherent, linked to the area-based plan and developed with the staff, young people and the local community. In addition, this planning took account of an appropriate curriculum and provided a clear vision for the future direction of the work.



238. In 28% of the organisations inspected, leadership and management required improvement; typically, self-evaluation processes were under-developed and the progress of the young people was not measured or recorded adequately. The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning in a significant minority of organisations were not systematic enough. Organisations need to become more self-critical, have a sharper focus on the outcomes which the young people achieve and recognise where improvements are needed.

239. Across the sector, young people were not involved sufficiently in the governance of their youth organisations. There is a need for leadership and management to empower young people in this key area and build further the capacity of their organisations to engage with them in making decisions about programmes that meet their needs and aspirations.

240. Priorities for Youth<sup>63</sup> is impacting well on the strategic development of the sector and beginning to influence youth work practice and planning at an organisational level. Additional resources provided to the EA by the Department of Education to extend opening hours and programmes in youth centres are benefitting and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable young people.



63 *Priorities for Youth - Improving Young People's Lives through Youth Work (Department of Education 2013).*

# Work-based learning, Further education and European social fund



90

**In work-based learning 67% of supplier organisations were evaluated as having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement**

*64 There were no formal institutional inspections in further education.*

*65 Only baseline inspections were undertaken in ESF.*

## Work-based learning

### Going well

There are good and very good retention rates on the respective levels of the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, with very high rates of achievement for those trainees and apprentices who complete their programmes.

Most of the ApprenticeshipsNI provision is well planned and linked effectively to employment and progression opportunities.

Care, guidance and support are good or better in 92% of the organisations inspected.

In 80% of the directed and workplace training sessions observed, the provision was good or better, with 35% outstanding or very good.

### Going forward

In 55% of organisations inspected<sup>66</sup>, there is a need to improve the quality of the provision for essential skills.

In more than 33% of organisations inspected, curriculum and quality improvement planning needs to improve to meet fully the needs of trainees and apprentices.

<sup>66</sup> Essential skills provision was inspected in 20 organisations, in the remaining 4 no delivery was taking place.

### The effectiveness of provision in work-based learning

#### Context

241. There are currently 40 supplier organisations contracted to provide Training for Success 2013 and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. At the end of April 2016<sup>67</sup>, 5,368 trainees were registered on the Training for Success programme. Of these, 62% were on the Skills for Work level 2 strand, 26% on Skills for Work level 1, and 10% on the Skills for Your Life<sup>68</sup>; 69% of the participants are male. The number of registrations has reduced significantly since the last reporting period and corresponds with an increased proportion of pupils staying on at school into sixth form<sup>69</sup>.

242. At the same time, a total of 7,359 apprentices<sup>70</sup> were registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Of these, 41% were on level 2 apprenticeship programmes and the remainder working towards a level 3. The highest proportions of apprentices are in engineering, food manufacture, health and social care, and hospitality.

92

Work-based learning inspection evidence 2014-16	
Total of work-based learning inspections	24
Number of follow-up inspections	9
Number of directed training sessions evaluated	544

<sup>67</sup> Department for the Economy, Statistical Bulletin Training for Success 2013, August 2016.

<sup>68</sup> A small number were not recorded on an option by the supplier or were on the level 3 Skills for Work strand.

