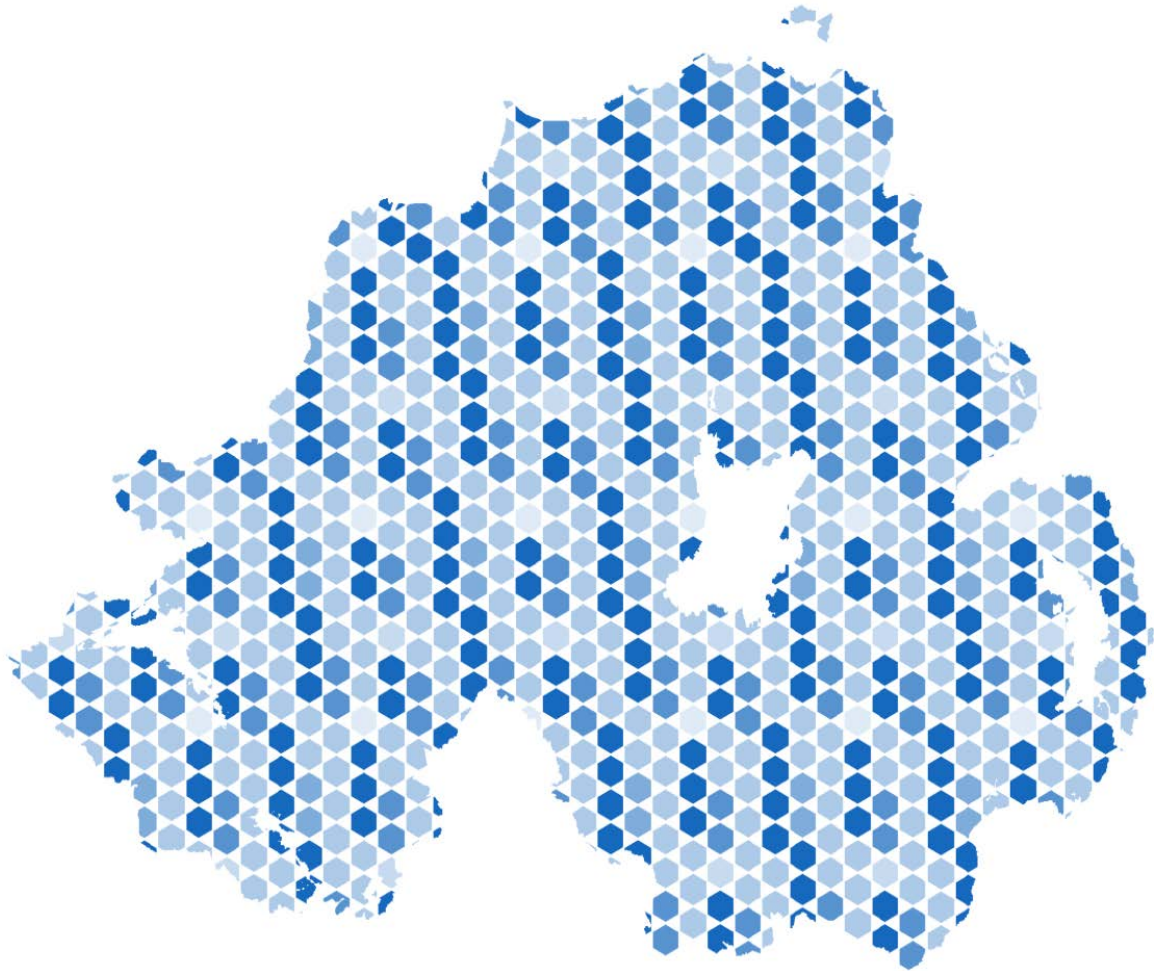


SPECIAL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rossmar School, Limavady,
County Londonderry

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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1. Context

Rossmar School provides education for pupils of three to 19 years who experience a wide range of increasingly complex difficulties which impact on their learning, communication, behaviour and social development. The school is located in Limavady and a rebuild of the school is due to commence. The school's nursery holds a dual day provision of three hours for a total of 11 children in two sessions. The school has been awarded the Bronze Award for eco-schools, and has a shared education partnership with two local schools for art projects and Learning for Life and Work.

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 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.

2. Views of parents and staff

Twenty-seven percent of parents (30) and 84% of staff (43) responded to the questionnaires. The parents who responded to the questionnaires wrote of the enjoyment their children experience in attending the school. An issue concerning communication was discussed with the governor and senior leader. The staff commended the collegial working relationships developed within the school.

3. Focus of the inspection

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 has been 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

- A more robust tracking system is required to monitor the progression of the pupils and the appropriateness of the qualifications they attain.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- standards attained by the pupils;
- progression in the pupils' learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects and activities; however it is appropriate for the staff to review the pupils' timetables to provide an appropriate balance of relevant subjects throughout the day and week.
- The school receives an appropriate range of therapy, and the therapists collaborate with teachers for the planning of the learning for pupils. The school provides counselling for primary and post-primary pupils.
- The staff use a range of assessments for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to provide base-line assessments for all of the pupils.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- the impact of the school's approach to care and welfare on the learning, teaching and outcomes.

7. Leadership and management

- A senior leadership team has been established, including the newly appointed principal, vice-principal and two heads of department. The team has consulted appropriately with staff, governors and pupils to review the whole-school priorities for development. There has been a collegial approach to school improvement with well-considered action plans developed for the current school year. The professional development of staff is afforded appropriate importance, it is important that this is aligned closely to future school improvement areas.
- Curriculum teams for literacy, numeracy and ICT have been established. Co-ordinator's roles and responsibilities have been reviewed, and, as a result, co-ordinators have begun to lead, monitor and evaluate their subject areas.

- A whole school approach to self-evaluation is currently being developed.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of strategic leadership;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote improvement.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The pupils are happy in school, enthusiastic about their learning experiences, and are aware 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 teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

Health and safety/accommodation

- The main school building is old and due for replacement on the same site. At present the existing building is in a very poor state of repair, with recurrent difficulties in the heating system, consequently, at times, the pupils have not been able to attend school.

Statistical data

| Rossmar school | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Enrolment school | 96 | 105 | 116 | 120 |
| Enrolment outreach | * | * | * | * |
| % Attendance | 89 | 88 | 86 | 89 |
| % FSME ¹ | 72 | 71 | 76 | 69 |
| 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 scrutinised documentation and held formal discussions with pupils.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with a representative from the governors;
- meetings with groups of pupils; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Outcomes for learners, on the Quality of provision and on Leadership and management:

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| Outstanding |
| Very Good |
| Good |
| Important area(s) for improvement |
| Requires significant improvement |
| Requires urgent improvement |

Inspection Outcome

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when indicating what will happen after the inspection:

| |
|---|
| The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation sustains improvement. |
| The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation sustains improvement |
| The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement which include the need to... There will be a formal follow-up inspection in... |
| The organisation 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 organisation's progress in addressing the need to... There will be a formal follow-up inspection in... |

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