

## An Assessment of the Impact of Newcomer Pupil Premium in Primary and Post-Primary Schools

May 2020

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ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



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## 1. Purpose of the evaluation

On behalf of the Department of Education (DE), between January and December 2018, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) undertook a small-scale assessment of the impact of the Newcomer Pupil Premium in primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland (NI). The aim of this work was to identify key strengths in the provision for newcomer<sup>1</sup> pupils in schools and to identify examples of effective practice.

As part of the evaluation, the ETI sought the following information from the participating schools:

- the context of the school in terms of its newcomer intake, for example, numbers, nationalities, educational history;
- the approaches to welcoming and settling newcomer pupils into the school, including engagement with parents and community representatives;
- the nature of the professional development undertaken by school staff in order to meet the needs of newcomer pupils;
- the key areas to which the Newcomer Pupil Premium is directed to meet the needs of the pupils; and
- the progress and attainment of newcomer pupils.

The methodology and evidence base is set out in Appendix 2.

## 2. Background to the evaluation

The Department of Education (DE) Statistical Bulletin 2/2018 “*Annual enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland, 2017/18*”<sup>2</sup> evidences an increased ethnic diversity in schools, as well as a year-on-year rise in the number of pupils whose home language is not English. There are currently around 90 home languages spoken by pupils across Northern Ireland. The bulletin reports:

*‘...there has been an increase in the number and proportion of newcomer pupils in schools in Northern Ireland....In 2017/18, there are more than 15,400 newcomer pupils, accounting for 4.5% of the school population.’*

The trend over time is detailed in Appendix 1.

## 3. Key Findings

### Outcomes for learners

- The newcomer pupils who met with inspectors were supportive and respectful in their interactions with one another and happy to discuss their experiences of learning, and school in general, with the inspectors. The pupils report that they enjoy school and participate in all aspects of school life; a number of pupils explained various roles and responsibilities they carry out. They take pride in sharing their languages and cultures with their peers and teachers, appreciate the language-specific support for English they receive in school and feel that they are making progress across the curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school but who does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/DE-enrolment-stats-bulletin-revised-feb-2018.pdf>

- The schools presented evidence, in a variety of forms, of the positive impact of additional support on the pupils' learning. This additional support included: withdrawal sessions; differentiated learning in class supported by a classroom assistant; intensive English language support; and pastoral support. The schools cited numerous examples of academic achievement by newcomer pupils, and highlighted other successes, such as greater levels of confidence and participation within and beyond the classroom.
- The small group of parents who met with the inspectors spoke very positively about their children's experiences in school and the progress they are making in their learning. They highlighted: the welcoming and inclusive ethos of the school; the pastoral and learning support the school provides for the children and their parents; and the opportunities, facilitated by the school, for their children to become active participants in both the school and local community.

### **Provision for learning**

- The schools visited employ a wide range of creative approaches to supporting newcomer pupils. Factors that influence the provision include, for example: the number of newcomer pupils enrolled in the school; the age, stage of development and education history of the pupils; and, the experience and capacity of the staff. Schools would benefit from more opportunities to share and discuss practice through, for example, clusters, workshops and dissemination events.
- A key priority for all of the schools visited is the investment they make in creating a respectful, empathetic, inclusive learning environment, where all members of the school community are welcomed and valued equally. Schools create this environment through ensuring diversity is integral to the life and work of the school and is celebrated within and beyond the classroom, and in the local and wider community.
- The schools invest much time and effort in planning and delivering well-structured and creative induction programmes, in order to meet the pastoral and learning needs of newcomer pupils, including those pupils who join a school during the academic year.
- Schools are proactive in getting to know the pupils, their families and communities, in order to ensure appropriate resources and staff, who are often bilingual, are provided to meet their learning, social and emotional needs. Importantly, schools report that, after the initial settling-in period, they have a greater awareness of individual needs and can adapt the support accordingly.
- Schools report that they need more support in meeting the needs of newcomer pupils who arrive in a key transition year. This is particularly the case in post-primary schools, most notably when newcomer pupils with limited English language skills join in key stage 4. The post-primary schools visited are working hard to provide these pupils with a tailored curriculum which reflects and respects their age and stage of development, and which allows them to make progress in their learning.

- Schools invest in a range of bespoke foreign language, bilingual and multilingual resources which enable newcomer pupils to use and improve their home languages, including where possible, becoming increasingly literate, and undertaking qualifications in their home languages. In discussions with inspectors, a number of pupils expressed their disappointment that there is no public examination available in their home language.
- As a result of the priority which schools have given to teacher professional learning, school staff are now more confident and thorough in their use of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)<sup>3</sup>. Importantly, staff are given dedicated time to allow them to complete the administration requirements and to track pupils' progress systematically within the CEFR.
- Appropriately, schools use a range of assessment data and pastoral information alongside the CEFR to track the pupils' progress across the curriculum; including: whole-class and withdrawal teacher observations; and, through discussions with parents and with the children themselves. This information informs the provision and planning of a range of support and appropriate interventions that are put in place to ensure all children make progress in their learning.
- Schools regularly monitor, review and adapt their arrangements for supporting newcomer pupils. As a result, the intervention and support provided is flexible and responsive to the diverse learning and pastoral needs of the individual pupils.

