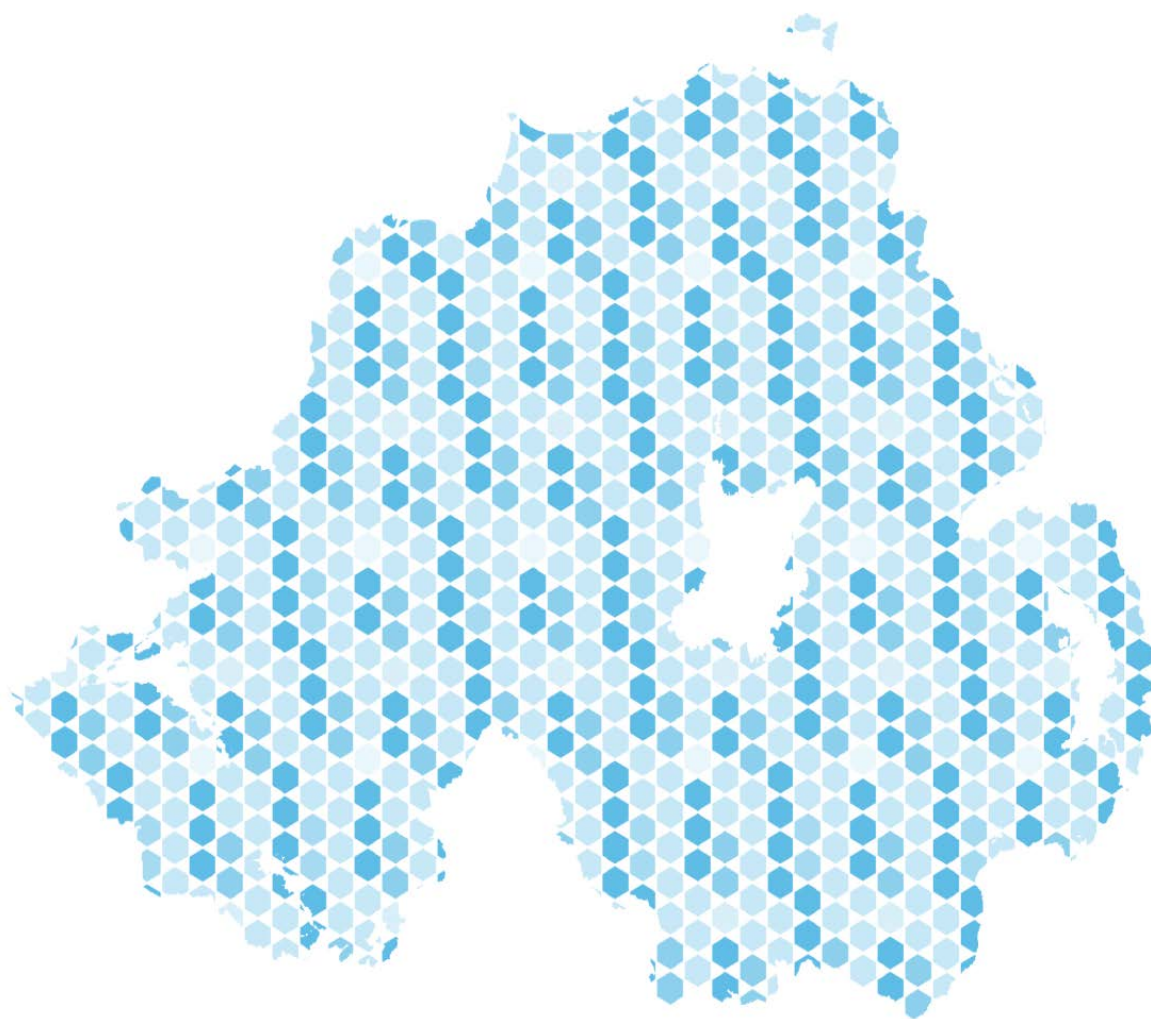


# PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Methodist College Belfast Preparatory  
Departments Downey and Fullerton  
House Schools, Belfast

Preparatory and co-educational

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

The preparatory department of Methodist College, Belfast consists of two schools, Fullerton House and Downey House. Fullerton House is situated within the main campus of Methodist College in South Belfast and Downey House occupies a spacious site within Pirrie Park in East Belfast. Each school serves a wide catchment area. The enrolment has decreased over the past five years, from 305 in 2013 to the current figure of 270 children. At the time of inspection, approximately 1% of the children were entitled to free school meals and 23% were identified as requiring additional help with aspects of their learning.

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.

Downey House School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrolment	132	123	119	118
% School attendance	96.2	96.4	96.7	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	0.76	0.81	0.84	0.85
No. of children on SEN register	34	22	30	28
% of children on SEN register	25.8	17.9	25.2	23.7
No. of children with statements of educational need	0	0	*	*

Fullerton House School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrolment	164	147	151	152
% School attendance	98.2	97.9	98.1	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.4	95.5	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>2</sup>	0.81	1.36	1.32	0.66
No. of children on SEN register	28	23	28	22
% of children on SEN register	17.1	15.6	18.5	14.5
No. of newcomer children	*	*	*	*

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

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

### 2. Views of parents and staff

Fourteen per cent of parents across both schools responded to the confidential, questionnaire. The responses to the parental questionnaire were mainly positive and the small number of written comments indicated mainly high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The ETI has communicated to the principal and the chair of the board of governors the main findings, and the individual issues arising, from the questionnaires. There were no responses from the staff to the online questionnaire.

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

<sup>2</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of children entitled to free school meals.

### 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.

### 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

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

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.
- During the inspection, the ETI met with a representative of the board of governors. It was reported that the governors carry out their challenge function and use their collective expertise and experience to support the preparatory department in areas relating to the pastoral care of the children and management of resources.
- The school development plan (SDP) for 2017-20 is at the consultation stage. The current evaluations in the SDP are neither sufficiently reflective nor detailed regarding the impact of the actions for 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. The children in each school report that they feel safe in school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully and discuss with the teaching staff the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school. The governors need to put in place immediately the necessary arrangements to review regularly child protection and safeguarding policies to ensure that they are fully comprehensive and are kept up-to-date.

## **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 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 short meeting with the principal and a member of the board of governors;
- meetings with the Head of the Preparatory Departments regarding school development planning, safeguarding and assessment;
- meetings with groups of year 6 children; and
- an opportunity to read documentation presented as supporting evidence of the school development plan, safeguarding and assessment.

## 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>3</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>3</sup> And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

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