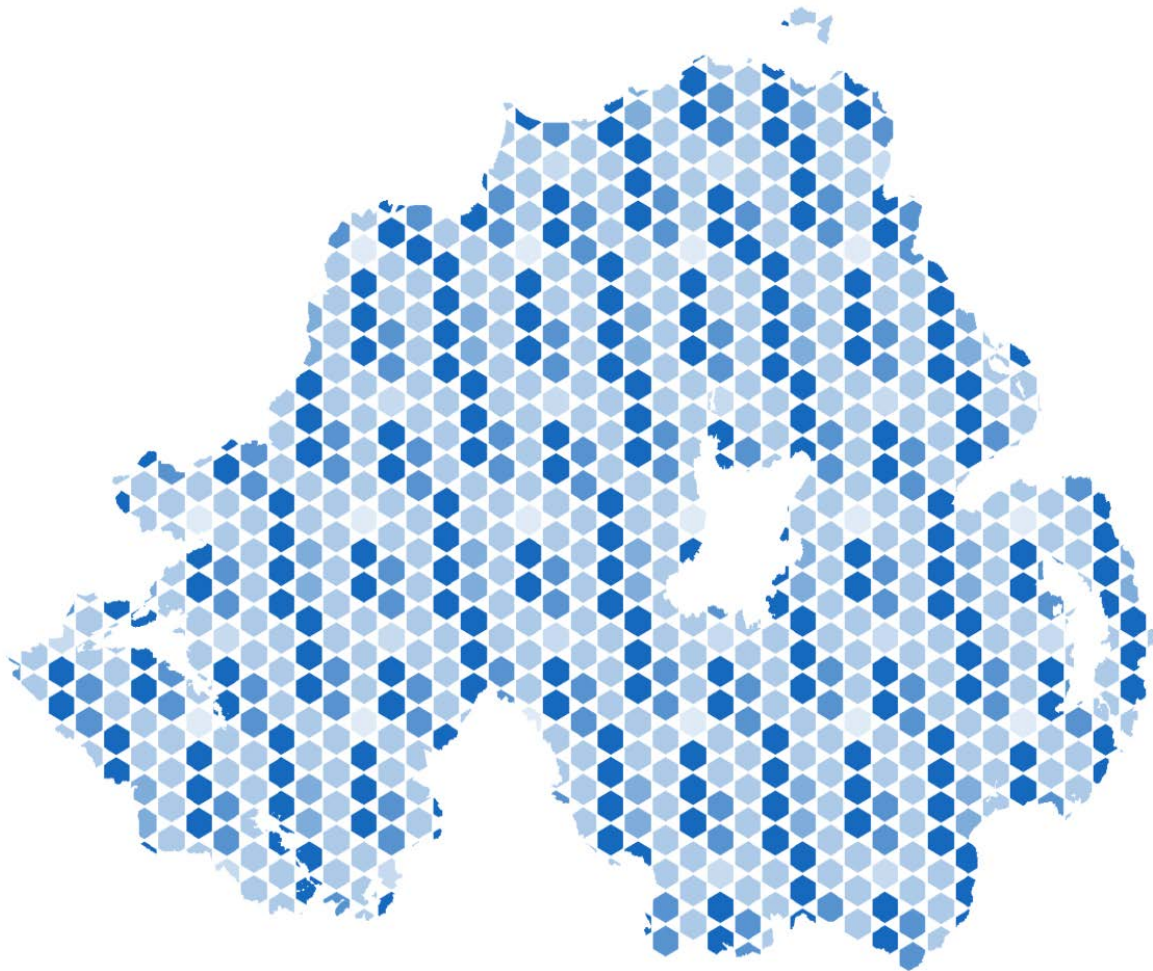


# Education and Training Inspectorate

## SPECIAL INSPECTION



### Arvalee Special School, Omagh, County Tyrone

Special, controlled, co-educational DE Ref No (231-6661)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in May 2019



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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Arvalee Special School, Omagh, County Tyrone (231-6661)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in May 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Arvalee School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. In the interim, the school has relocated to a new building on the Strule Shared Education Campus. In addition, a new vice-principal has recently been appointed and the school has achieved a silver award for developing the pupils' awareness and understanding of rights. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 20 May 2019.

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 the staff would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The principal and vice-principal co-operated in relation to safeguarding, and the principal co-operated in relation to aspects of his leadership and management role. 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.

### **Focus of the inspection**

The inspection focused on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school planning; the school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The areas of focus during the SII were:

- The development of the leadership team with a particular focus on leading learning through co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating key curriculum areas; and
- The development of an alternative, practical curriculum for pupils with challenging behaviour.

### **Key findings**

- There has been a strategic review of the structure and purpose of the senior and middle-management team and the revised roles and responsibilities prioritise the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching and the impact of this on pupils' learning outcomes and the progress they make. Pastoral and curriculum leadership roles are designed to enable collaborative working across all key stages in order take into account and plan for the breadth and complexity of pupils' learning needs.
- The school has established an alternative curriculum to address the holistic needs of a number of pupils with very challenging behaviour. The learning programme includes a broad range of enjoyable practical activities, and regular, purposeful life-skills sessions. In addition, individual timetables outline an appropriate focus on the sensory needs of all pupils. The school's internal data and the documentation made available shows that almost all of the pupils' attendance, motivation and engagement in learning activities has improved, and that there has been a reduction in the instances of challenging behaviours.

- The group of year Key Stage (KS) 2 children report that they enjoy the range of school activities including Maths, Art and PE. In particular, they enjoy the outdoor play area. Pupils from the newly established alternative curriculum class manage practical and purposeful jobs around the school, for example distributing milk to all classes and feeding and caring for the school chickens. The group of KS 3, 4 and 5 pupils report that they have very good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through the school council and the Strule Shared Campus joint school council. They enjoy meeting and working with their mainstream peers for example at the outdoor teambuilding programme and in the sports leadership training in conjunction with the five post-primary Strule Shared Campus schools.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the lines of inquiry; and
- the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

### **Safeguarding**

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The pupils with whom the inspector met report that they feel happy and safe in school and during shared campus joint activities. They know what to do and who to go to if they have worries or concerns. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate full, the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

### **Conclusion**

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.

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