Education and Training Inspectorate
CHIEF INSPECTOR'S REPORT
2016-2018

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The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

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It is with pleasure that I present my fourth report as Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate. This biennial report encompasses the findings from inspections, our wide range of surveys[1] and our district work across a range of sectors during the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018. These include pre-schools; primary, post-primary and special schools; education other than at school centres; youth provision; further education, training and initial teacher education, as well as work commissioned by other government departments.

Northern Ireland can be proud of the many dedicated professionals who work in education and training, including the support services, whose commitment to the children and young people in their care is truly about putting the learner first. Inspectors report that those who work in education and training are passionate about ensuring that our children and young people realise and often surpass their inherent potential.

The past two years have been a period of unprecedented challenge for our education and training system. In the absence of political leadership for a significant part of that time, schools and providers are working in a climate of severe financial challenge, while endeavouring to continue to provide high quality learning experiences. While inspections have continued across a wide range of our work, four of the five teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council are taking industrial action, primarily in relation to a pay dispute, which includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate on school inspections.

However, the Education and Training Inspectorate has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standard of education and the professional practice of teachers under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Inspections have proceeded in keeping with the Education and Training Inspectorate's vision and mission statement, _Promoting improvement in the interest of all learners._ Inspectors carry out this statutory function in a professional, courteous and respectful manner and in the knowledge that these circumstances are difficult both for the schools involved and the Inspectorate.

Inspection is an important element of public accountability and confidence, and also of improvement, supporting as it does the primacy of the learner. Inspection also provides an assurance to parents and carers that the education and training being provided for their children and young people is of good quality, as well as to government on the effectiveness of policy in practice.

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[1] Listed in Appendix 1

On all inspections, and including when an inspection is affected by action short of strike, the available evaluations and key findings are reported in the published report. However, this protracted period of action short of strike is preventing the Education and Training Inspectorate from affirming all of the strengths and the improvements that are being made, as well as identifying where the important and urgent improvements are needed. A failure to implement improvement will ultimately have a detrimental impact on learners. Inspection drives positive change and, as a result, learners get a better education.

From January 2017, the Education and Training Inspectorate introduced a more streamlined Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework that is common to all phases inspected. In addition to our usual full inspections, we also introduced shorter inspections, Sustaining Improvement Inspections for our best schools and Monitoring Inspections to ascertain the timing of the next full inspection. This range of models enables us to be more proportionate in how we allocate our resources. Coupled with follow-up inspections, it also enables us to report every three years, providing parents/carers, the wider community of stakeholders and government with more regular and frequent assurances on the quality of education.

In my last report I emphasised the importance of working together to achieve success for all. This message is all the more important in the current climate. All of us, those entrusted with the care and education of our children and young people, have a responsibility to put them first, above all else.

In the commentary **Learning Lessons: Inspiring People: Putting Learners First** which follows, I focus on how we can learn lessons from the past and from each other, to inspire everyone to give of their best and to shape an education and training system that meets better the needs of all learners.

Noelle Buick

NOELLE BUICK
Chief Inspector
Education and Training Inspectorate

COMMENTARY
Learning Lessons: Inspiring People: Putting Learners First

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection and Self-evaluation Framework (ISEF), the common framework for self-evaluation and inspection[2] (Figure 1) provides a holistic overview of the key aspects of education and training across all sectors and stages, from pre-school to further education and work-based learning. In creating a common framework the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) is extending the principle of openness and transparency so that all stakeholders are working together to promote improvement for all learners. Each phase and sector is supported by characteristics of effective practice and self-evaluation questions that are phase-specific. A version has also been provided to support governors and members of management committees in their important role of support and challenge.

There are now only four inspection outcomes reported (three performance levels and an overall effectiveness conclusion) supported by assurances for care and welfare, safeguarding and governance.

Figure 1

INSPECTION AND SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK					
Overall effectiveness					
Outcomes for Learners	**PL**	**Quality of Provision**	**PL**	**Leadership and Management**	**PL**
Standards attained	S/AFI	Quality of curriculum (including breadth, balance and appropriateness)	S/AFI	Effectiveness and impact of the strategic leadership	S/AFI
Progression		Effectiveness of guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences		Effectiveness and impact of the middle leadership	
Wider skills and dispositions/capabilities		Effectiveness and impact of planning, engagement/teaching/ training and assessment in promoting successful learning		Effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement, including self-evaluation and the development planning process	
Governance (for schools)		High degree of confidence	Confidence		Limited Confidence
Care and Welfare		**Level 1, C&W** impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners	**Level 2, C&W** does not impact positively enough on one or more of learning, teaching and outcomes		
Safeguarding		**Level 1:** Reflects the guidance	**Level 2:** Reflects broadly the guidance		**Level 3:** Unsatisfactory

PL - performance level   S - strength   AFI - area for improvement

The Sustaining Improvement Inspection (SII) model[3] is used in special, primary and post-primary schools and education other than at school (EOTAS) centres, for organisations previously evaluated as having a high level of capacity, or capacity, to identify and bring about improvement. The SII gives the organisation the opportunity to demonstrate that it continues to act effectively to sustain and effect improvement through its school development planning and underpinning self-evaluation process. The model enables the ETI to identify and affirm good practice in self-evaluation leading to improvement. The Monitoring Inspection (MIn) model, used initially in primary and post-primary schools, determines the type and timescale of the next inspection activity. It enables the ETI to be more proportionate to risk and focus its available resources where they will have the greatest impact in the best interest of the learners. New schools, including those which have been re-organised, will have a baseline MIn in their second year of operation.

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[3] Also from January 2017

Also, since January 2017, full inspections take place over four days for post-primary and special schools, EOTAS and youth centres, and over two, three or four days for primary schools. Pre-school inspections continue to be one day. The notification period for full inspections remains two weeks and the school/organisation continues to have a pre-inspection visit conducted by the reporting inspector. The notification period for SIIs and MIns is two working days. Safeguarding is included on all inspections. There are no changes to the follow-up inspection process.

During the reporting period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018, the ETI has carried out a full inspection programme in work-based learning, further education, the European Social Fund provision, youth provision, prison education, initial teacher education (in higher education) and in pre-school education, together with surveys, policy advice and district inspection work. Teacher union action in schools since January 2017 has had some impact both on school inspections and on education in schools. However, in fulfilling our statutory function, all inspections have continued in this reporting period in the best interests of the children and young people. (Figure 2)

Figure 2

ORGANISATION INSPECTIONS 1 JULY 2016 TO 30 JUNE 2018
FULL INSPECTIONS; SUSTAINING IMPROVEMENT INSPECTIONS; MONITORING
INSPECTIONS; BASELINE MONITORING INSPECTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP INSPECTIONS
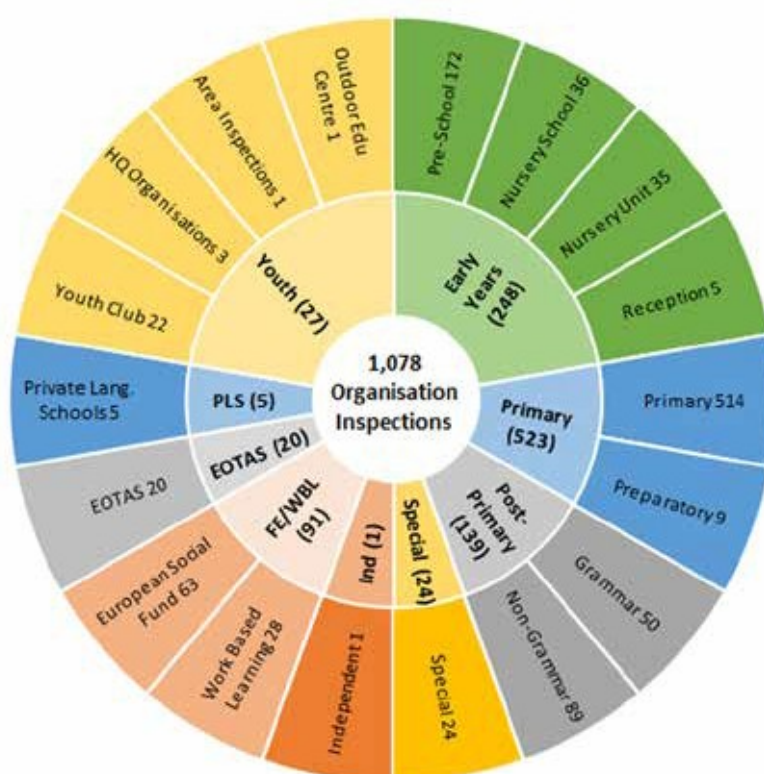
In the primary, post-primary and special education sectors, the impact of action short of strike has been variable. (Figure 3)

Figure 3

THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL FORMS OF SCHEDULED INSPECTIONS WITH EVALUATIVE FINDINGS AND/OR OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS CONCLUSIONS IN PRIMARY, POST-PRIMARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS 2016-2018
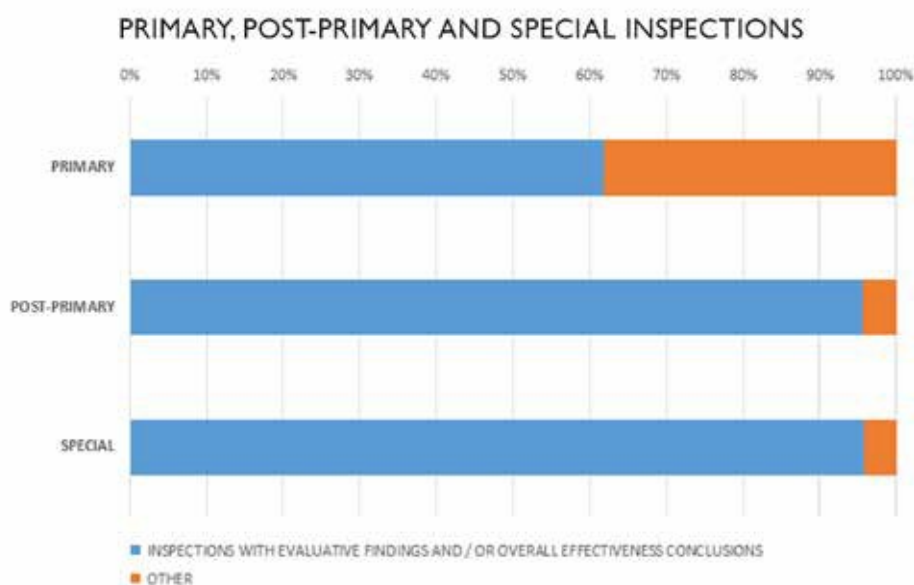
Through all forms of inspection activity in these phases during 2016-2018 the ETI reported evaluative findings and/or overall effectiveness conclusions in 62% of primary inspections, 96% of post-primary inspections and 96% of special school inspections (Figure 3).

More detail is provided in the respective phase reports where the relevant evaluative findings are summarised.   It is not, however, appropriate, in this Chief Inspector's Report (2016-2018), to compare detailed inspection evidence of improvement in each of these three phases with the findings from the periods covered by previous Chief Inspector's reports because (since January 2017) of fewer lesson observations, different inspection models and the new ISEF.

"Inspection leads to improvement and provides the assurances needed by the education and training system.   The work of inspectors in a range of different education and training organisations promotes improvement, through first-hand evidence, to affirm what is working well and to challenge, appropriately, what is not good enough."

The follow-up inspection process has always been, and remains, a significant driver for positive change. This process benefits many tens of thousands of learners through ensuring that they receive the best possible educational provision and care. In addition, it provides the necessary

assurances that resources are being used well to secure the best possible outcomes for the children and young people. Where the pace of progress is too slow, the ETI raises concerns and shares these with the relevant government department and employing authority to ensure that action is taken.

It is regrettable that, where there has been action short of strike, in a small number of schools involved in the follow-up inspection process, those areas for improvement identified prior to January 2017 have not been re-evaluated. The risk is that, in these schools, learners may be continuing to experience a quality of education which is not good enough In primary and post-primary schools this action has left the ETI unable to assure that any school improvement work is having the desired impact for 3,433 learners.

In many other school inspections, where the ETI has been able to report evaluative findings and/ or an overall effectiveness conclusion, principals, senior leadership teams and governors have found these and the related dialogue helpful in promoting improvement. However, without the evidence from observing learning and teaching, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community, the Department of Education (DE) and other stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the 15,153 learners in the primary and post-primary schools due for full inspections where we could not report either evaluative findings or overall effectiveness conclusions. If we include SII and MIn figures, the ETI is unable to assure the quality of education for an additional 24,116 learners, a total of 42,702 learners.

While inspection is an important element of public accountability, supporting as it does putting learners first, school leaders and inspectors are also reporting a range of highly undesirable impacts of the action short of strike on management arrangements and school improvement work. These include, but are not limited to the following:

➤ School principals, governors and other senior school leaders are under intense personal and professional pressure to balance the right of teachers to take industrial action with the rights of the learners, and their parents, to the best education.

➤ Important action to promote continuous improvement in those schools where teachers
are taking union action has slowed significantly.

