

# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche,  
Caisleán Uidhilín/Castlewellan,  
Contae an Dúin/ County Down

Irish-medium, co-educational

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action  
Short of Strike) in October 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche is a co-educational, non-denominational, Irish-medium primary school situated in the town of Castlewellan. The children attending the school come from the town and the surrounding rural areas. School enrolment has increased in the past four years and now sits at the minimum enrolment for schools in rural areas. The school forms part of a shared education partnership with the local integrated and controlled primary schools. A new principal was appointed last year.

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.

Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Enrolment	85	86	98	105
% Attendance	96.7	96	97.3	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	34	36	36	29
No of children on SEN register	11	13	17	14
% of children on SEN register	13	15	17	13
No. of children with statements of educational need	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

**Source:** data as held by the school.

N/A not available

\* fewer than 5

### 2. Views of parents and staff

Twenty-eight percent of parents and 44% of the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaire were positive and the written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the life and work of the school, and in particular, the work of the recently appointed principal. The responses to the staff questionnaire were mostly positive and endorsed the range of opportunities for staff development. The ETI has communicated to the principal, the chair and a representative of the board of governors the main findings, and any individual issues arising, from the questionnaires.

### 3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on literacy;

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

- quality of provision with a particular focus on literacy including across the curriculum; and
- quality of leadership and management.

#### **4. Overall findings of the inspection**

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Unable to assure of the quality of education
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	No performance level available
<b>Quality of provision</b>	No performance level available
<b>Leadership and management</b>	No performance level available

### **KEY FINDINGS**

#### **5. Outcomes for learners**

- A group of children from year seven read with the inspectors in Irish and English. They read fluently and expressively in both languages and talked confidently about their enjoyment of reading and their favourite authors.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the learning outcomes for the children;
- 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**

- The school development plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement and has been informed by consultation within the school community.
- During the inspection, the ETI met with representatives of the board of governors. The governors are well informed about the work and life of the school and they play a pro-active role in the school improvement process. They exercise their challenge function as necessary and are developing appropriate processes to ensure that improvement work is monitored systematically. They have established and continue to encourage effective links within the local community.

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. There is a need to review and update the school policy for intimate care. 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 discussions with the inspectors, the children in year 6 and 7 spoke positively about the caring and friendly relationships they have with one another, their enjoyment of learning and the pride they have in their school. They reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

## **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 children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential 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, some coordinators and representatives from the board of governors regarding the school development planning process, school improvement work and safeguarding;
- meetings with groups of year 6 and 7 children; and
- an opportunity to read documentation presented as supporting evidence pertaining to the school development plan and 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 management<sup>2</sup>:

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.

<sup>2</sup> And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

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