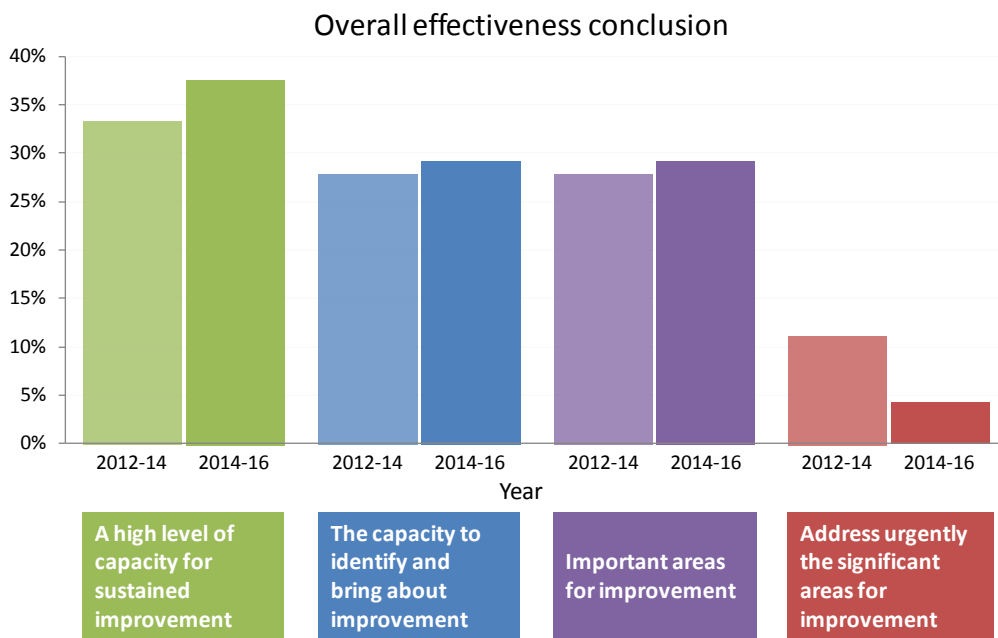
<sup>69</sup> Department of Education School Enrolments Statistical Bulletin, March 2016.

<sup>70</sup> Department for the Economy, Statistical Bulletin ApprenticeshipsNI 2013, August 2016.



**Overall effectiveness**

243. While caution is required in comparing organisations inspected in different reporting periods, it is worth noting that in this period the proportion of supplier organisations evaluated as having a high level of capacity or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement has risen slightly, from 61% in the last reporting period to 67%. The proportion of organisations identified as having important areas for improvement has risen slightly, mainly due to the reduction in the percentage of organisations needing to address urgently the significant areas for improvement, from 11% to 4%.



**Achievements and standards**

244. Achievements and standards in 75% of the work-based learning provision inspected are good or better. Most of the trainees and apprentices develop good or better professional and technical skills in addition to effective literacy, numeracy and ICT skills which they can apply well in the workplace. Most of the apprentices, and those trainees in a work-experience placement, are provided with good workplace mentoring and support to help them develop further their employability skills and a range of personal capabilities including self-confidence, independence and effective communication with work colleagues.



94

245. In 46% of organisations inspected, where achievements and standards were outstanding or very good, the organisations challenge and support each trainee and apprentice to progress at an appropriate pace and to gain new skills, knowledge and experience relevant to, and valued by, employers.

246. The quality of trainees’ and apprentices’ achievements and standards were outstanding in 21% of the organisations inspected. This outstanding practice was found exclusively in apprenticeships or in organisations specialising in specific occupational areas such as aeronautical engineering, hair and beauty, electrical engineering, or vehicle maintenance and repair.

247. Common success factors displayed in these organisations include: having strong, collaborative partnerships with employers; providing high quality industry-relevant training for their trainees or apprentices; and setting high expectations for them. In these organisations, most of the trainees and apprentices develop high levels of confidence and competence, learn to communicate effectively, and master highly specialised occupational skills. They are able to cope well with increasing levels of challenge and independent working, are highly motivated, and take responsibility for their own learning and development.

### Effective Practice

In the 65% of organisations where trainees and apprentices achieve good or better standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT, there is a well-embedded range of initial and diagnostic assessment processes, the outcomes of which are matched well to planning for individualised learning. There is also an appropriate emphasis on developing the trainees' and apprentices' capacity to apply and transfer their skills across a range of settings. In almost all of the organisations inspected, there is an increased focus on progressing the trainees and apprentices to level 2 in literacy, numeracy and ICT to support the development of their learning in their professional and technical areas and in the workplace.