➤ Governors in 17% of primary schools scheduled for inspection chose not to provide necessary assurance of safeguarding arrangements at the time of the initial inspection, contrary to their legal responsibility. Subsequently, all complied with the safeguarding element of inspection, and most within six weeks.

➤ Together with significant budgetary pressures on schools, there has been a shortening of the school week, as reported publicly by a small number of post-primary schools.

> There has been a significant reduction in generating and sharing assessment evidence, an essential element of putting learners first, and there has been a reluctance to take advantage of assessment moderation activities through engagement in the cross-curricular skills.

> There have been some reductions in formal communication amongst teachers, reducing the effectiveness of co-operative planning and collegial sharing.

> There has been a reduction in engagement in available professional development opportunities for teachers' professional learning in some schools, with this time being used for other activities such as parent-teacher meetings.

Challenging Times In Education

Learning Lessons: Inspiring People: Putting Learners First are the central messages of the Chief Inspector's Report for 2016-2018. Education benefits from learning lessons from previous experience which influences how we think and act in the future in order to improve the system and meet better the needs of all learners.

This report brings together important messages from ETI inspection and evaluation evidence from 2016-2018, and details the extent to which lessons have been learnt from findings previously reported which resulted in improvement; and where the need for concerted action remains and further improvement is needed.

If improvement is to continue to be enabled, systemic, political, community and operational change is also essential. The last two years have seen a period of unprecedented challenge in Northern Ireland's schools' sector. Difficult budgetary restrictions are biting hard. While area planning to ensure sustainable schools is taking place, it needs to advance at a much quicker pace, and there is currently unwanted disruption, arising from the teachers' industrial action.

A political vacuum at Stormont, the lack of an Executive and Assembly, with no Education Minister to make decisions and continued political uncertainty around Brexit, all mean that education and training continue to work in a period of uncertainty.

Despite this, the strength of the Northern Ireland education and training system is that it endures. And, furthermore, it continues to improve through the creativity, dedication and endurance of those who work for the best interest of the learners.

Many Learners Are Getting Ahead

"At the outset, let us applaud the learners and all those practitioners who work in and lead the many organisations that are delivering well for our children and young people."

The system continues to work very well for tens of thousands of learners. The many excellent leaders in pre-school settings, schools, colleges, youth centres, European Social Fund projects, work-based learning provisions and other education and training settings make judicious and efficient choices to ensure their learners are well taught, cared for and supported. In doing so, they draw on evidence of lessons learnt about what works well and what does not. The essential and important work of the ETI continues, and is a proven catalyst for change and improvement. However the ETI's work needs to be unfettered so that, through inspection activity, we can identify the lessons to be learnt and give the necessary assurances both that learners are getting the best education possible and that scarce resources are managed appropriately and effectively.

But Too Many Are Left Behind

The Northern Ireland education and training system has variability in outcomes for learners. Too many under-achieve, struggle to learn in under-performing schools and organisations, and find educational and vocational routes needlessly blocked by decisions about curriculum and assessment made by schools and governors who prioritise the interests of their school or organisation over the needs of the learners. Schools need to provide a curriculum that is suited to the needs of their learners putting them first.

Inspectors report regularly that, even in schools which provide well for most learners, there is undue variation in the quality of provision and outcomes for particular groups of learners, such as those with special educational needs (SEN), for free school meal entitlement (FSME) pupils, newcomers, looked after children and boys. Therefore, a challenge for all organisations in addressing such inconsistencies is to ensure that lessons are learnt about what works well and what is best avoided so that the needs of all learners are met well and that none are left behind.

Change Is Needed So Learners Are Not Short-Changed

Given the 2018-2019 opening resource allocation for the DE of nearly £1,94 billion and taking into account inflation, the spending power of today's education budget is £233 million less than it was in 2010. The NI Audit Office reported[4] that the value of the general schools' budget has fallen in real terms by 9.3% from 2012-2013 to 2016-2017.

There are still too many available places in schools. The current surplus capacity calculation stands at 17.5% of available places, reduced from the 2011-2012 baseline of 22.1%, but still falls short of DE's longer term goal of 10%[5]. Without a functioning Northern Ireland Executive and Education Minister in place, there are restrictions on the decisions that may be made, which creates further uncertainty, delay and frustration for those affected directly. For example, too many schools are too small to provide adequately for their pupils and ensure that they have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, particularly primary schools with more than two year groups in composite classes and sixth forms with fewer than 100 pupils[6]. In this context, there is a pressing need for all stakeholders to continue to pursue excellence in what they do and to aspire to provide a world-class education and training provision. The crucial task for all education and training organisations is to learn lessons from inspection evidence, and from self-evaluation, to transform and to adapt effectively what they provide in order to confront the significant challenges that exist presently.

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[4] The Financial Health of Schools | Northern Ireland Audit Office (niauditoffice.gov.uk)
[5] Area Planning Annual Report 2017-2018 Department Of Education July 2018 (paras 22 and 24)
[6] Area Planning Annual Report 2017-2018 (Ibid) paragraph 35

PUTTING LEARNERS FIRST: A PLEDGE FOR CHANGE

The stated purpose of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015[7] is to improve the well-being of children and young people through improved co-operation by authorities and service providers. Putting learners first is the approach underpinned by the Act. The Act defines the well-being of children and young people against eight parameters including: physical and mental health; living in safety and with stability; learning and achievement; economic and environmental well-being; the enjoyment of play and leisure; living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted; children and young people making a positive contribution to society; and living in a society which respects their rights.

Consequently, this commentary reports the ETI's inspection evidence (as detailed further in the phase reports), survey findings[8], policy advice and district inspector work under four headings, reflecting the parameters from the Act. Each section highlights the lessons that have been learnt; including the strengths which give children and young people the best start in life and points out where it remains necessary to continue to put learners first.

1. Children and young people should have a good start in life, be physically and mentally healthy and be able to enjoy and explore learning through play and leisure.

2. Children and young people should have a child-centred education of a high quality providing them with the best opportunity to learn and achieve.

3. Children and young people should live and learn in safety and stability, where their rights are respected, free of discrimination, with equality of opportunity and good relationships promoted.

4. Children and young people should develop the life skills to be economically active, experience environmental well-being and make a positive contribution to society.

Going forward, everyone working in the education and training system, the ETI included, needs to apply learning from the past and inspire people in order to bring about the necessary transformations described in this commentary.

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[7] Children Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
[8] See Appendix I

I.   Children And Young People Should Have A Good Start In Life, Be Physically And Mentally Healthy And Be Able To Enjoy And Explore Learning Through Play And Leisure.

Going well

➢ Children's speech, language and communication skills improve through SureStart.

➢ In the pre-school sector, as a whole, most children make a good start.

➢ Nearly all pre-school setting are supported by a range of 'Getting Ready to Learn' initiatives to help parents and staff work together.

Going forward

➢ Transitions to pre-school and the foundation stage in primary schools could benefit from more information being provided about the children's progress.

➢ There continues to be too much variability in the quality of provision and outcomes across the different pre-school providers.

➢ Where there are larger numbers of underage children, the demands restrict the ability of the practitioner to provide a quality pre-school programme.

➢ Overweight and obesity amongst young people is a growing problem which needs tackled through a co-ordinated, multi-agency healthy lifestyles programme.

➢ A significant number of learners are presenting with even more complex and mental health needs; thee are reported inconsistencies in timely access to health and social services to respond to the growing demand.

Education and training providers should facilitate play and empower children to explore new play and leisure activities They should tailor provision to ensure good health and mental well-being and develop the confidence of children and young people to speak out about health issues and be able to access appropriate help

It Begins With A Sure Start

SureStart[9] is an umbrella programme targeted at, and only available to, parents and children under the age of four living in the 25% of Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged areas. SureStart offers programmes educating parents in the importance of mother and baby time to enable strong attachment and secure relationships; and to help children with early physical and language development, giving them the best start. Inspiring parents to inspire their children is central to this programme.

Improvement in the children's speech, language and communication skills comes about as a result of their participation in SureStart. The early identification of delays in children's speech, language and communication is a strength of the projects. The added value of the on-site availability of specialist advice, support and intervention impacts positively on the children's progress.

In the developmental programme for 2-3 year-olds (a specific programme within SureStart), there is often too low an expectation of the importance of parental involvement. Not enough practical work is done to support these parents to help their child learn by building secure and enduring relationships with them.

Almost all of the projects are at a very early stage of developing systematic and meaningful self-evaluation leading to improvement. The providers do not monitor and record consistently enough the quality of the provision and outcomes for the children, nor do they use this information to evaluate their practice, to learn the necessary lessons and to inform future planning. In addition, there are shortcomings at a strategic area-based level, where transitions to pre-schools and the foundation stage in primary schools could benefit more from information provided by SureStart.

The Quality Of Pre-School Provision Varies

In the pre-school sector as a whole, most children make a good start, but there continues to be too much variability in the quality of provision and outcomes across the statutory and private/voluntary sector.

In particular, a small number of voluntary and private settings do not have the capacity to identify or sustain improvement; the quality of their provision and consequent outcomes are not good enough. The DE recognises the need to develop further the arrangements to manage such settings that have been evaluated, on a recurrent basis including after follow-up inspection, as having important or significant areas for improvement so that lessons can be learnt.

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[9] SureStart Evaluation Report, May 2018.

Underaged And Overstretched

The number of underage children (only two years of age) in statutory nursery settings has risen over the last two years to 837 in one-third of the statutory nursery setting; for example, in twenty-five of the 338 nursery schools and nursery units within primary schools as many as one-quarter of the children enrolled at the October 2017 census date were in the penultimate pre-school year.

The total number of underage children enrolled in pre-school settings is collated centrally at the October census date, but underage children who register after this date are not counted. Furthermore, neither DE nor Education Authority (EA) collates the number of underage children who are learning alongside pre-school children in voluntary pre-school settings. Where there is a larger number of underage children in a class, including those with additional needs, the demands on the practitioner to provide a quality pre-school programme is restricted and, as a result, the children do not make as sure a start as expected. The continued growth in the number of nursery units poses a challenge for pre-school area-based planning across Northern Ireland.

The relevant government departments and other agencies need urgently to provide more consistent guidance on curriculum, staff ratios and resources for underage children in pre-schools which will help providers to learn the necessary lessons.

There were 186 pre-school children in reception classes in 2017-2018 Of the 52 classes that have reception children enrolled, seven consist solely of reception age children, 21 are reception and year one only and 24 are composite classes with older year groups. These pre-school children have fewer planned opportunities designed for their specific age and stage of development and are engaged inappropriately in literacy and numeracy lessons which are too formal for their needs.

"Nearly all pre-school settings, supported well by a range of Getting Ready to Learn initiatives[10], are ensuring, most importantly, that parents and staff work well together to learn lessons which support young children's language and emotional development."

Children Need To Be Fit To Learn

Over one-fifth of Northern Ireland children entering primary school are already overweight or obese and this figure rises to over one in four pupils by Year 8, with greater inequality in the more disadvantaged areas[11] Preventing clinical obesity among our children can come about only with a long-term commitment, clear strategic direction, a series of appropriate interventions, strong leadership and closer inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary collaboration with other organisations, such as the Health Promotion Agency, to help parents and carers learn the right lessons about food and fitness.

The starting line is in pre-school and primary provision, through the development of fundamental movement skills. However, in a minority of pre-school settings, children have

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[10] The Early Intervention Transformation Programme: a Northern Ireland Executive/Atlantic Philanthropies Delivering Social Change Signature Programme, aims to improve outcomes for children and young people.
[11] Health Inequalities Annual Report 2018: Public Health Information & Research Branch, Information Analysis Directorate, Department of Health, Belfast.

insufficient opportunities to develop physical, energetic play, an important contributor to their long-term health and well-being. Games, dance, and music, which should contribute to building movement skills are underdeveloped. Either the lack of a suitable, safe space or ineffective planning to make best use of the space available, impacts adversely on the opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills and to run, jump and engage in energetic play.

High quality provision in physical education (PE), together with the promotion of healthy lifestyles and better dietary education, are key to reducing childhood obesity. Effective pre-school physical development, together with the recommended two hours of PE each week[12], may help to offset the unavoidable ineffectiveness of short-term initiatives, as there is no quick-fix. However, the reported provision[13] is very variable (from as short as 60 minutes) with durations of less than 120 minutes reported frequently. Inspiring children to take up sport and leisure activities will benefit them both in body and mind.

And Ready In Mind For Learning

According to local research, around "*45,000 children in Northern Ireland have a mental health problem*" and more than one in five pupils "*are suffering significant mental health problems by the time they reach eighteen* "[14]

Principals, pastoral leaders and inspectors report that a significant number of learners are presenting with increasingly complex and mental health needs.

An ETI evaluation survey on emotional health and well-being[15] reported that schools and centres identified over 4000 pupils with emotional health and well-being issues; slightly more boys than girls requiring support. While most are identified at key stage 4 (KS4), stresses are seen as early as the first year in primary school. The number of pupils who require support increases steadily with age. The five most common issues impacting negatively on pupils' emotional health and well-being are: anxiety, stress, anger, relationships and home life. Significantly, schools and EOTAS centres highlight an increasing number suffering from anxiety as a result of attachment disorders, school work, friendships and family relationships. A recurring theme in identifying mental health challenges is the increasing use of social media and online gaming by pupils, resulting in social isolation.

