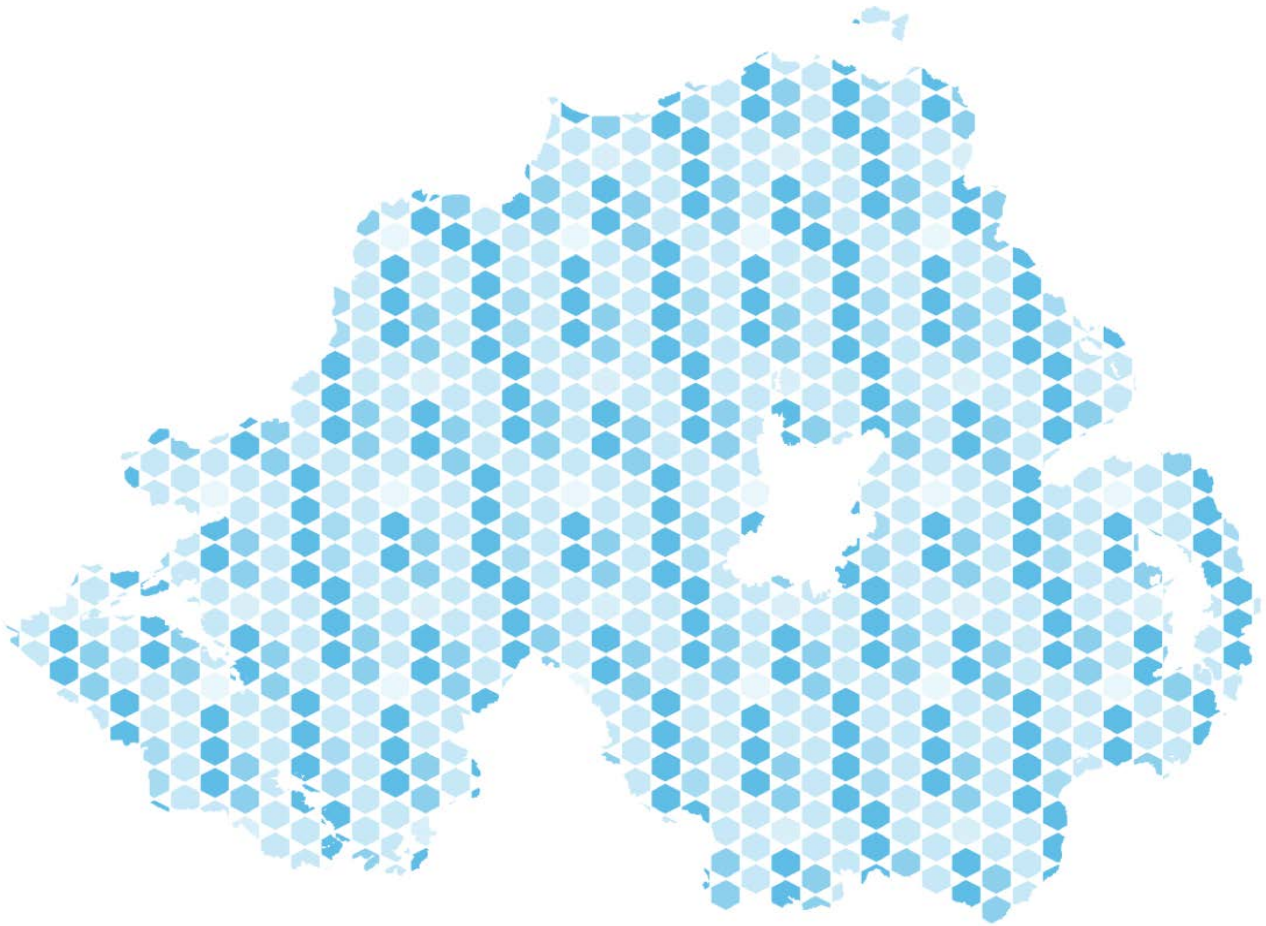


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Newbuildings Primary School and  
Ballyore Community Nursery Unit,  
Newbuildings, County Londonderry

Controlled, co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection (Involving  
Action Short of Strike) in June 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF NEWBUILDINGS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND BALLYORE COMMUNITY NURSERY UNIT, LONDONDERRY, BT47 2RL (201-2261)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection in March 2014 and the first follow-up inspection of Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore Community Nursery Unit in March 2016<sup>1</sup>, the latter report concluded that the school needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement included the need:

- to review the roles and responsibilities of staff, at all levels, to create and support a more collegial and robust approach to school improvement and to build the capacity of all staff to effect the required improvement in a timely manner;
- to develop further the governance of the school, in particular its capacity to monitor the administrative arrangements for the safeguarding of children, the outworking of the school's revised policies and, importantly, the standards achieved by the children; and
- to meet more effectively the learning needs of the significant minority of children identified as underachieving, including the children identified as having special educational needs, in order to raise the standards they attain.

The school's action plans were of a good quality and were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The school's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings. The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in October 2016 and a second follow-up inspection in June 2017.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that none of the teachers, including the senior leadership team, would be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

As a result of the action short of strike, the school did not distribute the online questionnaire information to parents and staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of parents and staff.

In the interval since the first follow-up inspection, actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- at the time of the interim follow-up visit in October 2016, the curriculum leaders' roles and responsibilities were reviewed to include monitoring and evaluating procedures;
- there has been a high level of staff absence (at the time of the follow-up inspection, five out of eight members of the teaching staff are in a temporary capacity);

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<sup>1</sup> [Follow-up Inspection - Newbuildings Primary School, Londonderry | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

- a significant number of key leadership roles are being filled by a member of staff in an acting-up capacity including a member of the senior staff who has undertaken the role of acting-principal;
- an associate principal and an acting-principal have been appointed by the Education Authority to support and maintain continuity in the management of the school;
- a new chair of the board of governors was appointed in May 2017 by the Education Authority after a continued period of instability in the governance of the school. The chair of the board of governors has identified priorities for improvement in: the school development planning process; communication practices; staff working relationships; and, addressing the parental concerns regarding the school's areas for improvement;
- enrolment has increased over the last eighteen months from 169 to 178 children;
- extensive building work has been almost completed to improve the quality of the school's accommodation; and
- school leaders, including governors, have received ongoing support from representatives of the Education Authority in the areas of leadership and management, governance and curriculum improvement.

### **Key findings**

- There is evidence that the administrative arrangements for the safeguarding of children is being monitored by the board of governors through the regular updates at their meetings. During the inspection, the school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. In discussion with the inspectors, a group of children from years 6 and 7 reported that they feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate the following areas for improvement:

- to review the roles and responsibilities of staff, at all levels, to create and support a more collegial and robust approach to school improvement and to build the capacity of all staff to effect the required improvement in a timely manner;
- to develop further the governance of the school, in particular, its capacity to monitor the administrative arrangements for the safeguarding of children, the outworking of the school's revised policies and, importantly, the standards achieved by the children; and
- to meet more effectively the learning needs of the significant minority of children identified as underachieving, including the children identified as having special educational needs, in order to raise the standards they attain.

Consequently, there remains a need for Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore Community Nursery School to address the important areas for improvement and, in addition:

- to address urgently the instability in the governance, strategic and middle leadership and staffing levels in the interests of the children's educational progress and school improvement.

## **Conclusion**

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the staff, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. The school is a high priority for future inspection.

The school may require external support to address the areas for improvement outlined in the key findings above<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Education Authority (and/or employing authority) that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

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