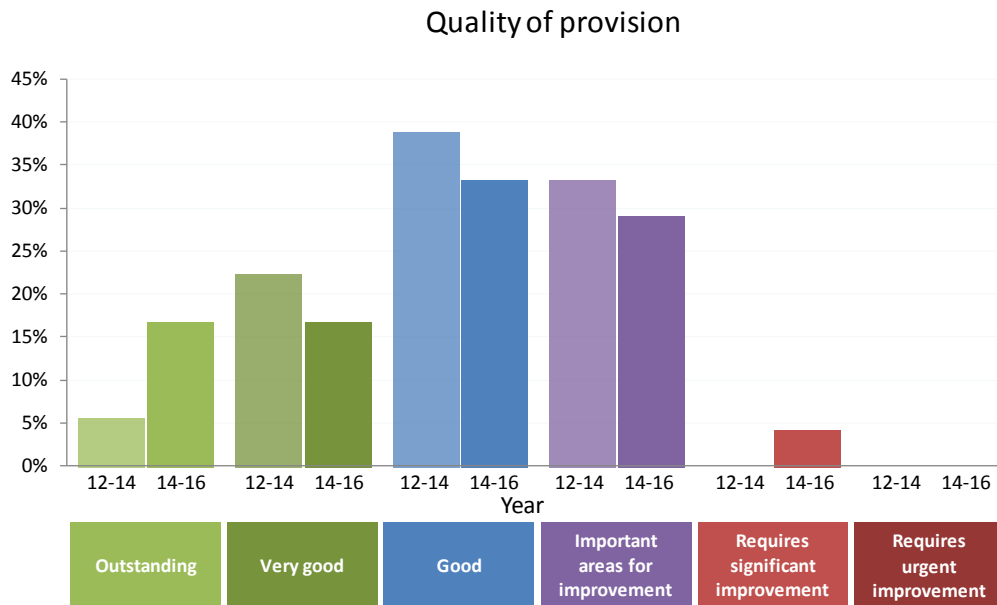
248. In 25% of the organisations inspected, the trainees' and apprentices' achievements and standards were evaluated as less than good. In these organisations, the trainees and apprentices are often making slow progress in developing their knowledge, skills and personal capabilities. For trainees, this is frequently due to limited, or no, access to a regular work-experience placement. Consequently, their opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the world of work and to develop and apply new skills is limited.

249. There has been a slight improvement in the retention rate of learners when compared to the previous reporting period. Across the organisations inspected, the overall average rate of retention<sup>71</sup> was good at 72%. The average rate of retention was highest for the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, where it increased from 72% to 80%. The lowest was on the Skills for Your Life (55%) and Skills for Work level 2 (59%) strands of Training for Success. It is important that the causes behind these low retention rates are identified by the organisations and appropriate measures put in place to address them. The average rates of achievement<sup>72</sup> for those trainees and apprentices who complete their programmes are high at 96% and 98% respectively.

<sup>71</sup> Retention in work-based learning is calculated as the proportion of trainees/apprentices enrolled after four weeks of year one, who complete their programme/framework. The percentages are based on the data provided by the organisations at the time of the inspection.

<sup>72</sup> Achievement rates are calculated as the proportion of trainees/apprentices who complete their occupational training framework, and who fully achieve their framework qualification.

**Quality of Provision for learning**



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250. The quality of the provision for learning is good or better in 67% of the organisations inspected and is outstanding or very good in around 50% of these.

251. The quality of 80% of the training sessions observed is good or better. It is noteworthy that there is evidence of improving practice across the work-based learning sector, with 35% of the directed training sessions evaluated as outstanding or very good. This is, in part, due to the more effective pedagogy observed as a result of tutors becoming better qualified<sup>73</sup> and more able to use effective learning and training strategies.

252. It is a concern, however, that 33% of the organisations have important or significant areas for improvement in their provision for learning. In these organisations, the training is characterised by poor planning, limited challenge and a curriculum offer that is too narrow and not matched well enough to the needs, aspirations and career opportunities of the trainees and apprentices. In particular, work-experience placements are not used well enough to support the learning and skills development of the trainees, or to raise their aspirations.

<sup>73</sup> An increasing number of tutors have completed the Certificate in Teaching qualification.

253. While there is ongoing investment and increasing use of ILT<sup>74</sup>, there is too much variation in its use to support and enrich learning effectively and, for most organisations, ILT use is an important area for improvement. A majority of tutors require further professional development in order to build their confidence and competence in utilising the full potential of ILT.

254. There are important, or significant, areas for improvement in the essential skills provision across a majority (55%) of the organisations inspected<sup>75</sup>. The areas for improvement continue to be characterised by incoherent planning to develop and embed the essential skills across a wider range of contexts and irregular or inappropriate timetabling of the delivery. In some instances, there are insufficient opportunities for trainees and apprentices to demonstrate the transferability of their learning from the essential skills sessions to their professional and technical work, and to the workplace. A particular concern is the limited emphasis on developing trainees' confidence and competence for extended literacy or numeracy skills development. In the effective practice observed, the essential skills tutors have well-established links with their colleagues delivering other aspects of the training framework and plan jointly to develop the trainees' and apprentices' essential skills.