EOTAS centres report that the most vulnerable pupils are not getting a consistent service; for example, access to the necessary specialist support. There are important lessons to be learnt here: procedures for support need to be effective, such as appointing an inclusion and

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[12] Statutory Curriculum
[13] Department of Education (DE) School Omnibus Survey 2016 (NISRA) section C.
[14] Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Overview, Strategies, Policies, Care Pathways, CAMHS and Barriers to accessing
Services Northern Ireland Assembly Research January 2017.
[15] An ETI Evaluation of the effectiveness of Mental Health and Well-being support for pupils in schools and EOTAS centres.

well-being co-ordinator, or a family support and youth worker, while appreciating this may not always be financially possible. Post-primary schools and centres refer young people to the Independent Counselling Service for Schools, and, although it is reported that additional sessions are provided by the EA to meet demand, schools report that they cannot avail of the support in a timely manner and often use their own budget to fund additional external counselling. There are reported inconsistencies in accessibility to health and social services, in particular to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015 was enacted in order to improve co-operation among children's authorities and service providers to contribute better to the emotional health and well-being of children and young people; lessons embodied in the legislation need to be learnt and a more effective infrastructure between external agencies and schools/centres is required.

2   Children And Young People Should Have A Child-Centred Education Of A High Quality Providing Them With The Best Opportunity To Learn And Achieve.

Going well

- In nearly all pre-school settings children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted effectively.

- In primary schools, more purposeful application of the children's thinking skills, personal capabilities and self-assessment leads to better quality work.

- In public examinsations in 2016-2017, the outcomes for learners continue to show incremental yeare-on-year improvement from the previous reporting period.

- In the more effective practice, post-primary schools co-operate to implement a more flexible, learner-focused approach, sometimes using action-based research.

Going forward

- While most pre-school children make very good progress, there is a growing trend to introduce, prematurely, learning that is too formal and not age and stage appropriate.

- The provision of a broad, and balanced primary curriculum which nurtures the children's creative and physical talents is more essential than ever.

- The assessment and examination culture, post-14, can have consequences for learners, including stress, a narrowing of the curriculum and restricted pathways.

- Good results can mask underachievement in schools, with an intake of more able pupils, but where the curriculum design may be traditional and lacking in flexibility.

- FSME pupils continue to underperform in relation to those not entitled to FSME; boys are still significantly underperforming girls.

- The development of literacy and the use of mathematics across the curriculum continue to be areas that require further improvement.

Education and training providers should ensure that education is valued, is learner-centred and is meeting the needs and aspirations of learners through high quality learning and teaching. Children and young people should have the best opportunities to achieve and be fully prepared for what comes after they leave school.

A Giant Step For Little Ones

Where the Northern Ireland pre-school curriculum guidance is implemented effectively, nearly all children make good to outstanding progress across the six areas of learning. Worryingly, there is a growing trend to introduce, prematurely, activities that are too formal and not age and stage appropriate. Early years practitioners need to respond by acquiring a better understanding of early childhood development, making more effective use of their observations of the children's learning.

Nearly all pre-school settings promote effectively the children's personal, social and emotional development, with children secure in the routines and transitions. However, in a minority (10%) of settings, the management of the children's social skills and good behaviour is a concern. There are insufficient opportunities for the children to develop resilience, take both responsibility for themselves and care for the learning environment.

And Children Then Take Their Next Learning Steps

"Children are motivated and make more consistent progress when their learning is well connected within broad and balanced learning experiences. In the best primary school practice, teachers recognise this; they plan for and link these experiences to the children's interests across the curriculum. Involving children in planning and making choices about and within their learning topics is not sufficiently prioritised."

When children talk and discuss in pairs and groups, they are able to assess their progress, but these opportunities are limited and are often variable in quality. Where discussions are more effective, with a purposeful application of the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities, including peer and self-assessment skills, they learn how to set personal goals.

Where They Are Helped To Count, Read And Succeed Better

While there is improvement in children's mental mathematics strategies, their use of mathematical language to explain their thinking requires further development. In the foundation stage and at key stage one (KS1), there are insufficient opportunities to develop more extended, age-appropriate writing and to improve handwriting skills. The inappropriate use of worksheets restricts opportunities for the children to use and extend their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and learn lessons in a more constructive fashion.

While developing literacy and numeracy remains important, the holistic development of the child is central to the approach in most primary schools; and while this understanding has grown, it remains important that teachers avoid planning low-level, one-off activities. With many teachers reporting increased concern about the children's personal, social and emotional well-being, the provision of a broad, and balanced curriculum which nurtures the children's creative and physical talents is essential.

An Effective Post-Primary Curriculum Is Key To Success

An enabling post-primary curriculum is pupil-centred, allowing pupils to learn and achieve through developing knowledge, understanding and skills. Importantly, this begins at the primary stage, with schools increasingly recognising the importance of providing connected learning opportunities which lead to more coherent progression. The more effective schools know this, focus on what is taught, how it is taught and how it links to meaningful, high-value accredited courses. The assessment and examination culture, at post-14, can have negative consequences including undue stress on pupils, a narrowing of the curriculum and restricted pathways.

"More post-primary schools are measuring and understanding the value-added outcomes they provide for their pupils. Inspection evidence shows that the impetus for getting good results can mask underachievement, particularly in those schools with an intake of more able pupils, but where the curriculum design may be perceived to be traditional and lacking flexibility."

In other schools, where examination results may appear less favourable, value-added data reveals commendable progress for pupils, including those with complex barriers to learning.

In general, at KS4, there is either a lack of appropriate pathways that meet the needs of all the pupils and provide progression routes, or there is insufficient knowledge about them. More lessons need to be learnt which lead to improvement. Greater cognisance needs to be taken by pupils and teachers of the most recent Skills Barometer report[16] which identifies those skills that are likely to be in demand in the labour market over the next decade (depending on the uncertain impact of Brexit) and which will support the main growth areas in the Northern Ireland economy. Overall, across 14-19 provision in general, young people do not have sufficient exposure to the world of work. All of the stakeholders, including employers, need to do much more if young people are to be well enough informed to make appropriate, robust decisions at key points in their education and training.

In Post-Primary, A Majority Learn And Attain Well

In the absence of devolved government, the Northern Ireland Civil Service outlines its strategy for addressing under-achievement in the Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018-2019[17] which aims "to give our children and young people the best start in life". One of the key indicators is the percentage of school leavers achieving at Level 2. (Level 2 includes five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including equivalent qualifications, and GCSE English and GCSE mathematics).

The achievement of school leavers at the DE key benchmarks of five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, or equivalent, including GCSEs in English and mathematics, shows incremental year-on-year improvement from the previous reporting period. In 2016-2017, 69.6% of pupils leaving school achieved at this standard, an increase of almost two percentage points from 2015-2016[18]. The achievement of those pupils in the final year of a GCE A level or equivalent course also showed year-on-year improvement. At year 14, 69% of pupils achieved three or more A levels at grades A*-C, or equivalent, in the 2016-2017 academic year, an increase of 2.7 percentage points from the previous year[19].

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[16] Northern Ireland Skills Barometer
[17] Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018/19 (executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)
[18] Statistical bulletin 10/2017 - Year 12 and 14 examination performance at post-primary schools in Northern Ireland 2016/17 (Revised June 2021) | Department of Education (education-ni.gov.uk)
[19] School leavers
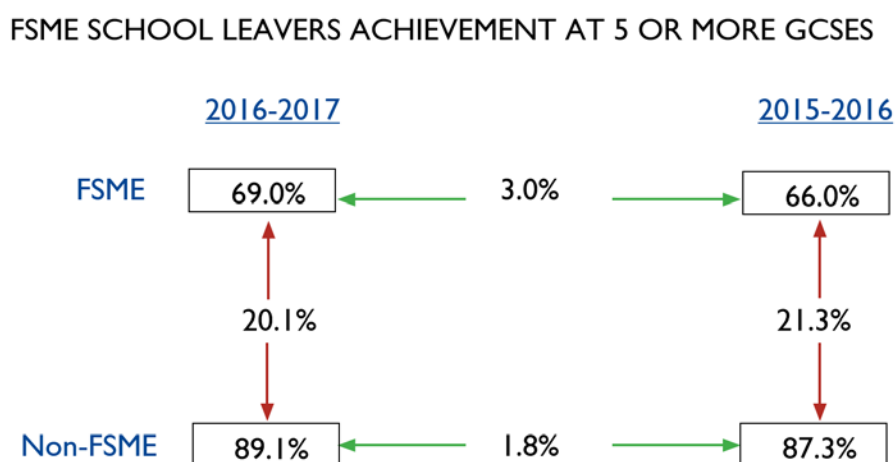
But Too Many Do Not

FSME pupils continue to underperform in relation to non-FSME pupils; similarly the gender gap between girls and boys continues to be an area of concern, with boys still underperforming. Gaps in attainment between boys and girls and FSME and non-FSME pupils are chronic, and need to be addressed with much greater urgency and effectiveness.

Of FSME pupils, 69% left school in 2016-2017 having achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C including equivalents, an increase of three percentage points from 66.0% in 2015-2016.

In 2016-2017, 89.1% of non-FSME achieved this indicator. There remains a gap in achievement of 20.1 percentage points, down slightly from 21.3 percentage points from 2015-2016. (Figure 4)

As is the case with all school leavers, FSME females performed better than their male counterparts in all the performance indicators. In 2016-2017, 75.5% of female FSME school leavers achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C including equivalent qualifications, compared with 62.7% of males, indicating a gap of 12.8 percentage points.
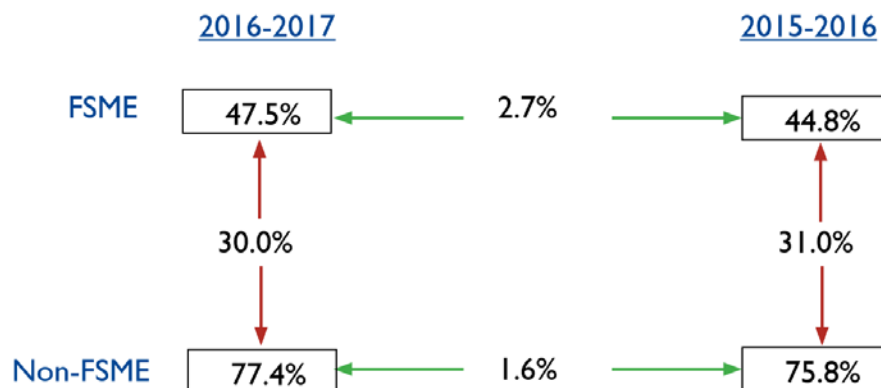
Figure 4

FSME SCHOOL LEAVERS ACHIEVEMENT AT 5 OR MORE GCSES

	2016-2017		2015-2016
FSME	69.0%	← 3.0% →	66.0%
	20.1%		21.3%
Non-FSME	89.1%	← 1.8% →	87.3%

In 2016-2017, 47.5% of FSME school leavers achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A* - C or equivalent including GCSEs in English and mathematics, an increase of 2.7 percentage points since 2015-2016, and 21.1 percentage points since 2005-2006 (26.4%) when data was first collected by DE.