### **Leadership and management**

- Schools have benefited from a range of professional learning opportunities to meet the needs of newcomer pupils. This includes, for example: support from the Intercultural Education Service of the Education Authority (IES)<sup>4</sup>; access to professional associations for language learning; and, visits to other schools and settings in order to learn from their experience.
- Schools use a range of appropriate methods of communication to reach families and communities and to involve them in the life and work of the school. These include, for example: newsletters and summaries of key policies, which are easily understood and often visual; home visits carried out by school staff; parent liaison officers who are available to facilitate home-school communication; special assemblies and celebrations which reflect and respect the diversity of the schools' communities; and, parent education programmes and workshops to enable parents to support their children in their learning.
- All of the schools visited are working hard to ensure that newcomer pupils and their families are fully involved in all aspects of the life of the school.

### **4. Conclusion**

- The schools visited are making creative use of resources, including school personnel at all levels, in order to provide additional support which is tailored carefully and sensitively to the individual needs of newcomer pupils. Key to the success of the additional support is the flexibility to adapt to the changing needs and interests of newcomer pupils and to respond to the needs of those who arrive a different times throughout the year.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/intercultural-education-service/>

- As there is no one single approach to supporting newcomer pupils, schools would benefit from opportunities to share and discuss their practice, through for example, clusters, and dissemination events.
- The schools are fully committed to ensuring that newcomer pupils and their families are welcomed and feel valued members of the school community. The newcomer pupils are encouraged and enabled to participate in and contribute to all aspects of school life.

## **Recommendations**

It is important that consideration be given, at all levels, to:

- facilitate the dissemination of current best practice in newcomer provision, enabling schools to share the innovative approaches that they have individually developed and, as a result, to build the capacity to ensure a consistently, high quality service for all newcomer children;
- support schools in meeting the needs of newcomer pupils who arrive in a key transition year, in particular those with limited English language skills who join in key stage 4; and
- the funding for newcomer pupils who arrive after the school census return in October, which raises a financial cost for schools.

**Table 6b: Newcomer pupils by school type, 2012/13 - 2017/18**  
**Nursery, Primary, Post Primary and Special Schools**

	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Voluntary and Private Pre-School Centres (funded children only)	330	3.9%	341	4.1%	335	3.9%	364	4.2%	356	4.3%	337	4.2%
Nursery Schools	327	5.5%	330	5.6%	323	5.5%	382	6.5%	409	7.0%	452	7.7%
Nursery Classes & Reception	512	5.6%	570	6.1%	598	6.3%	654	6.8%	691	7.1%	699	7.2%
Primary Schools & Prep. Departments (Year 1 - Year 7)	5,969	3.8%	6,854	4.2%	8,080	4.9%	8,853	5.2%	9,703	5.7%	10,724	6.2%
Secondary (Non Grammar) Schools	2,244	2.7%	2,288	2.8%	2,219	2.8%	2,279	2.9%	2,381	3.1%	2,562	3.3%
Grammar Schools (Year 8 - Year 14)	274	0.4%	213	0.3%	232	0.4%	271	0.4%	262	0.4%	277	0.4%
Special Schools	91	2.0%	101	2.1%	113	2.2%	129	2.5%	141	2.6%	169	2.9%
EOTAS Centres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
<b>ALL FUNDED PRE-SCHOOL, NURSERY, PRIMARY, POST-PRIMARY, SPECIAL SCHOOLS and EOTAS CENTRES</b>	<b>9,747</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>10,697</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>11,900</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>12,932</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>13,943</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>15,220</b>	<b>4.4%</b>

1.A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school but who does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, and the wider environment, and does not have a language in common with the teacher, whether that is English or Irish. This has previously been referred to as English an Additional Language. It does not refer to indigenous pupils who choose to attend an Irish medium school.

<sup>2</sup> Enrolments for special schools and EOTAS centres relate those where pupils are single registered to the school, or are dual registered and the special school/EOTAS centre is recorded as the main school.

**Methodology, evidence base and schools visited as part of the evaluation**

A small team of ETI inspectors conducted visits to a selection of primary and post-primary schools during the period January 2018 to December 2018.