255. The quality of the careers education, information, advice and guidance was evaluated as good or better in 61% of the organisations inspected. The most effective provision is innovative and comprehensive, focusing on establishing successful career progression pathways for the trainees and apprentices, and is underpinned by a relevant broad and balanced curriculum and effective involvement of employers and other advisory agencies. In the remaining 39% of the provision, there are important areas for improvement such as poor access to careers resources, limited individualised guidance, and few opportunities for trainees and apprentices to visit different relevant workplaces to increase their awareness of career progression and development opportunities.

256. The quality of pastoral care was good or better in 92% of the organisations inspected; in 71% it was outstanding or very good. In the best practice, trainees and apprentices are well supported by highly committed tutors in their directed training and in the workplace. The majority of the organisations have effective links with, and appropriate access to, external support agencies to assist in guiding and supporting the trainees and apprentices.

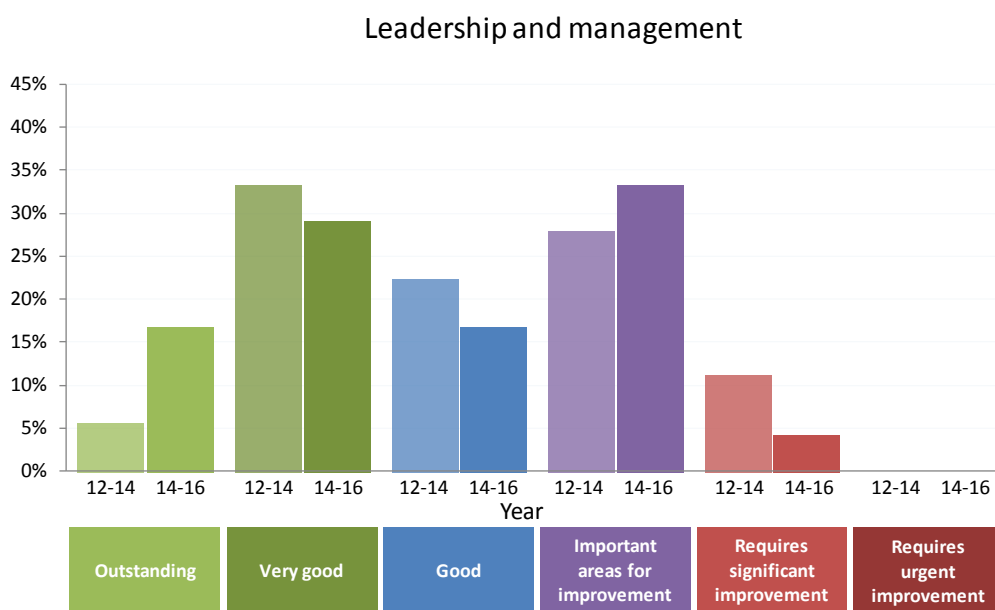
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<sup>74</sup> Information and learning technology (ILT) is also commonly referred to as technology enhanced learning (TEL) in the work-based learning sector.

<sup>75</sup> Essential skills provision was inspected in 20 organisations, in the remaining four there was no delivery.

### Leadership and management

257. The quality of the leadership and management is good or better in 63% of the organisations inspected; it is outstanding or very good in 46%. Important or significant areas for improvement were identified in the remaining 37%.



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258. In the organisations where the quality of leadership and management was outstanding or very good, there is strong, highly effective strategic leadership and management of the curriculum. In these organisations, curriculum planning is well embedded across the organisation, the provision is matched well to the individual needs of the trainees and apprentices, and is aligned well to the needs of the economy and key government priorities. Links and partnerships with employers, sector skills councils, industry bodies, schools and other key stakeholders are strong and highly effective in supporting economic and workforce development.

259. Important areas for improvement in a significant minority of organisations include the need to review the curriculum provision and timetabling arrangements to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to develop relevant occupational skills and knowledge, essential skills, and personal, social and employability skills.

260. Most of the accommodation and resources, including the provision of ICT equipment, have continued to improve across the organisations and are now good or better.