This result is 30 percentage points lower than the equivalent for non-FSME school leavers of 77.4% (an increase of 1.6 percentage points from 75.8% in 2015-2016). Clearly, some lessons are being learnt and this modest closing of the gap reflects the longer-term trend. However, there remains more to do with around a 30 percentage point difference between FSME and non-FSME pupils. (Figure 5)

Figure 5

FSME SCHOOL LEAVERS ACHIEVEMENT AT 5 OR MORE GCSES INC ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS

	2016-2017		2015-2016
FSME	47.5%	← 2.7% →	44.8%
	30.0%		31.0%
Non-FSME	77.4%	← 1.6% →	75.8%

In 2016-2017, 57.8% of FSME pupils who were in the final year of an A level or equivalent course attained 3 or more A levels at grades A*-C, or equivalent, while 71.5% of non-FSME pupils attained the same standard, a gap of 13.7 percentage points. (Figure 6)

Figure 6

FSME YEAR 14 ACHIEVEMENT AT 3 OR MORE A LEVELS

	2016-2017		2015-2016
FSME	57.8%	← 4.2% →	53.6%
	13.7%		15.4%
Non-FSME	71.5%	← 2.5% →	69.0%
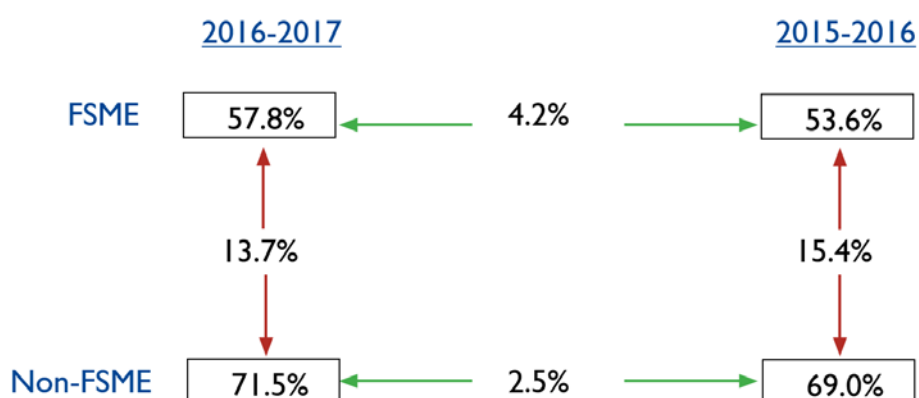
Gender

With regard to the gender gap, girls continued to outperform boys over the reporting period, at GCSE in particular.
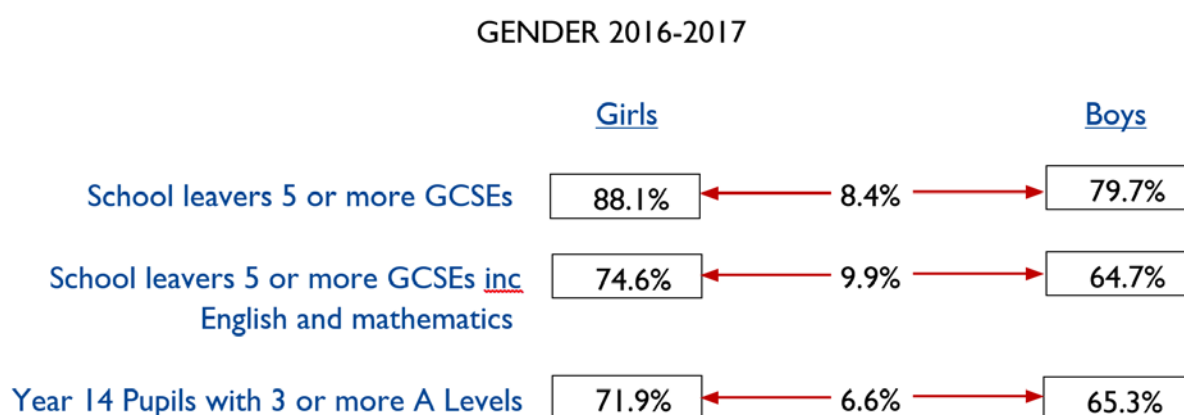
In 2016-2017, female school leavers continued to perform better than their male counterparts, with 88.1% of female pupils achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C, including equivalents, compared with 79.7% of male school leavers, a gap of 8.4 percentage points.

When GCSE English and GCSE mathematics are included in the five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C indicator, the gap is broadly similar. Of female pupils, 74.6% achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C, including equivalents, and with GCSEs in English and mathematics, compared with 64.7% of males.

For those pupils in the final year of an A level or equivalent course, 71.9% of females attained three or more A levels at grades A*-C, or equivalent, while 65.3% of males attained the same standard. There is a small sign that some lessons are bearing fruit. The Joint Council for Qualifications data for 2018 shows that, at A level, grade A*, Northern Ireland male candidates outperformed females for the first time by 0.4 of a percentage point[20]

These gaps in attainment between boys and girls (Figure 7) and FSME and non-FSME pupils remain and need to be reduced.

Figure 7

GENDER 2016-2017

	Girls		Boys
School leavers 5 or more GCSEs	88.1%	← 8.4% →	79.7%
School leavers 5 or more GCSEs inc English and mathematics	74.6%	← 9.9% →	64.7%
Year 14 Pupils with 3 or more A Levels	71.9%	← 6.6% →	65.3%

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[20] Examination results - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications Note that this figure includes candidates who are not just from schools and that females continue to outperform males at all other grades and grade combinations.

Literacy Matters

In the most effective literacy practice observed by inspectors in this period, opportunities were provided to secure more complex and extended responses both orally and in writing. Characteristics of less effective practice include low levels of challenge and follow-on where there were unduly passive learning experiences for pupils. The pupils' oracy, thinking skills and extended responses are underdeveloped and there are lessons still to learn in the variation in the quality of the teachers' marking for improvement.

In the post-primary phase, lessons learnt include the effective use of a range of strategies, including adept questioning and effective group work. However, the promotion of literacy continues be the most common area that requires further development as too many pupils are not provided with enough opportunity to use their literacy skills across all subjects. This exposes a developmental need for staff as well as pupils; the ETI documents, Better Literacy, Better English and the PiEM report[21] are support materials which contain helpful lessons that are worth learning.

And Mathematics Counts Too

"The characteristics of the most effective mathematics lessons include a high level of engagement, well-planned opportunities for pupils to take risks with their learning, the use of appropriate strategies to encourage independent learning, and skilful questioning to challenge deeper thinking and develop mathematical oracy. While there are examples of very good quality mathematics provision, there is still too much variability. In the post-primary phase, in general, there are lessons to be learnt from the lack of development of mathematics across the curriculum."

Essential Skills

Since September 2017, a significant minority of the providers inspected face challenges adapting to the revised essential skills assessment arrangements for literacy and numeracy.

In about a quarter of the work-based learning suppliers inspected, too many trainees and apprentices do not attain or apply their essential skills at a sufficient pace or level. In the better organisations inspected, the transfer and application of literacy and numeracy skills supports the professional and technical work of the trainees and apprentices, and helps them in the workplace.

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[21] PiEM (Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics) All available at ETI website.

Inspiring Teaching, Better Learning

The role of the teacher is that of an informed, knowledgeable practitioner whose challenge is to inspire the learners in their care to have a love of learning and, through discourse about, and sharing of, best practice, to inspire their colleagues. While a range of providers make valuable contributions to the professional development of teachers, the core purpose of the Learning Leaders Strategy[22] is to encourage teachers, individually and collectively, to take greater autonomy in advancing their professional learning.

"In the more effective practice, post-primary schools co-operate in a planned and coherent fashion within Area Learning Communities, learning lessons from each other and implementing a more flexible, learner-focused approach, sometimes using action-based research."

The ETI plays a role[23], working in partnership with the EA, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), in developing self-evaluative guidance resources to help teachers, as leaders of learning, to build their capacity as effective reflective practitioners and to evaluate improvement first hand.

The trend towards greater autonomy is particularly pertinent given the reduction, over time, in external support and the recourse to unregulated external educational consultants to support professional development. It is important that all schools evaluate the impact of such arrangements in terms of their quality, effectiveness and sustainability.

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[22] Teaching professional learning strategy
[23] Learning Leaders

3. **Children and young people should live and learn in safety and stability, where their rights are respected, free of discrimination, with equality of opportunity, and good relationships promoted.**

Going well

➢ In most organisations there is a growing alignment of the care, welfare and academic aspects of provision for learners and safeguarding is a high priority.

➢ There is evidence that schools are increasingly seeking and heeding the views of pupils: learning lessons from the learners.

➢ An ETI SEN survey showed all schools following the Code of Practice, and making coherent responses which meet the needs of learners well.

➢ Learners are benefitting well from their involvement in shared education partnerships which is resulting in the development of positive, mutually respectful attitudes.

➢ An increasing number of learners are educated through the medium of Irish, benefitting from an immersion-specific learning environment.

➢ In a divided and contested society, many youth workers engage with young people at the cutting edge; the most effective practice empowers these young people.

Going forward

➢ In a minority of schools, at the time of inspection, there were shortcomings in aspects of the arrangements for safeguarding which were subsequently addressed.

➢ Too many pupils miss school as a result of suspension or expulsion.

➢ It is important that the placement of young people into an EOTAS setting is appropriate and timely in terms of their individual needs.

➢ There continues to be a decline in uptake within areas of the post-14 curriculum, in particular the arts and modern languages.

Education and training providers should promote the rights of the child Children and young people should learn together and respect difference. They should be able to participate in decision-making, and have a say in matters that affect them.

Effective Safeguarding, Care And Welfare, Of All Learners Are Paramount

All organisations must promote the care, welfare and safeguarding rights of learners, particularly where there are significant barriers to their retention, engagement in learning and progression, as well as potential risks to personal protection.

Where children and young people benefit markedly from effective and quality provision, the staff implement robust systems that are routinely monitored and quality assured, with a team approach which reflects a strong commitment to safeguarding and protecting them. In addition, in most organisations inspected over the past two years, these lessons have been taken to heart and there is a growing alignment of the care and welfare and academic aspects of their provision.

During the reporting period, in most organisations inspected, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils, reflected or reflected broadly the guidance issued by DE.

In the minority of settings where there were shortcomings: training on child protection was not up to date; risk assessments were lacking; safeguarding policies and practices were not being revised routinely; and, in a very few cases, there were health or safety hazards.

At the time of inspection, a minority of primary schools opted to delay the provision of assurances about safeguarding aspects of the school for up to six weeks and, in a small number of cases, for longer. In many of these cases, there was a lack of awareness and insufficient oversight by governors of their statutory duty to review annually the child protection procedures; in some cases, however, it was because aspects of their procedures did not comply with requirements. Overall, the ETI was able to obtain fundamental assurances on safeguarding, but was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of all arrangements for safeguarding in those primary and post-primary schools impacted by the action short of strike. The ETI followed up any evidence of unsatisfactory practice, with effective interventions by the Child Protection Support Services when necessary.

"It is imperative that organisations and governors/management committee members recognise that these are important lessons to learn and that they are ultimately responsible for securing the safety of children in their care. Being unaware of what is expected for securing high quality safeguarding is no defence and presents significant and unacceptable risks both to learners and to the organisation."

Learners Should Be Seen _AND_ Heard

"The arrangements for all inspection include discussions with groups of learners. Further proof of the ETI's commitment to taking account of the learners' views of their educational experiences is the development of an online questionnaire for groups of learners to express their opinions at the time of inspection."

There is evidence that schools themselves are increasingly seeking and heeding the views of pupils through questionnaires and pupil focus groups: learning lessons from learners. While most schools have a student council, there is variability in the effectiveness of these to contribute to decision-making about the curriculum and learning, or for them to function as agents of change. Inspectors report that the more effective examples of student councils allow for them to engage authentically in matters that are meaningful to them.

Attendance Matters

Learners have a right to an education and to attend schools where they are taught well and cared for. The rate of absence, however, remains unacceptably high. The DE _Miss School = Miss Out, Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy_[24], published early in this reporting period (in December 2016), has not yet had an effect on improving school attendance, which continues to increase as pupils move from primary to post-primary schools, and remains at a Northern Ireland average of 93.3% in post-primary schools. Of the 6.7% of absences, almost one-third is unauthorised; and, while it is difficult to make direct comparisons with other jurisdictions, this is the highest level of unauthorised absence in the UK.

Too many pupils miss school as a result of suspension or expulsion. In 2016-2017, a total of 4,048 pupils of compulsory school age (four to 16) were suspended and, alarmingly, 286 of these were primary school children[25]. This equates to over 15,500 school days being lost to those pupils. The proportion of boys being issued with suspension is approximately three times that of girls; more must be done in these schools to address the needs of those most at risk of disengagement. Not attending lessons will have serious consequences on future attainment and progression, not to mention the life chances of these young people.

"Schools must make all necessary arrangements to ensure that there is no interruption to the child's right to education. Lessons can be learnt from the ETI good practice report and case studies on attendance published in November 2016."[26]

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[24] DENI Statistical Bulletin 1/2018 · Attendance-at-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-2016-17 (education-ni.gov.uk)
[25] Pupil Suspensions 2016-2017
[26] Attendance in Schools: an ETI Good Practice Report and Case Studies

Children Are Entitled To Have Their Needs Fully Met

During the reporting period, the ETI carried out an evaluation of the impact of provision for special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools and support for pupil outcomes, with a particular focus on effective early intervention strategies[27].

All schools surveyed follow the SEN Code of Practice, and have coherent school systems to respond to special needs. The specialist skills and knowledge of the SEN co-ordinator, and learning support/SEN team, ensure effective support for pupils individually and continuing professional development for staff. These schools have learnt how to develop effectively their use of individual education plans (IEPs), focusing on strategies that work for each learner. The schools include the pupil's contributions to their own IEP and listen carefully to what they say about how they learn best. As a result, they have developed insightful pupil profiles as a basis for curricular and social support. The schools review their practice regularly, learn lessons from it and communicate and liaise well with parents and carers.

Figure 8

LOCATION OF SEN PUPILS (DE SCHOOL CENSUS 2016-2017)

PUPILS WITH A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND WHERE THEY ARE EDUCATED

Educated in a mainstream school 68.0%   32.0% Educated in a special school

An increasing number of pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties are attending special schools and, through appropriate sensory activities, their needs are being well met[28]. The schools continue to provide work experience and employability accreditation appropriately for pupils in respect of their educational entitlement

Despite the complexity of learning, social and emotional development needs, special schools receive counselling services only for their post-primary pupils. A minority of special schools report that they are able to provide counselling for their primary children only through fund-raising.