The visits involved some or all of the following:

- discussions with the principal and relevant staff, including bi-lingual classroom assistants and support staff;
- observation of lessons in mainstream classrooms and newcomer-specific sessions;
- a review of relevant documentation;
- discussions with groups of newcomer pupils; and
- discussion with a small group of parents

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action, primarily in relation to a pay dispute, which includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). This had a minor impact on the number of participating schools and on the number of lessons observed.

The schools which supported this evaluation were:

**Primary**

Bush Primary School  
Harmony Hill Primary School and Nursery Unit, Lisburn  
Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt  
Rowandale Integrated Primary School  
St Mary's Primary School, Pomeroy  
St Paul's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Belfast  
St Clare's Abbey Primary School, Newry

**Post-Primary**

Corpus Christi College, Belfast  
Drumglass High School  
Malone Integrated College, Belfast



### **Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt Case Study – Newcomer Pupil Premium**

Holy Family Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in Magherafelt. The current enrolment is just under 600 pupils. Since the arrival of the first Polish family in 2005, the school population has become increasingly diverse; there are now ten nationalities represented in the school, accounting for over one quarter of the children.

#### **Provision**

Many of the children whose home language is not English, now come to the school from the local pre-school providers, meaning that they are established in the community and that their prior school experience is known. For families with little or no experience of the locality, or of the education system, there is an initial meeting with the vice-principal, supported by an interpreter, if necessary. Following this, there is a comprehensive induction into school life, including a Welcome booklet to help families understand routines and expectations. All school publications, including prospectus, newsletters and website, are thoughtfully and skilfully designed to be as accessible as possible to the whole school community. This is achieved through use of visuals, and unambiguous language. In addition, the children may be paired up with an already established older newcomer child.

The school provides additional English language classes four days a week after school. Very specific diagnostic testing helps ensure that support provided is tailored to the needs of the children. This includes support to address special educational needs, as eighteen per cent of the children on the special needs register speak English as an additional language, and a number have statements. Language support is tightly aligned to curriculum planning for the mainstream lessons. The children's progress is regularly assessed through the work that they complete in these lessons and in the mainstream classroom. Assessment is integrated into the learning experiences and progress made against the CEFR is recorded incrementally on SIMS. The school uses resources developed and modified over the years. Technology, including interpreter software, supports and challenges the learning.

The school's motto, 'Forward Together', expresses the sense of mutual respect and togetherness that is fostered in Holy Family. The school environment reflects these values, and they are revisited routinely as part of everyday school life. A strong emphasis is placed on learning to be a good global citizen, through respecting each other and through helping people in need at home and around the world. The children are encouraged to learn about and value their own and others' languages, traditions and cultures. Diversity is celebrated through, for example, 'Green Day', 'GAA day' and European Day of Languages. The school has been supported in addressing contentious issues surrounding diversity by external partners, such as Speedwell Trust.

Community links with partners such as: Mid Ulster Council; Citizens Advice; South Tyrone Empowerment Programme; and The Volunteer Centre are strong and effective. The support that these organisations provide with a range of everyday things such as bank accounts, bills and services, help families and complement and extend what the school can provide.

## **Success**

The numbers of children, who speak English as an additional language, choosing to attend the school go some way to demonstrate that families feel part of the school and believe their children are being served well. Many EAL children undertake their complete primary education in Holy Family Primary School and the school's internal data shows that, by the end of key stage 2 (KS2) when they are ready to progress to post-primary school, all of the EAL children are progressing and attaining very well.

## **Malone College Case Study – Newcomer Pupil Premium**

Malone College is an 11-19 grant-maintained integrated school situated in south-west Belfast. The current enrolment is just under 500 pupils, with 67% entitled to free school meals.

Over the past five years, the school population has reflected the changing dynamic and diversity of south-west Belfast. In 2013/14, the international pupils came mainly from Eastern Europe; in 2014/15 from an increasing number of Eastern European countries as well as Somalia; in 2015/16 the school admitted 41 new Roma pupils; and, in 2016/17 there was an increase in the number of Syrian and Arabic-speaking pupils.

There are 26 nationalities represented in the student body, accounting for around one quarter of the enrolment, along with five out of the six main world religions.

### **Provision**

There is a team of staff with responsibility for whole-school provision for the school's diverse intake. The leader for EAL provision: plans for induction, learning, teaching and assessment for the EAL pupils; and, together with a teaching colleague and teaching assistant, delivers the intensive English lessons and withdrawal support. The pupils' attendance and progress in English and the mainstream curriculum are monitored closely using a range of assessment approaches. Progress against the CEFR is monitored as required by DE.

In addition, the teaching assistant and home/school liaison officer build relationships with the pupils and their families. They, and the principal, often visit homes and the resulting relationships have impacted positively on attendance and engagement with education by pupils, parents and wider communities.

The school has a Bilingual Centre open from 8.00am until 4.00pm. This is always staffed and provides a social space for the EAL pupils, their friends and peers. Peer support is an important feature of school life; established pupils are encouraged to support newly-arrived or younger pupils.