261. Most of the staff are experienced and are supported well to engage in relevant continuing professional development. For example, there is a strong emphasis on raising the quality of learning and training through regular lesson observations by peers and managers in order to support the development of tutors' pedagogic practice.

262. Self-evaluation and quality improvement planning is used effectively in the majority of organisations. There is increasing evidence of having systems in place to collate, analyse and report on key performance indicators. This data is used increasingly well to plan for improvement, targeting of support, and the progression and achievement of trainees and apprentices. Where the processes are not rigorous enough, there are often gaps such as the limited involvement of key stakeholders, the work of sub-contractors, or the capacity of course teams and tutors to undertake rigorous and evidence-based judgements on the quality of the provision.



### The effectiveness of provision in further education

#### Context

263. There are six further education colleges in Northern Ireland. Based on the most recently published full year data<sup>76</sup>, total enrolments on further education professional and technical accredited courses have decreased slightly since the last Chief Inspector's Report (2012-14) to 140,137. For 2014-15, enrolments at level 1, and below, accounted for 21% of the provision, level 2 for 46%, level 3 for 24% and the remaining nine percent were at level 4 and above. Part-time provision remains significant, accounting for 82% of all enrolments.

264. While there was no formal institutional inspection of the further education colleges during this reporting period, three thematic evaluations were carried out across the six colleges. These focused on continuing professional development, the development of level 2 Youth Training Strategy pilot programmes, and the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative<sup>77</sup>.

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#### Evaluation of continuing professional development

265. Across the six further education colleges, the quality of the continuing professional development (CPD) provided for staff ranges from outstanding to good. In four of the colleges there is evidence of outstanding or very good CPD arrangements that are evolving continuously to adapt to the changing needs of college workforce development planning. In these colleges, CPD has a central role in underpinning the colleges' strategic curriculum planning and development, with a clear focus on supporting the Northern Ireland economy. In the two remaining colleges, work is under way to improve further the good CPD provision. Within these two colleges, CPD needs to be more prominent in curriculum planning. Overall, the sector would benefit from greater collaboration in disseminating and establishing best practice across the colleges, particularly in meeting more effectively the CPD needs of part-time staff.

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<sup>76</sup> Department for the Economy, *Further Education Activity in Northern Ireland 2010/2011 to 2014/15*, published December 2015.

<sup>77</sup> *Evaluation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Further Education*, published June 2015; *A Longitudinal Evaluation of the Youth Training pilot programmes at level 2 provided by the six colleges of further education in Northern Ireland*, published April 2016; and *An evaluation of the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative Project in the six colleges of further education in Northern Ireland*, published June 2016.



### **Evaluation of the Youth Training Strategy pilot programmes at level 2**

266. The Department for the Economy<sup>78</sup> invited the six colleges of further education to submit proposals for pilot Youth Training programmes in June 2015 to inform the strategy implementation. Sixteen pilot programmes were approved by the Department in a small number of professional and technical areas and were delivered in the colleges from September 2015.

267. In June 2016 the ETI evaluation found that the colleges had collaborated effectively to plan the pilots and share effective practice. The pilots included a range of innovative approaches to delivery, differentiated across the colleges. The pilots also tested various elements of the strategy such as, progressing students towards achieving a GCSE grade C or better in English and mathematics and developing project-based learning to integrate better students' work-related learning from placements into their programme.

268. Strengths of the pilot included: the mostly good or better quality of the learning, teaching and training; the effective use of ILT in a majority of the programmes to support learning; the high quality of most of the work-experience placements; the high quality of most of the care, guidance and support, including careers; and the high standards of work demonstrated by most of the students.

269. As the pilot develops further, the colleges need to include a wider range of professional and technical areas in more economically relevant areas, with greater employer involvement in their design, delivery and assessment. More work is required to exploit fully the role of the student workplace mentor and all of the learning from the work-experience placements. In addition, the project-based learning and GCSE English and mathematics delivery models should be evaluated by the colleges to inform future planning and delivery.

### **Evaluation of the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative**

270. In September 2015, the six colleges engaged with 18 post-primary schools to use the essential skills of literacy and numeracy to support 373 pupils who were at risk of not obtaining a grade C in GCSE English and mathematics.