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[27] The Report of a Survey of SEN in Mainstream Schools, March 2018. (to follow)
[28] Data from DE NI Schools Censuses 2015-2018.

Off-Site, Not Out Of Sight

It is important that the placement of pupils into EOTAS settings is appropriate and timely in terms of their individual needs.

Lessons can be learnt from the best practice, where pupils attend EOTAS centres for a limited period on a part-time basis, in tandem with individual support when they are studying in their school. The centres enable pupils to develop strategies to learn how to manage their emotions and behaviours, helping them to learn more readily.

In order to ensure that pupils placed in EOTAS have access to their full curriculum entitlement, there should be more detailed planning of the objectives of the placement, for greater curriculum access and opportunities to return to their school (for example, to study part-time, to have access to vocational education, and for regular review) before the placement takes effect.

Inspection evidence indicates that a small number of pupils are being inappropriately placed in EOTAS; the EA should ensure that other appropriate interventions have first been exhausted. Furthermore, and despite the EOTAS guidance[29], placing year 12 pupils in EOTAS centres remains a persistently poor practice.

A small number of pupils with a statement of special educational need are also inappropriately placed in EOTAS provision. The DE needs to review with the EA the lessons to be learnt from the monitoring and approval process.

EOTAS centres are experiencing an increase in the proportion of pupils being referred through the CAMHS, including young people with autism and multiple learning difficulties, and those questioning their gender identity.

Effective centres focus on education and accreditation in public examinations and on preparing pupils for the transition to education, employment and training. In the best practice, a small number of pupils obtain GCSE awards and return to their schools to study at GCE A level, while others progress to further education and training.

Learning To Live And Work Together For A Shared Future

Education has a crucial role to play in peace-building and creating a secure and cohesive community. In 2017-2018 approximately 51,300 pupils and over 7,000 teachers engaged in shared learning through the Shared Education Signature Project (SESP)[30]. The SESP focuses on raising educational standards, promoting reconciliation and collaborative working: learning lessons from the past.

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[29] DE Circular 2014/24: Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) guidance.
[30] The Shared Education Signature Project Evaluation Report, October 2018. Education and Training Inspectorate.

"For teachers and schools, shared education is contributing effectively to leadership across the partnerships and contributes further to inspiring learning leaders, learning organisations and learning communities, particularly where leadership is distributed."

For the pupils, in the best practice, their views are listened to, valued and lead to action. In a small number of partnerships, the views of the pupils were not given sufficient consideration in the planning, delivery and evaluation of shared education. It is therefore encouraging that, through involvement in shared education, young people are modelling good community relationships in communities where there is an absence of adult leadership. It is also encouraging that, although a small number of partnerships reported community opposition to shared education they resolved to progress and celebrate the work, in the best interests of their pupils.[31]

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[31] Ibid: pages 1 to 3.

The evaluation of the SESP indicates that the projects have progressed well through developmental stages from 'defining', through 'developing', to 'expanding' and 'embedding'. This progressive learning of lessons needs to be supported elsewhere in the curriculum, in particular, where shared education is regarded as an 'add-on' rather than an integral part of learning and teaching. For example, Personal, Social and Emotional Development in the pre-school curriculum, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding in primary schools, and history education and Learning for Life and Work in post-primary schools should all reinforce shared education. All of these offer significant opportunities to prepare our children and young people to learn lessons about transforming Northern Ireland into an inclusive and shared society.

More Pupils Enjoy Learning Through Irish

An increasing number of learners are educated through the medium of Irish, with 6,184 pupils benefiting from an immersion-specific learning environment where they develop well their cognitive and bi-literacy skills and achieve good or better standards.

They have a good understanding and converse confidently in Irish and English, with developing fluency and accuracy in both, as they progress through the Irish-medium sector.

In the free-standing Irish-medium post-primary schools inspected, the standards the pupils attain in literacy (Irish and English) are consistently very good or better.

Modern Languages Continue To Lose Their Voice

The cultural and commercial importance of language learning cannot be overestimated, given the changing profile of our society and the unpredictable economic future. Yet the uptake for modern languages at post-16 and KS4 continues to be disappointing. Despite this, most of the language lessons observed in this reporting period were good or better.

"Schools are to be commended for encouraging newcomer pupils to maintain and speak their home languages; by, for example, supporting them through employing bi-lingual assistants and in taking public examinations in their home languages."

As there continues to be a decline in the study of modern languages post-14; it would be timely to implement the Northern Ireland Languages Strategy[32], especially given the evidence of cognitive, social and economic benefits arising from language learning[33]. The previous Primary Modern Languages Programme, which ended in 2015, successfully brought tutors into over 400 primary schools teaching Irish, Polish and Spanish to children in the foundation stage and KS1 with beneficial outcomes[34].

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[32] Language for the Future Report
[33] The Review of Current Primary Languages Programme (2017) (Stranmillis University College, Belfast)
[34] An Evaluation of the Primary Modern Languages Programme (2009) Education and Training Inspectorate

Back To The Drawing Board For The Arts?

Sixty-nine per cent (69%) of primary schools indicated that they require assistance in developing schemes of work for art and design that ensure a breadth and depth of learning experience[35]. Furthermore, inspectors in post-primary schools are reporting concerns with reference to the general access to the arts and individual pupil uptake of subjects such as GCSE and A level art and design, music and drama.

It would be timely for DE to commission a review to learn lessons about the underlying causes for the decline in the arts.

Youth Matters In Society

Across the youth service, there is an appropriate focus on assessing and meeting the mental health needs of young people who face a range of personal and social issues; for example, examination stress, the pressures of social media, low self-esteem, exclusion and marginalisation, and threats from paramilitaries. Through their increasing participation in the youth service, young people are learning how to overcome many of their barriers to learning.

In a society where young people can often be denied a voice, there are very good examples of youth workers engaging and inspiring young people to advocate for themselves and others. In the best practice, the young people develop a critical understanding of contemporary issues such as Brexit, social division, sexual preference, gender identity and how to contribute positively to their communities.

Youth workers identify those young people who are most vulnerable and marginalised and implement support through appropriate intervention strategies. In a divided and contested society, many youth workers have learnt very effective lessons about how to engage with young people at the cutting edge. The most effective practice empowers these young people to move forward in meaningful roles within their organisation and within their community.

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[35] Of responses to the DE School Omnibus Survey 2016, published August 2016.

4. Children and young people should develop the life skills to be economically active, experience environmental well-being and make a positive contribution to society.

Going well

➢ Transition is effective where there is meaningful collaboration across the phases to inform an accurate assessment of the learner's individual needs.

➢ Good opportunities within the Training for Success (TfS) provision exist where the trainees are enabled to complete their training and essential skills successfully.

➢ A high level of commitment is shown by the European Social Fund (ESF) providers to support the marginalised in society.

➢ Positive signs of improvement are evident in the learning and skills provision in Northern Ireland's prisons.

Going forward

➢ For many young people the decision to remain in school is undermined by a limited curriculum offer which is not well informed by pertinent labour market information.

➢ With more males than females registered on the TfS programme there is a need to increase the number of females entering a wider range of occupational areas.

➢ While most children have an understanding of online safety and appropriate online behavior, they are still at an unacceptable risk from the abuse of social media.

➢ Given the constant advancement of technology more teachers need to develop their digital skills.

➢ Across 14-19 provision generally, teachers and learners need a better understanding of business knowledge, local and national industry and the needs of the economy.

Education and training providers should be supporting effective transition for all young people into post-school education, training and/or employment, particularly the most vulnerable, and should be mitigating the impact of poverty Young people should develop the life skills to be economically active, environmentally responsible and participate well in society.

Transition: A Challenge At All Stages

Inspectors remain concerned about transition at all stages: there are lessons to be learnt about improving the effectiveness of transition from pre-school into primary, post-primary and beyond. These transitions remain much too variable in terms of learners building effectively on their prior learning. In the best practice, there is meaningful collaboration across the phases, using all available information to inform an accurate assessment of the learner's individual needs. Added value is most apparent when organisations identify and respond effectively to the cognitive and pastoral characteristics of all the learners.

Figure 10

SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS (DE SCHOOL CENSUS 2016-2017)

Staying On At School May Not Be Right For All

The number of trainees recruited to the Training for Success (TfS) programme continues to decline, with increasing numbers of pupils staying on at school, post-16. For many young people, the decision to remain in school is undermined by a limited curriculum offer which is not well informed by pertinent labour market information and career opportunities in important skills areas. Lessons can be learnt to address these shortcomings through closer partnerships between schools, further education and training and better awareness of the most recent Skills Barometer[36] report.

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[36] Northern Ireland Skills Barometer

Inspection evidence indicates that too many young people leave school and enter training with low levels of attainment. Across the organisations inspected only, 11% of trainees on entry to the TfS programme achieve the benchmark of four or more GSCE passes at grades A* to C, including equivalents, and GCSE English and GCSE mathematics.

A majority of young people present with significant barriers to learning and are ill prepared to engage effectively and to succeed in a vocational training programme and work-related learning: too many leave their programmes early. This situation is due to a number of factors including: demographic changes; insufficient access by supplier organisations to pupils in post-primary schools at key decision points to help them make informed decisions; and, at times, limited awareness of the TfS programme amongst parents and young people. Consequently, work-based learning supplier organisations report that they are having to spend more resources and time developing the trainees' readiness to learn in order to access a work-related training curriculum.

Good opportunities within the TfS provision exist where the trainees are enabled to complete their training and essential skills successfully and access relevant pathways, in particular apprenticeship training.

Training For Success Is Male-Oriented

With more males (over 70%) than females being registered on the TfS programme there is a need for all stakeholders to promote positively and increase the number of female trainees entering a wider range of occupational areas where employment opportunities and potential earnings are better.

"Across the supplier organisations inspected, the majority of the female trainees are registered in a narrow range of gender-oriented professional and technical areas, including hairdressing, beauty and childcare. Employment opportunities in some of these areas are limited, largely part-time and often low paid. Only a small proportion of female trainees register in STEM-related areas."

ApprenticeshipsNI Is Not Attracting Enough Females

There continues to be a gender imbalance in the attraction of females to employment in some apprenticeships. Based on recent data[37] female apprentices make up only 3% of all STEM-related apprenticeship registrations. A majority of the apprentices are male and are employed, for example, in the range of engineering disciplines and construction trades. Encouragingly, apprentices from Northern Ireland benefit from involvement in the WorldSkills[38] events. Clear progression pathways now exist for many apprentices and are used increasingly by them to access higher level apprenticeships. There is an important lesson to be learnt from this example of good work which should be built upon with a wider range of professional and technical apprenticeships for all at this level, regardless of gender.

European Social Fund Interventions Succeed

A high level of commitment is shown by the European Social Fund (ESF) providers to support the marginalised in society such as the disabled, socially excluded, and those who are economically inactive.

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[37] Department for the Economy, ApprenticeshipsNI Statistical Bulletin Tables, August 2018.

[38] WorldSkills UK brings together apprentices and young people from across the UK to compete to be the best in their chosen skill - first in national competitions and then as Team UK in international skills competitions.

The ESF providers offer an appropriate curriculum with flexible, tailored provision which meets well the complex needs of the participants by addressing their social isolation and raising their confidence, employability, self-esteem and self-worth.

Prison Education Is Reforming

Positive signs of improvement are evident in the learning and skills provision across Northern Ireland's prisons. This is characterised by enhanced levels of involvement of the further education sector, the implementation of a core day which prioritises participation in learning and skills development, and a more cohesive management of the provision. At the highest level, there is a clear ambition and desire for further improvement. More needs to be done to ensure a broader and more relevant curriculum and higher levels of participation in training in the essential skills.

Living With A World At Your Fingertips

The curricular guidance for pre-school education has been recently updated to include the development of the children's skills of ICT Emerging inspection evidence shows that children are being encouraged to apply these skills in creative and open-ended play-based activities. While most primary children develop well their digital skills, this lesson has not been shared in a minority of schools where there is an overuse of low-value, repetitive drill-and-practice learning with insufficient opportunities to use the technology in thematic projects to improve the quality of their work. In these cases, interaction with technology tends to be predominantly trivial, creating a barrier to learning. Over the reporting period, the number of pupils achieving the CCEA GCE A level grade in Software Systems Design (SSD) has increased eight-fold from a low base and across a greater number of schools. At the end of their first year, computing students at Queen's University who had gained the SSD A level are outperforming students with other entry A levels by 71% to 54%[39].

Over the past four years, 18 schools have gained ICT Excellence awards[40] for transforming teaching and learning, a scheme supported by the EA, C2k and Capita. A growing number of schools (62 at September 2018)[41] have achieved the nationally recognised Digital School of Distinction Award[42], supported by DE.

"While most children have an appropriate understanding of online safety and acceptable online behaviour, they are still at an unacceptable risk from the abuse of social media. Consequently, the ETI scrutinises arrangements and guidance for the safe use of ICT when evaluating safeguarding."