The importance of promoting the pupils' own languages for cognitive as well as cultural development is emphasised. The richness of diversity is built into the fabric of the school environment and routines, for example, through: multi-cultural signage; the prayer area; language of the month; world religious festival of the month; and through assemblies with multi-cultural themes directed by modern languages and religious education teachers.

Community networks are strong; the school has worked closely with numerous local partnerships and community organisations in supporting the pupils' wellbeing and attainment, including: South Belfast Project Group; West Belfast Partnership; Horn of Africa; Romanian Roma Community Association of Northern Ireland.

In order to build their competence in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language, the EAL team and wider staff continue to learn as professionals. To date, the EAL team has undertaken online training from the Intercultural Service and, in relation to EAL-specific teaching approaches, have worked with the British Council on the Nexus Programme. The team has learnt from visiting recognised centres of excellence in multi-cultural education, including Babington Community College, Leicester and St Mark's Community College, Tallaght. The leader of EAL provides regular guidance to colleagues on improving their approaches to supporting and challenging EAL pupils in mainstream lessons.

## **Success**

There are many successes. One example is a pupil, who arrived as a refugee from Syria with very little English and after one year, achieved 3A\*, 1A and 1C at GCSE. This pupil was recognised through the Barnardo's Young Achiever of the Year Award. Where possible, the pupils undertake GCSE and GCE in their own languages. Overall attainment in the school is above the Northern Ireland average for schools in the same FSME category at both GCSE and GCE level.

Diversity is a 'way of being' in the school. Not only is this encouraging educational engagement and attainment of the EAL pupils, it is developing global citizenship across the whole school community. The pupils and staff learn with and from each other to understand and appreciate different ways of communicating, praying, celebrating and living. The school has just received the DE School of Sanctuary Award.

**St Paul's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Belfast, Case Study****Context**

St Paul's is a Catholic-maintained primary school and nursery unit in the Beechmount Electoral Ward in West Belfast. The current enrolment is approximately 400 pupils; almost 80% of the children are entitled to free school meals and the proportion of newcomer children currently stands at 30%. The school has achieved its Level 1 Rights Respecting Schools Award and is currently working towards accreditation at Level 2.

**Provision**

The school has developed a multi-faceted approach to learning, teaching and assessment in order to meet the needs of the ever-growing population of newcomer children. The Newcomer Pupil Premium, combined with other sources of funding, is used to facilitate an innovative range of initiatives, strategies and tailored interventions. A reduced pupil-teacher ratio is maintained and composite classes are avoided throughout the school. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and have access to professional development opportunities in order to build their capacity to effectively plan for and meet the needs of newcomer children. The vice-principal and newcomer co-ordinator liaise with the Intercultural Education Service (IES) to ensure the best possible provision for the children; the vice-principal has developed a bespoke teaching programme and provides daily support to the children; and foundation stage and key stage one staff provide small-group weekly support sessions.

On arrival to the school, the physical environment creates a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where multilingual and visual signage encourages all members of the school community to take part in all aspects of school life. Throughout the school, in classrooms and in the library, a range of resources, including: bilingual and picture dictionaries, stories and numeracy resources; visual timetables; posters; and, materials reflecting other cultures and faiths, are readily available and the school allocates time and money, when the need arises, to purchase and produce additional resources to support the newcomer children in accessing the curriculum. Within individual classrooms, all children are prepared to welcome the newcomer child and will learn about the native country of the child, its cultures and traditions; a learning buddy is also assigned, if required, to help with settling in.

The school values the necessity to form partnerships and build working relationships with a range of stakeholders. A newcomer cluster group has been formed with a number of other schools to: facilitate the sharing of ideas; disseminate best practice; and, develop shared resources. Parental engagement is encouraged through: liaison with the parent support officer; curriculum workshops; parenting and education courses; school trips; reading partners; parent helpers; home-school journals containing key language; informal daily discussions; and the more formal parent-teacher meetings and written reports. The school has also forged effective partnerships with a range of community groups and organisations to provide holistic support to the children and their families.

## **Success**

The ethos of St Paul's Primary School and Nursery Unit reflects the linguistic, religious and cultural diversity of all its children and school community. The newcomer population in the school continues to rise, with many newcomer children now transferring to the school from other schools. The high quality bespoke resources that have been developed in the school over recent years and the tailored approach to learning, teaching and assessing ensure that the learning and pastoral needs of the children are met in a fully inclusive environment. Robust systems of monitoring and evaluating are in place to track the progress the newcomer children make in their learning and to ensure that they meet their full potential. The high expectations that staff have for all of the children are matched by: high levels of parental satisfaction; increased pupil self-esteem and confidence; and strong parental and community support.

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