271. A key finding is that almost all of the pupils' gain greater confidence in the use of English and mathematics and they respond well to the opportunity to develop and apply their new learning and skills to relevant and meaningful contexts. This is due to a number of factors including the effective learning approaches used and the smaller class sizes

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<sup>78</sup> The functions and service delivered by the Department for Employment and Learning transferred to the Department for the Economy on 9 May 2016.

which provide pupils with enhanced opportunities to ask questions and receive one-to-one feedback on their progress.

### Effective Practice

The learning and teaching sessions in the essential skills provide opportunities for pupils who face significant challenges in English and mathematics to revisit basic, and, on occasion, more complex, concepts in a supportive environment. The pupils benefit from achieving essential skills qualifications and having opportunities to use and develop their skills in English and mathematics. This allows them to make incremental gains in learning and progression, as evidenced in most of their GCSE mock examination outcomes.

272. Key priorities for further development include the need for: agreed common approaches to initial and diagnostic assessment, incisive feedback which gives clear guidance to the pupils on how to improve, more effective processes to select the pupils likely to benefit most from the work of the project and increased opportunities for teachers and lecturers to meet in order to plan collaboratively.

### Inspection services provided for the European Social Fund programme

#### Context

273. The strategic aim of the European Social Fund (ESF) Programme is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. The Department for the Economy is currently funding 64 ESF projects.

274. To June 2015, there were evaluation visits to 95 projects on the legacy ESF programme<sup>79</sup> which initially focused on the project promoters' capacity to evaluate the quality of their own provision in order to lay the foundations for the commencement of a formal inspection process for the current programme<sup>80</sup>. From November 2015 to June 2016, the ETI completed 59 baseline inspections of ESF projects on the current programme.

#### Overall effectiveness

275. Almost all of the project promoters visited have a strong commitment to meeting the needs of their participant group with an appropriate focus on their personal, social and emotional needs and the development of the relevant skills, qualities and attributes needed to enhance their employability. Almost all of the project promoters need to improve further their use of self-evaluation to inform their planning and quality improvement processes. Common areas for improvement identified include: limited sharing of effective practice; insufficient use of performance data to demonstrate clearly the impact of their project; underdeveloped or poorly implemented policies; and the need to develop further the participant personal action plans and related review documentation.

<sup>79</sup> *The legacy ESF programme 2007 – 2013 in Northern Ireland.*

<sup>80</sup> *The ESF programme 2014 – 2020 in Northern Ireland.*

## **Work for other commissioning departments**



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**The ETI provided inspection services for the  
Home Office, Criminal Justice Inspection  
and the Department of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs**

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### Inspection services provided for the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

#### Context

276. The ETI inspect purposeful activity within prisons, evaluating the quality of prisoner work roles, education, training and skills. The evaluations are incorporated into the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJNI) published inspection reports.

#### Overall effectiveness

277. In Maghaberry prison, an unannounced inspection in May 2015 found that the prison needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement in its learning and skills provision. As a consequence, a follow-up inspection was carried out in January 2016.

278. The original inspection of Maghaberry prison found that the quality of the strategic leadership and management of learning and skills was poor, while self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes had notable shortcomings. There was insufficient purposeful activity and most of the available work activities were not sufficiently challenging. The overall education curriculum was narrow and, as a consequence, opportunities for accreditation and progression were poor. Most of the teaching and learning had important or significant areas for improvement. The standard of prisoners' work was good, but too few achieved accreditation above level 1.

279. The follow-up inspection found that reasonable progress had been made in addressing the areas for improvement. A key development was the sub-contracting of learning and skills provision to Belfast Metropolitan College. This change is beginning to provide prisoners with better opportunities to achieve accredited qualifications and to engage in a wider range of purposeful activity.

280. The inspection of learning and skills provision in Hydebank Wood Secure College and Ash House Women's prison in May 2016 found that the overall effectiveness had improved considerably since the previous inspection in February 2013. While there remain important areas for improvement, there is a clearer vision of how these will be addressed. The prison's senior management is innovative and committed to providing quality learning and skills provision that focuses on supporting progression.

281. An effective partnership has been established with Belfast Metropolitan College to outsource learning and skills provision, though joint planning is at an early stage of development and potential benefits are not yet fully realised.