Given the constant and ongoing advancement of technology, such as in coding, more teachers need to learn to develop their digital skills in order to prepare better their pupils for the increasingly digital society they inhabit

CEIAG: Pathways, Crossroads And Dead-Ends

The majority of the careers and employability lessons (CEIAG: Careers education, information, advice and guidance) inspected during this period, were meeting the needs and aspirations of all of the pupils. In the better provision, lessons can be learnt from schools that make effective use of pupil assessment data and labour market information, along with attentive pastoral care and SEN information, to provide appropriate pathways and transitions into education, training and employment. They also establish effective partnerships with a range of educational, vocational and work-based providers to inspire, inform and guide pupils well.

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[39] Success on Computing Degrees: Survey of Relevant Subject A –Level performance Differences. QUB, October 2018. (70% equates to a first-class level performance and 54% to a 2.2 level).
[40] ICT Excellence Awards
[41] Digital Schools Awards Northern Ireland – School Locations
[42] Digital Schools Awards Northern Ireland – Resources and Information

In the remainder of provision inspected, and across 14-19 provision generally, there is insufficient understanding of business knowledge, local and national industry, the needs of the economy, and low levels of awareness and understanding by young people of all the available progression pathways. There is a paucity of appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers, particularly in forging better links with employers and securing first-hand work experience for teachers to learn lessons about business and industry.

Across the training supplier organisations inspected, the quality of the in-house CEIAG is effective in a majority (71%) of cases and is characterised by a high level of employer engagement to prepare the trainees effectively for the workplace, develop their occupational and employability skills in a timely manner and provide an increasing number of well-planned and appropriate work-placement experiences.

In the remainder, improvement is needed in: the variability of the quality of initial assessment; the insufficient rigour in the placement of the trainees at particular levels of training; and the low levels of awareness and understanding of progression pathways which risk leading to a dead end.

Reflecting On Challenge

Reading back over the earliest Chief Inspectors' Reports[43] offers perspective about the effectiveness of decisions made in the past and insight to guide decision-making, going forward.

"For example, the development of the cross-curricular themes of Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage were, at a time of community division in 1989, a far-sighted introduction which underpins many strengths found in education today."

The ideas endure: they inspire tolerance, respect and understanding of difference (which, today, takes many different forms) helping young people build a cohesive and harmonious society.

This is notable, given the extent to which teachers, schools and the education and training service have responded to widening social diversity over the past thirty years:

- ➢ 23,000 learners are now in integrated education and 51,300 are engaged in shared education;

- ➢ nearly 6,200 pupils study in the Irish language;

- ➢ 79,000 learners have some form of special educational needs, and over 71,000 of these are in mainstream classes (supported by almost 11,000[44] classroom assistants) and their educational plans are better focused (The Code of Practice was introduced in 1998);

- ➢ three out of ten pupils are entitled to free school meals; and

- ➢ there are 15,400 newcomer learners, speaking some 90 first languages, with Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese the most common[45]

"Twenty years ago another important foundation was laid when DE launched the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme, making an investment in early learning to the point where 91% of all three year-olds now benefit."

This improvement has laid an important foundation for raising standards Our learners do relatively well in international assessment studies, particularly at primary level. From the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2015)[46] our 15 year-olds performed slightly better than the global average in science and at the global average in mathematics and

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[43] The first Chief Inspector's Review covered the period 1992 to 1999 and was followed by the first Chief Inspector's Report for 1999-2002 Chief Inspectors' Reports have been biennial since then.
[44] EA figures at 31.3.2018 and DE figures at 30.9.2017.
[45] School enrolments - overview
[46] PISA 2015 – Results for Northern Ireland

reading, our performance has remained stable in all three domains. In the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS 2015)[47] our nine to 10 year-old children out-performed 42 of 50 countries in mathematics and were above the international average in science. In the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2016)[48] our nine to 10 year-old children outperformed 41 of 49 countries and were significantly outperformed by only two. We have maintained levels of attainment in TIMSS and PIRLS since our first assessments in 2011.

In 1992, the Chief Inspector aspired that the ETI would help schools develop a culture of self-evaluation; a culture which has significantly reformed positively and beyond recognition

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[47] TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2015
[48] PIRLS 2016 – Results for Northern Ireland

in the past twenty-six years Self-evaluation (internal) and external evaluation (inspection) are complementary and their relationship creates a dynamic to stimulating improvement. Such have been the lessons learnt in relation to the importance and impact of high quality self-evaluation that, where schools and providers have been assessed through inspection as having an effective self-assessment process, a lighter touch inspection process applies, enabling a more proportionate approach to inspection.

"In addition, and thanks to the success of the C2k[49] project from 1990 onwards, learning leaders now analyse data to inform decisions, track improvement, evaluate improvement and measure the value-added - the distance travelled - by low-attaining learners in a way that would surprise school leaders of the early 1990s."

More recently, the Chief Inspector's Report for 2014-2016 set out progress against eleven challenges which were identified originally in the 2012-2014 report[50].

In the 2016-2018 period covered by this report, notable progress has been made with respect to the outworking of shared education and in the quality of care and welfare of learners, which remains a strength despite the evidence of increasing stresses in mental health and well-being for young people.

Elsewhere, we can welcome progress made, albeit only marginal and incremental, in a significant number of other areas, despite previous Chief Inspectors' Reports highlighting repeatedly where lessons still need to be learnt and more needs to be done.

These include: the gap in attainment between FSME and non-FMSE learners; the need for more consistently high quality leadership; variability of attainment across types of schools and the flexible curriculum offer needed to provide appropriate pathways for a wide range of learners; aspects of safeguarding; the engagement of parents, especially to improve attendance; and timely and effective responses to the growing proportion of learners with complex special educational needs.

The shifting number and nature of schools, with an increase in the numbers of pupils staying on post-16, highlights the need for lessons to be learnt about the provision of more flexible pathways, more agility in adapting annually to the changing needs of pupils and better outcomes for all: putting learners first.

In 1992, there were 236 post-primary schools (although, unlike today, not all had year 12 pupils) now there are 199; most notably, 97 of the 133 non-grammar schools now offer post-16 courses, a very significant change, with over three out of five of the age group in sixth form classes. Only 37% of pupils were selectively enrolled in grammar schools in 1987: today it is 45%, and all schools provide the same Northern Ireland curriculum, a step-change. At 173,744, the numbers enrolled in primary classes P1-7 is now also the highest since 1999[51].

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[49] CLASS/Classroom 2000.
[50] Chief Inspector's Report 2014-2016 pages 111 and 112.
[51] School enrolments – Northern Ireland summary data

This Chief Inspector's Report sets out the many challenges that remain, but learning lessons from the past about inspiring people and putting learners first can help us to address them. While there is much to celebrate, some of the areas for improvement reported in the early nineties persist. To these can be added some persistent contemporary issues.

Challenges include the need to:

➢ develop the part played by leaders in improving the quality of learning and teaching;

➢ develop the role and effectiveness of middle leaders;

➢ reduce inconsistencies in the quality of learning and teaching within and between institutions, especially matching it more closely to the needs of individuals;

➢ improve outcomes for specific groups of learners;

➢ ensure that the safeguarding of children and young people is paramount;

➢ engage more closely with parents/carers as the 'first educators';

➢ extend curricular and teaching links which ease transitions; and

➢ improve the breadth and coherence of the creative and expressive provision.

Provided that leadership is clear-sighted, it can help those who work in the education and training system to recognise that accountability to the learner, their parents and carers, as well as to their teaching colleagues, is a cogent and powerful driver of improvement.

The key to understanding how we have moved so far forward since 1992 is encapsulated in the main messages in this Chief Inspector's Report: **Learning Lessons: Inspiring People: Putting Learners First.**

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Going well

➢ Most (78%) of the pre-school settings inspected have a high level of capacity or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

➢ Most children across all pre-school settings are continuing to make good or better progress in all aspects of the pre-school curriculum.

➢ There is steady improvement in the voluntary and private sector, with the outcomes for learners good or better in nearly all (91%) of these settings.

➢ The development of the children's attention ad listening skills, and the wider aspects of language and literacy, is a strength in almost all settings.

Going forward

➢ Self-evaluation and action-planning processes for improvement are underdeveloped in over a quarter of nursery units and voluntary and private pre-school settings.

➢ In the statutory pre-school sector, there is an increase in adult-directed activities at the expense of a more appropriate focus on child-initiated play.

➢ The external support for quality improvement, especially through the role of the early years specialists in the voluntary sector, is too variable in quality.

Context

In 2018, there were 23,500 pupils in funded pre-school education in 383 private and voluntary pre-school settings, 95 nursery schools and 243 nursery units located in primary schools, which is 91% of three year olds in the population[52] There are 186 children in 52 reception classes in primary schools.

There were 248 inspections, of all forms, in all early years provision in 2016-2018, in addition to evidence from district inspector visits, policy advice and thematic reviews and surveys.

The effectiveness of pre-school provision
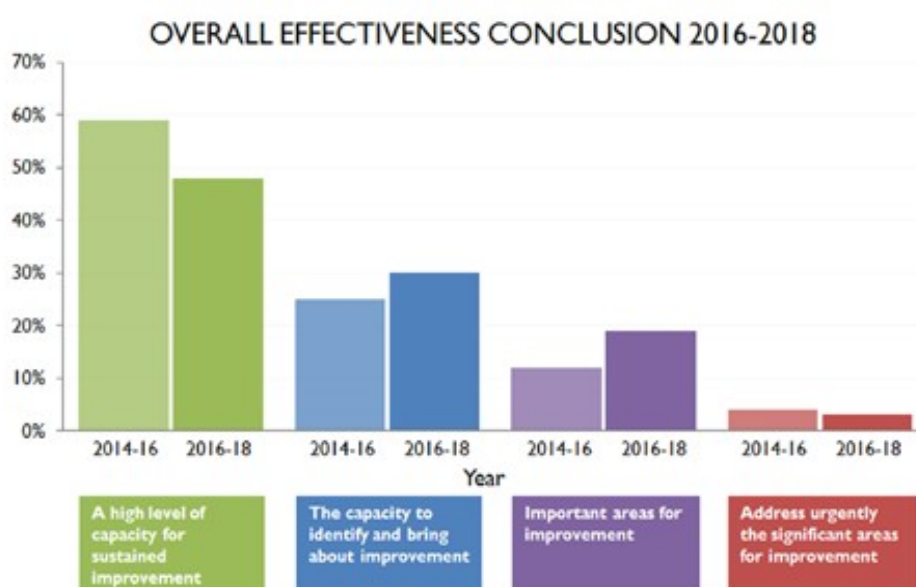
Inspection evidence re-affirms the continued effective work across the organisations inspected. Most (78%) pre-school settings had a high level of capacity or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. A minority (19%) had important areas for improvement and a small number (3%) needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement.

In the Irish Medium Education (IME) sector, a majority of settings had the capacity to identify and bring about improvement; one voluntary setting had a high level of capacity for sustained improvement and another needed to the address urgently significant areas for improvement.


Across the whole sector there have been small decreases, due to shortcomings in leadership and management, compared with the period 2014-2016, in the number of settings evaluated as having a high level of capacity, or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. In nursery schools, most (87%) had a high level of capacity for sustained improvement, or the capacity, to identify and bring about improvement, compared with nearly all (95%) in the previous Chief Inspector's Report.

Of the follow-up inspections, all but four were in private and voluntary pre-school settings. Thirty-one improved to the level of having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement or to a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. Seven settings remain in the follow-up process and continue to have important areas for improvement. A small number of nursery settings are receiving formal intervention support from the EA. A small number of the voluntary and private settings do not have the capacity to sustain improvement and require more specialised external support. The DE is currently reviewing the procedure for providing funded places to settings that are unable to achieve or sustain capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

Outcomes for learners

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS 2016-2018
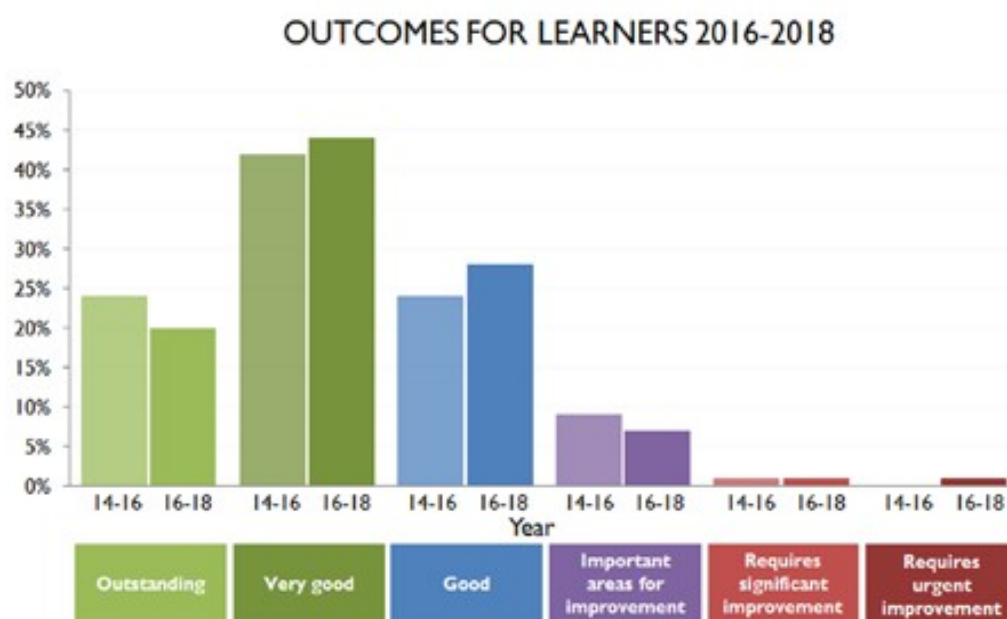
Nearly all children experience good or better outcomes in almost all settings (97% of nursery schools, 92% of nursery units and 91% of voluntary and private). The Pre-School Education Programme[53] is twenty years old. Over this period, outcomes for children attending voluntary and private settings have steadily improved. The improved capacity of those staff who have attained a degree level qualification in early years education is evident in better professional understanding of how to improve outcomes and provision. Of the voluntary and private settings inspected, outcomes in a majority (59%) were outstanding or very good, which is comparable with the outcomes achieved in a majority (58%) of nursery units. Outcomes in most (87%) nursery schools were evaluated as being outstanding or very good.

