

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bessbrook Primary School and
Nursery Unit, Newry, County Down

Controlled, co-educational

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
April 2018

eti

The Education and Training Inspectorate
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Bessbrook Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated in the centre of the village of Bessbrook, three miles from Newry. The enrolment has risen steadily over the last four years, as has the number of newcomer pupils. The school houses a small museum charting the history of the village of Bessbrook from its founding in 1845.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The 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.

Bessbrook Primary School and Nursery Unit	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrolment	95	100	102	109
% School attendance	95.1	94.2	94.5	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	95.5	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	38.9	44	45.1	49.1
No. of children on SEN register	18	19	18	21
% of children on SEN register	18.9	19	17.6	19.3
No. of children with statements of educational need	7	6	5	8
No. of newcomers	*	*	8	13

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

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

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy including across the curriculum;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy including the nursery unit; and
- quality of leadership and management.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure of the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available
Nursery Unit	No performance level available

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- A group of year 7 children engaged enthusiastically in a discussion with inspectors about their learning in numeracy. They have a good understanding of the importance of mathematics and gave examples of how they use numeracy in their everyday lives.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the learning outcomes for the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- care and welfare.

7. Leadership and management

- During the inspection, the ETI met with a representative from the governors who expressed confidence in the principal and staff and pride in the school's inclusive ethos and standing in the local community. The governors reported that they bring a range of skills and expertise to support the school improvement process.
- The school development plan is comprehensive and well-structured. It is informed by consultation with stakeholders and the analysis of a range of appropriate data. The associated action plans have clear, evaluative baselines and focus appropriately on improving further the learning experiences for, and outcomes attained by, the children.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of strategic leadership and governance;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. 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.
- In discussion with the inspectors, a group of year 6 children spoke positively about their learning experiences within and beyond the classroom. They reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

9. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the staff, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website: [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observe learning and teaching, scrutinise documentation and the children's written work and hold formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for inspection include:

- a meeting with a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential, online questionnaire.

Where, owing to the action short of strike, this evidence base was not available, it has been referenced in the body of the inspection report.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- meetings with the principal;
- a meeting with a representative from the board of governors;
- meetings with year 6 and 7 children; and
- a meeting with the designated teacher for safeguarding, and the opportunity to read documentation for safeguarding.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management²:

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 school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

² And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

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