## Work for other commissioning departments

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282. The quality of the learning, teaching and training has improved since the previous inspection with 77% of the sessions observed evaluated as good or better and just over 40% very good. While the range of accredited learning has been extended, it remains insufficient and does not provide adequate opportunities for progression to higher levels. Outcomes attained in literacy and numeracy are improving. However, while accredited achievements remain generally low, they are improving.

## Inspection services provided for the Home Office – Educational Oversight

### Context

283. The ETI undertakes Tier 4 Educational Oversight and Annual Monitoring Review inspections (for provision up to, and including, level 3) on behalf of the Home Office<sup>81</sup>.

### Overall effectiveness

284. The three inspections carried out during the reporting period confirm that all of the private language schools demonstrate the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners and meet the requirements for Educational Oversight.

### Achievements and standards

285. There is variation in the standards of the learners' spoken English, ranging from a basic level of fluency to high levels of proficiency. Almost all of the learners observed, or interviewed, are making good progress in their learning and are improving their level of fluency in spoken English.

286. Outcomes on both accredited and non-accredited programmes are high; almost all of the learners who remain and complete their targeted programme or qualification achieve well.

### Quality of provision for learning

287. The quality of the learning and teaching observed was mostly very good. Lessons are well planned and a range of learning and teaching strategies are used effectively. The learners benefit from content that is differentiated and contextualised well to meet their differing abilities and development needs.

288. Good examples exist of the use of blended learning and mobile technologies by the tutors. However, this aspect of the provision remains an area for further capacity building, particularly in relation to the continuing professional development of staff.

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81 Home Office Tier 4 Guidelines - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-4-student-guidance-for-educators>

289. The learners benefit from good quality pastoral care and support. This includes: good quality pre-entry advice and guidance; well-developed induction and social programmes; effective communication with the parents of younger learners; and the good links developed with a range of host families who provide residential accommodation.

### **Leadership and management**

290. All of the English language schools are well managed and appropriate corporate structures are in place. The roles and responsibilities of staff across the schools are clearly defined and are kept under regular review in order to best meet the needs of the organisation and the learners.

291. Effective electronic management information systems are in place in all three schools to market their programmes, facilitate the recruitment of learners, and to review, monitor, and report on their progress. It is important that management continues to review and develop these systems to inform further strategic and operational planning, and to develop robust monitoring and reporting processes.

292. Staff are highly experienced and are provided with very good opportunities to undertake continuing professional development, including participation in European funded projects.

293. While management, across the schools, has invested significantly in the IT infrastructure, formal strategies and policies for the integration of technology-enhanced learning need to be further developed. High quality accommodation and physical resources are in place for the students across all three schools, and good quality residential accommodation facilities are provided for those learners who require it.

294. Appropriate quality assurance systems are in place across the three schools. Staff have worked well to develop and implement appropriate processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning. There is a need, however, to develop further the self-evaluation process to identify more clearly key strengths and areas for improvement in the provision, and to determine accurately the specific and measurable actions needed to address the areas for improvement in the quality improvement plan.

295. All three of the schools have continued to work hard to develop appropriate safeguarding processes and they all promote effectively the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults.



### Inspection services provided for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

#### Context

296. The ETI provides inspection services for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) is funded by DAERA to provide education and training at three main campus sites in Antrim (Greenmount), Cookstown (Loughry) and Enniskillen.

#### Overall effectiveness

297. An evaluation of the CAFRE industry training provision was carried out in March 2015. The industry training courses are delivered by CAFRE staff in the college's main campuses and also in a number of out-centres across Northern Ireland. This provision aims to develop the skills and competences of personnel working in the various land-based and food industries, including farmers and those working within the equine and food processing industries. Across the period 2011-14, 324 industry training learning courses were delivered to 48,311 learners.

298. Overall, achievements and standards on the industry training provision were good. The standard of the learners' practical work observed was good or better. The college however, needs to increase the low number of learners who undertake and achieve an accredited qualification.

299. The quality of the industry training provision for learning is very good. A particular strength is the wide curriculum offer which is meeting very well the needs of learners, and is very responsive to the needs of industry. All of the directed and practical training sessions observed were of a good or better quality, with 74% being outstanding or very good.

300. The quality of leadership and management of the curriculum planning for the industry training provision is very good. There are extensive and effective links at various levels with industry, external agencies and other key stakeholders in the agri-food sectors.