Positive outcomes result from high quality interaction of staff with children and, especially, skilful engagement in learning through play, which continue to be key strengths. In one-third of pre-school settings inspected, the children's progress in the use of appropriate ICT to enrich their learning remains limited. Where this is least effective, children use digital devices to complete activities, such as colouring or jigsaws, which do not help them develop any worthwhile skills and prevent them from developing fine motor skills, early mathematical skills, language skills and social interaction.

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[53] Formerly named the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme from 1998 to 2003.

Effective development of the children's attention and listening skills, and wider aspects of language and literacy, is almost always a strength. The children develop the language to communicate and relate well and their self-awareness and their awareness of the feelings and emotions of others is consistently very good.

While most children experience good or better opportunities to sing and perform with simple musical instruments, one-fifth of the settings provide limited experience to listen, move and respond to music.

In a playgroup the challenge for the staff is to provide the children with experiences and resources to increase their interest in and understanding of music.

They provide a range of opportunities; the children are able to access independently a range of imaginative resources including a variety of commercial and hand-made musical instruments.

As a result of this planning and provision, the children's natural curiosity leads them to experiment with sound and rhythm using the instruments and they often initiate spontaineous singing sessions together, and with the staff.

During the story session, the children are particularly responsive to a piece of classical music and are able to tell the sequence of the story based on their familiarity with the tempo of the music and recognition of the sounds of the instruments.

There is a growing trend of planning activities leading to the premature teaching of aspects of the year one curriculum before the children are ready to learn. There is an increase in adult-directed activities, at the expense of a more appropriate focus on child-initiated play, which curtails the children's ability to make choices and develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Harnessing the children's natural curiosity to investigate the world around them is less evident across the curriculum. In almost one in five pre-schools, the children are not sufficiently involved in observing and caring for living things.

Most (82%) children are developing appropriate gross motor skills and engaging in various forms of energetic play, including climbing and using wheeled vehicles. However, in one in four settings, the children's interest in games and the early athletic skills of running, throwing and jumping are underdeveloped.

The children's progress in personal, social, emotional and language development is restricted where the pre-school children are learning alongside underage children and, particularly, when they are in groups where the underage are the majority.

A similar effect can be seen with children in reception groups and in playgroups with small numbers of children. The enrolment of underage children has increased in the last two years from 729 in 2016-2017 and 837 in 2017–2018[54]. This places undue demands on the staff to balance their time and to plan and provide high quality provision for the breadth of need in composite groups. The challenges are compounded by a lack of consistent guidance from the relevant Departments and agencies[55] on an age and stage appropriate curriculum for underage children, for appropriate adult-child ratios and for the use of resources across the whole pre-school sector.

Where outcomes are less than good, there is a need to: ensure that all staff have the necessary qualifications, professional skills, knowledge and understanding to plan an appropriate pre-school curriculum; improve engagement with parents; raise outcomes further; and improve the effectiveness of the transition arrangements to promote continuity of high quality learning experiences into the foundation stage.

Quality of provision
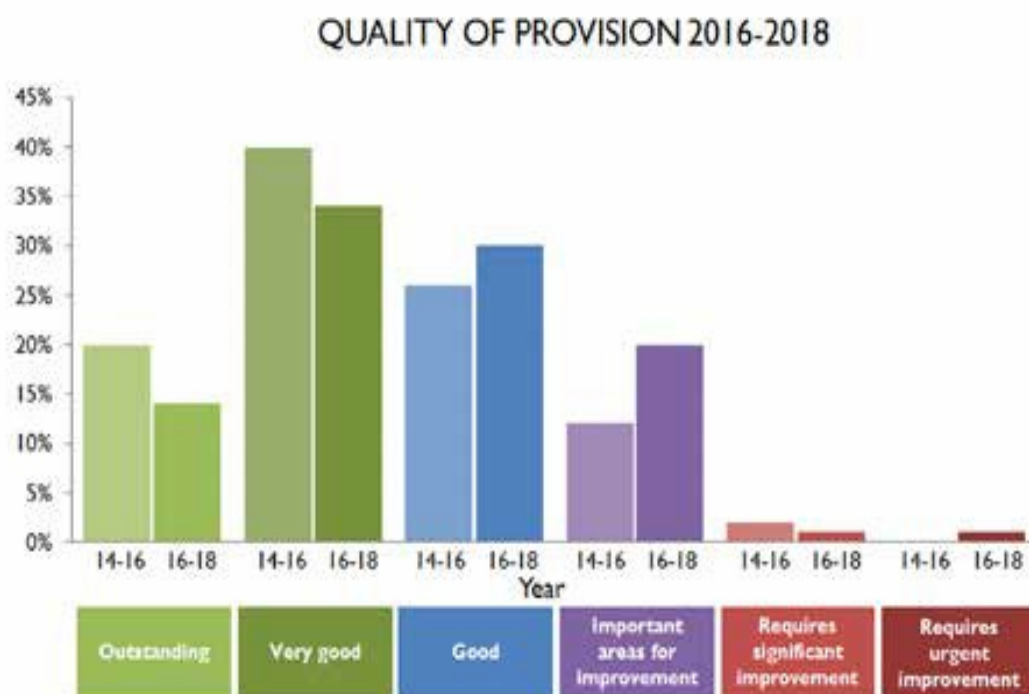
The overall quality of provision for learning remains generally high at 78% good or better. A key strength is the quality of the staff interaction to sustain interest and support the children sensitively by promoting learning through play, giving children time to process information,

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[54] NI School Census 2016-17 and 2017-18, Department of Education.
[55] The Department of Education, Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, Childcare Partnerships, Education Authority and the Early Years Organisation all have input to programmes for 2 year olds.

enquire and problem-solve. However, there is no room for complacency as there is an overall decline of six percentage points in both the voluntary and statutory sectors compared with the previous period.

There is concern among early years staff about the challenges of supporting the rising numbers of children who present with complex learning needs. They report that it is increasingly difficult to access the necessary training and support to meet the needs of pre-school children with special needs in their pre-school year. The proportion of children with special needs is growing and the early identification of their needs has improved. However, early identification is not always being followed by effective intervention. The length of the statementing process means that some children do not receive appropriate support until too late in their pre-school year. The high quality training provided by the EA's special educational needs capacity-building programmes for staff has improved further the ability of staff to plan for and support such learners; this needs to be sustained. The most common need for improvement is the more effective use of assessment information to plan for meeting the needs of all the children.

In all of the IME settings inspected, the children have a good understanding of spoken Irish. Songs and rhymes are used well to consolidate key vocabulary phrases. All settings have effective links with parents and with primary schools to prepare children well for transition Some settings miss opportunities to maximise fully the potential for learning and to promote the development of the children's social skills.

IME staff continue to plan activities around resources, without making the intended learning explicit. The cycle of observation, assessment and planning to ensure consistency of best practice needs to improve. Individual education plans are inadequate in the majority of settings.

Leadership and management

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT 2016-2018

The quality of leadership and management is good or better in just over three-quarters (76%) of all pre-school settings.

The voluntary and private sector continue to have issues in aspects of leadership and management in a minority (25%) of settings. Improvements continue to be needed in action planning, monitoring and in evaluation leading to improvement, including in a minority of nursery units.

External support for quality improvement, especially through the role of the early years specialists in the voluntary sector, remains variable in quality. Furthermore, the range of professional development opportunities in the statutory sector have reduced Boards of governors and management committees need to monitor closely the value for money of such support. Early years specialists from the ALTRAM[56] organisation have helped the IME settings make a good start to self-evaluation and planning for improvement. However, more remains to be done.

The DE's Getting Ready to Learn initiatives[57] include: the increased involvement of parents, especially of significant males; the growing involvement of the local community; and the increased use of community libraries. The increase in the information provided about children who are transferring from the Developmental Programme for 2-3 year olds in SureStart settings to pre-schools is a sign of improvement. Such partnership working needs to be extended.

There is an increase in the displacement of good and outstanding voluntary sector provision as a result of the increase in the number of nursery unit development proposals being approved. There remains a need to improve the connections between all early years providers.

Principals of primary schools need to take more cognisance of their nursery units as a cross-community provision. Inspection experience indicates that the original intention of the pre-school programme, to provide nursery education on a cross-community basis, conflicts with the increasing trend of the units adopting the identity of the primary school community in which they are located, for example, where they share names and uniforms.

The high turnover of management committee members and early years specialists within private and voluntary settings impacts negatively on raising and sustaining the quality of the provision.

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[56] The regional support group for Irish-medium early years projects.
[57] Getting Ready to Learn

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the relevant Departments in two-thirds of the pre-school settings inspected. In almost one-third there were areas for improvement which included training in child protection which is not up to date and safeguarding policies and risk assessments not being revised or reviewed regularly in line with guidance from the relevant Departments. There was one nursery school where the arrangements for safeguarding children were unsatisfactory.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Going well

- Effective leadership and management continues to focus on learning and teaching in the classroom.

- Children are more aware of what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

- Children are using ICT as a learning tool across wider aspects of their learning and are developing their proficiency to investigate and solve problems in a digital environment.

- The increased heed given to the voice of the child informs school development planning through, for example, the school council, eco-councils and initiatives, such as Rights Respecting Schools.

Going forward

- In a minority of schools, principals, vice-principals and co-ordinators need to be better at evaluating the impact of the provision on the children's outcomes.

- In a significant minority of schools, teachers need to place the children's knowledge and skills within interwoven learning experiences in a way which develops their capacity to make decisions and take responsibility for their learning.

- In the foundation stage and KS1, a more holistic view of the children's progress, reflecting their prior learning and making use of high quality, first-hand evidence regarding their development and outcomes, needs to be more widespread.

Context[58]

There are 173,744 children in 817 primary schools (years 1-7), including preparatory departments. Enrolment has risen by over 2,000 children this year to the highest total since 1999-2000.

There were 523 inspections, of all forms, in primary schools in 2016-2018.

The effectiveness of primary school provision

During 2016-2018, the ETI evaluated aspects of: outcomes for learners; quality of provision, including curriculum; and leadership and management including governance and safeguarding Key findings were shared and published. The ETI reported evaluative findings and/or overall effectiveness conclusions in 62% of all forms of primary school inspections, in addition to evidence from district inspector visits, policy advice and thematic reviews and surveys.
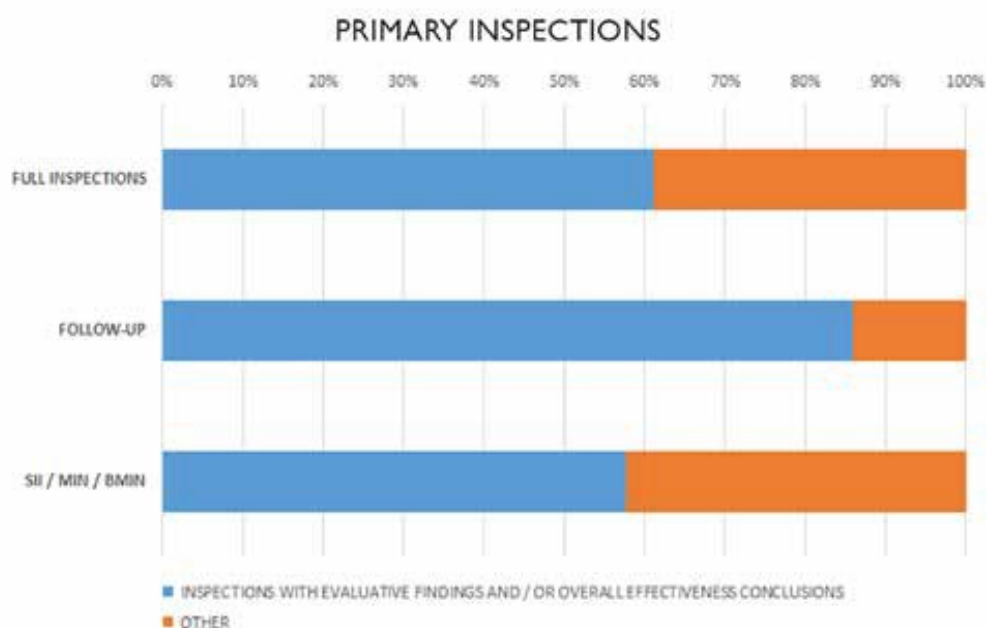
The ETI reported evaluative findings and/or overall effectiveness conclusions in 61% of full inspections, in 57% of sustaining improvement and monitoring inspections and in 86% of follow-up inspections. The engagement by primary schools in follow-up inspections enabled these schools to demonstrate their improvement. In 9% of the schools where the ETI was able to report an overall effectiveness conclusion, there was no improvement. In the five Irish-medium schools inspected, only two were evaluated as having either a high level of capacity, or capacity, to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all learners[59].

