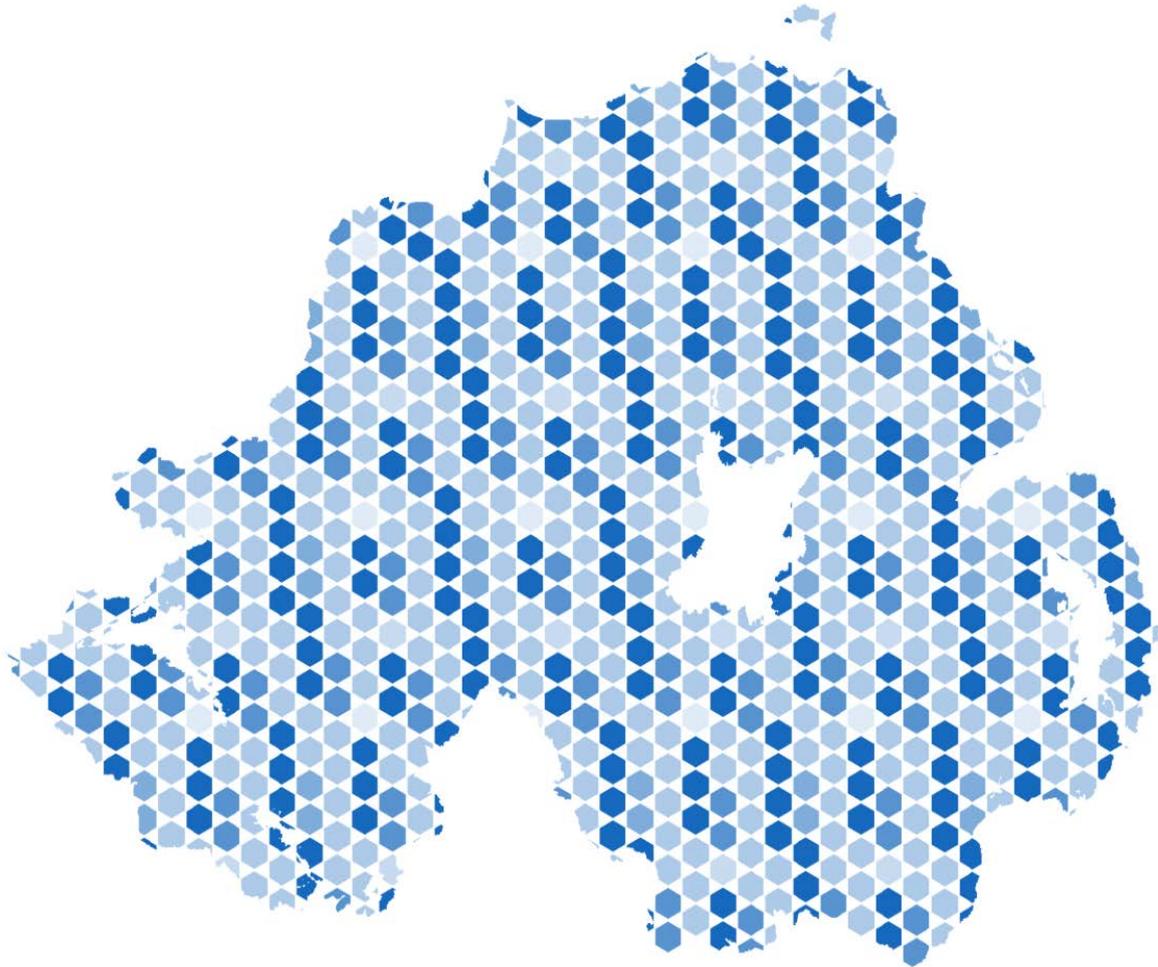


Education and Training Inspectorate

SPECIAL INSPECTION



Brookfield School, Moira, County Down

Special, controlled, co-educational DE Ref No (431-6022)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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1. Context

Brookfield School is situated on an extensive rural site between Moira and Lisburn. The school provides education for 150 children aged from three to eleven years with a wide range of complex learning needs, including sensory, behavioural and communication difficulties. The school was built ten years ago for children with moderate learning difficulties, however there is an important change in the learning profiles of the children in the nursery and Foundation Stage, with the children exhibiting more significant and complex difficulties than those in Key Stage 2.