## Appendix 1

The Chief Inspector’s Report for 2012-14 identified eleven key challenges to ensure that all learners in Northern Ireland receive high quality education and training and fulfil their potential. Progress has been made in many of these areas as outlined below.

Challenges 2012-14	Progress in addressing the challenges over the period 2014-16
<p>Improve outcomes for young people; almost 40% of post-primary pupils do not achieve five GCSEs (or equivalents) at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, rising to 66% for those entitled to free school meals.</p>	<p>While there has been some improvement, the 2015 figures (the latest available) show that 34% of school leavers still do not achieve five GCSEs (or equivalents) at grades A* to C including GCSE English and mathematics, and for those entitled to free school meals the figure is 59%.</p>
<p>Improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy, particularly at age 15 and for adults, where we compare less favourably with many other countries in international studies<sup>82</sup>.</p>	<p>The Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics (PIEM) Project, the Delivering Social Change in Literacy and Numeracy (DSCILN) Signature Project and the Essential Skills Change Fund Initiative have all made a difference.</p>
<p>Build on the mainly good or better quality provision inspected in pre-school, primary, special and further education to ensure all education and training is as good as it can be.</p>	<p>Of provision inspected during the reporting period, 84% of pre-school, 79% of primary, 86% in post-primary, six of the eight special schools, and 67% of work-based learning provision<sup>83</sup> was evaluated as having a high level of capacity or capacity to identify and bring about improvement.</p>
<p>Ensure high quality of leadership and management in all education and training provision, but particularly in post-primary schools and workbased learning where approximately one-third of those inspected need to improve.</p>	<p>Most providers have sound, strategic leadership: 86% of post-primary schools inspected have leadership that is good or better; however, nearly one in five needs to improve. In work-based learning, over one-third still need to improve the leadership.</p>

<sup>82</sup> PISA and other international studies have not been reported in the intervening period.

<sup>83</sup> FE provision was not evaluated on this measure in the reporting period.

Reduce the variability in the life chances of children and young people which is too dependent on whether they have access to a good pre-school, school, further education college or training provider.	Variability remains across the province in access to good quality provision. However, the gap between the attainment of those attending non-grammar and grammar schools is continuing to close.
Urge parents, carers, communities, employers and other relevant stakeholders to engage more fully with educators and trainers in order to support children and young people in their learning, challenging weak practice where appropriate.	Inspection continues to identify and challenge weak practice. During the period of this Chief Inspector's Report the Department of Education undertook a public-relations 'Get Involved Because Education Works' campaign to engage parents and carers more fully in supporting their children's learning.
Ensure all organisations continue to work together to provide learners with access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their learning and training needs and maximises the use of resources.	A choice of pathways is open to learners; it remains a challenge to improve the effectiveness of transition in learning from phase to phase and to provide better adapted curricular choice. Good career guidance connects aspiration to progress.
Continue to raise the ambition and aspirations of all learners through good quality pastoral care and support that meets an increasingly complex range of needs and barriers to learning.	Pastoral care is a strength across all providers. However, it is unacceptable that the arrangements for safeguarding children and young people are not comprehensive in all schools.
Develop the capacity of teachers and management in schools to meet the notable rise in the number of pupils who have special educational needs.	The number of learners with special needs continues to rise and the capacity of schools to respond appropriately is improving: the quality of the provision remains good or better in most schools. However, some pupils' individual needs are not met sufficiently well.
Provide high quality professional development and support for staff; particularly where the quality of learning and teaching needs to improve.	The Department of Education has launched its new strategy "Learning Leaders: a strategy for teacher professional learning" which outlines the characteristics of desirable innovative practice. The contribution of the PRSD process to school improvement is marginal at best.
Build on The Sharing in Education Programme which demonstrated that high quality shared experiences contribute to better learning.	The Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project has continued to build on shared education across 134 schools engaging over 2,200 teachers and in excess of 22,000 pupils in shared learning experiences.

## Appendix 2

### Organisation inspections carried out 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2016



Indp	-	Independent schools
EOTAS	-	Education Other Than at School
HQC	-	Headquarter organisation
OEC	-	Outdoor education centre
WBL	-	Work-based learning
ESF	-	European Social Fund

**Notes:**

The number of inspections excludes pilot inspections, follow-up activity, surveys, evaluations and district visits.

ETI contributed to one Criminal Justice Inspection and the reports were published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.





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