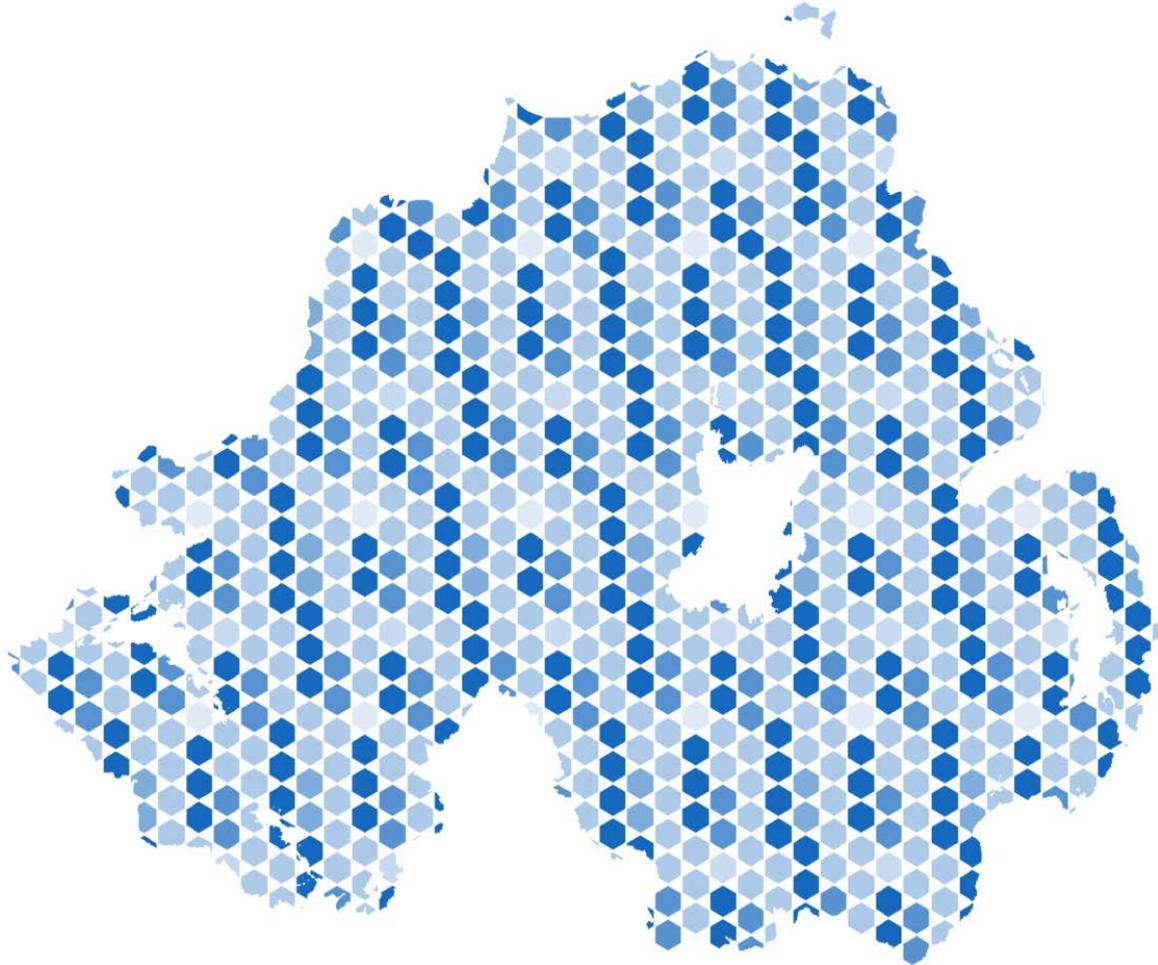


Education and Training Inspectorate

SPECIAL INSPECTION



Willowbridge School, Enniskillen, County Fermanagh

DE Ref No: 231-6694

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
October 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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1. Context

Willowbridge School is situated on the outskirts of Enniskillen and has a wide catchment area that includes Fermanagh, Tyrone and some border towns of Donegal and Leitrim. The school provides education for pupils aged from three to nineteen years with a wide range of complex learning difficulties. The school opened in 2012 and is an amalgamation of Erne School and Elmbrook School. There has been a steady increase in the number of pupils enrolled. The school has an acting principal in post.

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. A member of the senior leadership team co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their safeguarding responsibilities. 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.

2. Parents and staff questionnaire responses

Very few parents (1.5%) and a minority of the non-teaching staff responded to the online, confidential questionnaire; no teachers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all of the responses to the parental questionnaire including the additional written comments indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular the parents highlighted the caring, dedicated staff, the very good communication, the good progress their children were making and how happy they were in school.

The majority of the responses to the staff questionnaires indicated satisfaction with almost all areas of the life and work of the school including having appropriate staff development opportunities. A small number of concerns in the additional written comments were communicated to the principal and members of the board of governors along with the main findings from the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for pupils; in particular, how the school is addressing individual needs;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the outcomes for pupils; in particular, how the school is addressing individual needs;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

Where it is possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they have been 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

- During discussions with the inspectors, the pupils spoke enthusiastically about the school's student council and the changes they were able to make, such as the purchase of outside play equipment. They highlighted that they have the opportunity to develop leadership skills through prefect duties and helping other pupils in the school.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the learning outcomes for the pupils;
- progression in the pupils' learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The pupils with whom the inspectors spoke, reported that they enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities, for example, dancing, karate and Minecraft, and they appreciate the support and care provided by the staff. In particular the leavers spoke positively about their enjoyment of work experience placements.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

7. Leadership and management

- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are involved in all aspects of the life and work of the school, for example they review regularly school policies and conduct planned classroom visits.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness and impact of the strategic and middle leadership;
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement, including self-evaluation and the development planning process;

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflects broadly the guidance from the department of education. The pupils report that they feel safe in the 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 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 teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education and safeguarding being provided for the children.

The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

Statistical data

Willowbridge School	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Enrolment school	133	139	149	152	160
% Attendance	91.10	91.46	87.46	86.4	88.73
% FSME ¹	85	82	76	78	76
Newcomers	*	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

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

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework which guides inspection and self-evaluation within special schools is available on the ETI website [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Special Education | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with a representative from the governors;
- a meeting with the senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding;
- scrutiny of available safeguarding documentation;
- meetings with groups of pupils; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential 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

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.

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

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.

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