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. Almost half of the senior leadership team co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their leadership and 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

A small number of parents and a minority of staff responded to the online, confidential questionnaire. The responses to the parental questionnaire were very positive and the written comments indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The responses to the staff questionnaire endorsed the effective work within the school, but also highlighted the lack of sufficient appropriate resources for the learning and sensory needs of the children with more complex difficulties. The ETI has communicated to the principal and the chair of the board of governors the main findings, and any individual issues arising, 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

- The process for monitoring the progress of the children is robust and is developing appropriately in line with the children's changing and increasingly complex profile of need. The school's data indicates that most of the children make good progress from their baseline assessments in the key curriculum areas of using mathematics, using Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and communication.
- During discussions with the inspectors, the children spoke confidently and with pride about the opportunities they have to take on meaningful roles and responsibilities, such as digital leaders, school and eco-council members and helping the younger children in learning activities and play around the school. The children talked enthusiastically of the learning and extra-curricular activities they enjoy in school such as art, play-based learning, cookery and football.

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 school provides a well-balanced curriculum with a wide range of activities for the children with less severe learning difficulties. There is a lack of appropriate accommodation and resources for one-to-one work and sensory needs for the children with more complex difficulties, and emotional and behavioural challenges.
- The class teams, with input from senior members of staff, and outside agencies, for example the Middletown Centre for Autism, compile positive behaviour support packs to address the needs of the children with additional social, emotional and behavioural needs. For children who require one-to-one work for periods of time when they are unsettled, the school provides well-structured and highly effective support.

- The children who have additional needs for social communication and play skills benefit from supplementary support sessions planned by the class teachers and provided by a trained volunteer. The children and parents involved report that the children develop further their confidence, social skills and independence.
- The children spoke very positively of how well they are cared for and supported in their learning by all of the staff.

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

- The school development plan is informed by rigorous consultation with key stakeholders, and the associated action plans are focussed sharply on improving the experiences and provision for children with diverse and complex needs. The senior leadership have prioritised appropriately the need to build the capacity of the middle leaders to monitor and evaluate more robustly their areas of co-ordination across the school.
- Two members of the senior leadership team are providing temporarily co-ordinator responsibilities for literacy and numeracy. It is important that there is a timely review of the distribution of these responsibilities for the senior leadership so that their focus remains on the school's strategic priorities.
- Appropriate links with a small number of primary and special schools have been established to share effective practice in meeting the children's changing profile of need.
- The parent and staff association works collaboratively to secure funds which are improving the provision for the children, such as the resourcing of the life-skills and sensory rooms.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. There are aspects of governance to review, namely to:
 - develop oversight of the outcomes and standards; and to
 - provide updated child protection training for the governors.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness and impact of the strategic and middle leadership; and
- 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 are unsatisfactory¹. 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.

The areas which must be addressed urgently include:

- the completion of the relevant safeguarding training for the governors, including training for the designated governor;
- the appropriate and suitable vetting in compliance with the Department of Education circulars for a small number of staff; and
- a review of the intimate care, and code of conduct policies for staff to reflect further the school context.

The ETI will return to the school within six working weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the unsatisfactory arrangements for safeguarding¹.

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.

The ETI will return to the school within six weeks to evaluate the progress in addressing the arrangements for safeguarding.

¹ The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Education Authority that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

Health and safety

- The three climbing frames in the playground are not in use because they are unsafe and require urgent removal to ensure the safety of the children.

Accommodation

- The main heating system to the school is broken and no longer in service.

Statistical data

Brookfield School	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Enrolment school	160	161	152	150
% Attendance	92.8	93.6	93.1	91
% FSME ²	48	50	46	41
Newcomers	6	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

² 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 scrutinised documentation and 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;
- meetings with groups of children; 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 management³:

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.

³ 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.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF BROOKFIELD SCHOOL IN MARCH 2019

SAFEGUARDING

In line with the child protection/safeguarding procedures of the Education and Training Inspectorate, the ETI returned to Brookfield School on 8 April 2019 as a follow-up to the inspection which took place on 11 March 2019; the purpose of the visit was to ensure that the safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory in the inspection, had been addressed.

On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements now reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE). Owing to the ongoing action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully, the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

During the interim period, the school had received support from the Child Protection School Support Service of the Education Authority and the Advisory Service of the Education Authority.

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