

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Damhead Primary School,
Coleraine, County Londonderry

Controlled, co-educational

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Damhead Primary School is a controlled, co-educational school situated three miles south of Coleraine. The school draws its enrolment from a large catchment area, including the towns of Ballymoney, Coleraine and Portstewart; it is operating currently at full capacity. Over the last three years, the proportion of children identified as having special educational needs has increased significantly. A new principal was appointed in April 2016. The school is participating in a Shared Education partnership with two other local primary schools.

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 almost all of the teachers would not 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.

Damhead Primary School	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Enrolment	197	196	206	209
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.6	96.8	97.4	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	14	13	15	12
No. of children on SEN register	21	21	42	46
No. of children with statements of educational needs	6	5	*	8
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	*

Source: data as held by the school.

N/A not available

* fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

Twenty-two percent of parents responded to the confidential, online questionnaire; almost all of the responses were extremely positive. In particular, the written responses highlighted: the dedicated, enthusiastic leadership of the principal; the approachable and supportive teachers; the welcoming ethos; and, the introduction of a range of initiatives to engage the children in their learning. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main points emerging from the questionnaires. There were no responses to the staff's confidential, online questionnaire.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate the:

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

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

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they are reported below.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure 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

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- 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 last two years, a robust process for school development planning has been implemented. Meaningful consultation with all stakeholders and analysis of relevant data have informed the identification of appropriate priorities for development, leading to a shared commitment to improvement. To enhance the capacity of the school to effect improvement, a senior leadership team has been formed and robust self-evaluation processes continue to be refined and developed. The senior leaders and co-ordinators have developed effectively their areas of responsibility through, for example, the sharing of effective practice and their engagement in well-planned opportunities for teacher professional learning.

- During the inspection, the ETI met with representatives of the board of governors. The governors reported that they are well-informed about the life and work of the school. Useful links between the governors and co-ordinators within the school have been established to develop further the capacity of the governance to provide a timely and appropriate support and challenge function to school improvement work.

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. In discussions with inspectors, a sample of year 6 children reported that they feel safe and happy in school. They know what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety or well-being. However, owing to action sort of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

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 representatives of the board of governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the children, 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:

- a meeting with representatives of the board of governors;
- a meeting with a group of children from year 6;
- the review of: the safeguarding documentation, the self-evaluation materials of key pastoral and curricular areas; and, the school development planning;
- meetings with the principal, senior leaders and co-ordinators in the school; and
- the opportunity for parents and staff to complete a confidential, online questionnaire.

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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