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[58] Except where otherwise reported, all key findings include Irish-medium primary schools.
[59] In all school inspections, assurances on safeguarding were provided, in 17% of cases after a delay.

It is not appropriate, in this phase report, to compare detailed inspection evidence with the findings from previous Chief Inspectors' Reports as, since January 2017, there were different models of inspection, fewer lesson observations and a new ISEF.

Outcomes for learners

In the better practice, in literacy, the children engage readily in appropriately challenging activities which develop their understanding of different texts and improve their ability to write in a range of forms across the curriculum. However, where children's reading and writing are confined to a narrow range of texts and genres, the development of comprehension skills, including inference, is compromised and there is limited opportunity for the children to articulate, refine or justify their reasoning. It is notable that handwriting needs to be developed more systematically in all key stages to support the development and flow of the children's creative ideas and improve their spelling.

High standards in mathematics are evident, including in sessions where inspectors talked with children about their numeracy. The children have a clear understanding of mental mathematical and problem-solving strategies, can choose appropriate approaches to make accurate calculations and explain their mathematical thinking.

In the foundation stage, where observed indoor and outdoor play-based programmes are well-planned, and the children have a sufficient variety of real and natural resources, the play provides appropriate challenge in numeracy and literacy. Consequently, the children are seen to progress well their creativity, self-management and problem-solving skills. High quality outdoor learning experiences, however, remain underdeveloped due in part to insufficient breadth and creativity in planned learning. Opportunities for the children's physical development outdoors are similarly limited.

The overall outcomes for learners in Irish-medium schools are good or better and, in a minority, very good. The outcomes in the foundation stage are very good in a majority of the schools.

The children's communication skills in both Irish and English are strengths. They have a very good understanding of Irish and converse confidently with developing fluency and accuracy. By KS2, the children read with fluency in both languages.

A wide range of inspection evidence shows that more children are becoming better at using ICT to investigate and solve problems while working in a digital environment. However, it is a concern that there is an overuse of low-value, repetitive drill-and-practice learning, without meaningful teacher support, which presents little opportunity for the children to interact with peers or enhance transferable skills. In the foundation stage, Using ICT remains a cross-curricular area for development.

A growing number of schools are using an increased range of specifically-targeted software programmes to build the children's reading fluency and enthusiasm, proficiency in mathematics or their social confidence and self-esteem. Where such approaches are having a positive effect, the software is incorporated as a component within well-considered and structured reading, numeracy and personal development programmes.

In a medium-sized, primary school, the staff present the primary curriculum in a holistic way to help the children apply their knowledge and skills and prepare them for the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing world. The teachers combine complementary active learning experiences, including the use of ICT, alongside developing the children's knowledge of and relationship with, the local community, the natural environment and a wider global perspective.

Using the staff's various talents and skills effectively, the school prioritised training and time for co-ordinators to improve the planning. The teachers map out World Around Us (WAU) topics and the progression of skills alongside opportunities in other learning areas where connected learning is planned explicitly. Literacy and numeracy resources are aligned with the various WAU topics across the school.

There is a conscious effort to develop the children's 'thinking skills and personal capabilities', in particular their personal independence and life skills. The highly effective link between the school and the environment is a real driver in connecting the children's learning; the staff take a multi-sensory approach to delivering the curriculum through outdoor learning and the Eco-Schools work from years 1-7. Alongside this, the global learning work builds the children's understanding of their place in the world.

Through the school councils and eco-councils, the children report favourably on the changes in their learning and positive parental feedback in questionnaires continues to inform school development planning.

Quality of provision

In the better teaching of literacy, well-planned strategies infuse the wider thinking skills and personal capabilities. Teachers who understand fully the place and importance of literacy within the primary phase connect it meaningfully across the curriculum, for example, in a key area such as WAU, where the learning experiences reflect the needs and interests of the children.

Children have good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills purposefully in other areas of the curriculum. Collaborating in small groups and engaging in practical activities consolidate and extend their grasp of numeracy concepts and develop mathematical competence and flexible thinking. Overall, most children would benefit from more time to explain their mathematical thinking using appropriate mathematical vocabulary and applying their knowledge of mathematical processes.

Ten years on from the implementation of the revisions to the Northern Ireland Curriculum there are more opportunities for open-ended research, investigation and child-led enquiry through activity-based learning. However, inspection evidence indicates that the development of the children's capacity to direct, make decisions about and take responsibility for their learning remains an important area for more consistent development.

The children's understanding of computational thinking, coding and robotics is seen to be enhanced when schools and individual teachers use technologies actively and when teachers have engaged in relevant training.

Individual education plans with appropriate targets and strategies, and which are reviewed regularly to meet the needs of individuals, support effectively the children who require it. Such support is enhanced further when complemented by highly skilled classroom assistants.

Formative assessment across the curriculum is still not used sufficiently to inform planning, which may restrict opportunities to address the children's developmental or additional needs. Where teachers know the needs of individual children, through direct observation and better analysis of the school's data (including attendance and well-being), the subsequent provision offers better tailored support.

Opportunities to extend the children's work through shared education links and partnerships are enhancing the children's learning in a range of ways. There is scope to develop clustering arrangements with neighbouring schools and more meaningful links with post-primary schools.

Leadership and management

Where leadership and management is effective, senior and middle leaders share a clear vision for continuous improvement and understanding how to transform vision into action and measure impact. Focused school development and associated action-planning processes are sharpened by a thorough analysis of all relevant qualitative information and quantitative data to track, monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions on the children's progress and improve their outcomes over a sustained period.

Effective leadership and management continues to focus on learning and teaching. Where there are shortcomings, middle management, including co-ordinators are not evaluating sufficiently the impact of learning and teaching and improving planning for learning in order to meet more effectively the needs of all of the children.

Inspection evidence confirms that governors who are involved actively in, and informed fully about, the school improvement process are better placed to support and challenge, where appropriate, the leadership in all aspects of decision-making.

Safeguarding

In discussion with inspectors, the children are aware of what to do and who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being. They are increasingly aware of their personal safety online and of safe and appropriate behaviours. Parents and carers are being made aware of how to monitor children's online safety at home.

During the September to December 2016 programme of inspection, in almost one-fifth of the schools, the arrangements for safeguarding did not reflect DE guidance. Appropriate training had not been completed and key child protection and safeguarding policies were either not in place or had not been reviewed appropriately. One in ten schools inspected in that period had unsatisfactory arrangements for safeguarding.

Within the January 2017 to June 2018 period, 17% of primary schools chose to delay the provision of assurances to the ETI about the safeguarding of children for up to six weeks, and in a small number of cases for longer. In instances related to union action, this delay reflected a lack of awareness and insufficient understanding by the governors of their statutory duty, or a lack of annual review by governors of the child protection procedures; in some cases, however, it was because aspects of their procedures did not comply with requirements at the time of inspection.

POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Going well

- The use of data for tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils, initiating appropriate interventions and addressing the variation in outcomes, continues to improve.

- High expectations complemented by strong partnerships between school, home and pupils secure appropriate outcomes and pathways for the pupils.

- Schools continue to promote the pupil voice, giving them meaningful opportunities to be involved in, and lead on, the development of key aspects of school provision.

- Schools engage increasingly in appropriate partnerships such as school-based collaborations within Area Learning Communities, school-to-school links, and community and shared education initiatives.

Going forward

- Some schools need to identify better and close, more effectively, the attainment gaps for target groups of pupils.

- Schools need to review their KS3 curriculum offer to provide pupils with opportunities for challenging, connected and contextualized learning to build their knowledge, understanding and skills.

- All schools, when designing a curriculum with enabling breadth and flexibility, need to consider the currency, duplication and career progression of the qualifications they offer.

Context

In total 140,545 pupils[60] are enrolled in 199 post-primary schools. One hundred and sixty-three schools (82%) now have sixth forms with approximately 28,500 pupils, 62% of all 16-17 year olds in Northern Ireland[61].

There were 139 inspections, of all forms, in post-primary schools in 2016-2018.

The effectiveness of post-primary school provision

During 2016-2018, the ETI evaluated aspects of: outcomes for learners; the quality of provision, including curriculum and careers; and leadership and management, including governance and safeguarding. Key findings were shared and published. The ETI reported evaluative findings and/ or overall effectiveness conclusions in 96% of all forms of post-primary inspections, in addition to evidence from district inspector visits, policy advice and thematic reviews and surveys[62].
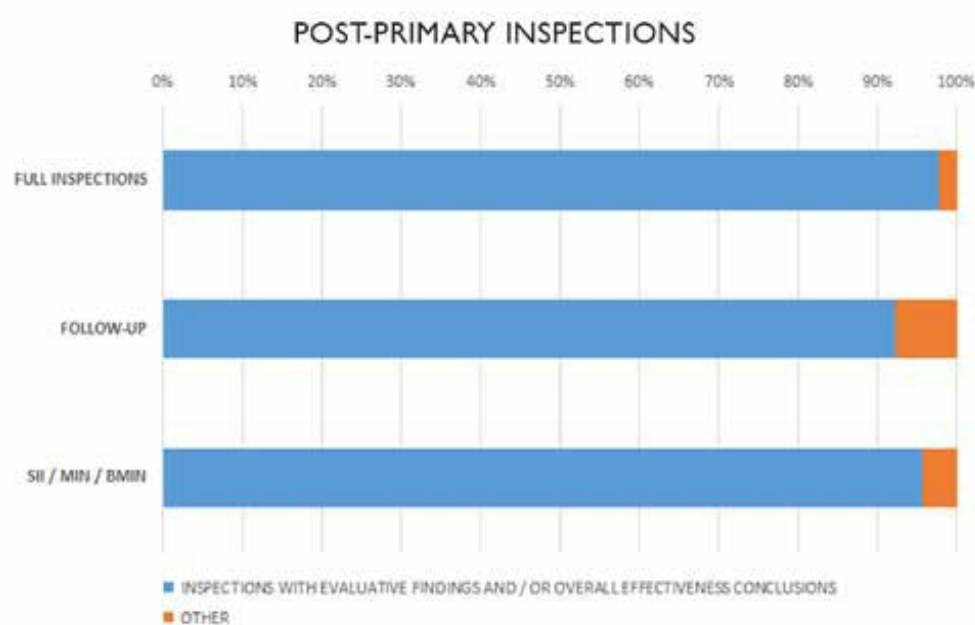
The ETI reported evaluative findings and/or overall effectiveness conclusions in 98% of full inspections, and in 96% of sustaining improvement, monitoring and baseline monitoring inspections, where nearly all schools provided evidence that they were identifying actions focused on bringing about improvement, and in 92% of follow-up inspections.

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[60] Down by 15,000 since its peak in 2002-03. One third (66) are grammar schools enrolling 45% of the post-primary pupils, the highest ever, and two thirds (133) are non-grammar schools. DE statistical bulletin 2/2018.
[61] DE statistical bulletin 2/2018.
[62] In school inspections assurances on safeguarding were provided.

Where schools exited successfully the follow-up process, the factors leading to improvement included the dissemination of effective classroom practice and a development planning process underpinned by effective self-evaluation leading to well-targeted continuing professional development for all staff. There are, consequently, better defined roles, responsibilities and internal accountability at all levels leading to improvement.

It is not appropriate, in this phase report, to compare detailed inspection evidence with the findings from previous Chief Inspectors' Reports as, since January 2017, there have been different models of inspection, fewer lesson observations and a new ISEF.

Outcomes for learners

Pupils in grammar and non-grammar schools are attaining improved outcomes in public examinations.

At GCSE, the headline outcomes attained by year 12 pupils in 2016-2017 continued their marginal year-on-year rise, with 70.3% attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including equivalent qualifications and GCSE English and GCSE mathematics. Girls continue to out-perform boys[63].

There is a significant difference in grammar schools in the DE benchmark of seven A*-C or equivalent including GCSE English and GCSE mathematics in the outcomes achieved between males and females. Furthermore, inspection evidence shows that in the schools' own data, at seven or more GCSEs at grades A* to B, including GCSE English and GCSE mathematics, the differential between boys and girls remains a matter for concern. There is a need for the DE to develop benchmarked performance measure at A*-B which would be more discriminating in grammar schools.

The attainment gap in five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including equivalent qualifications and with GCSE English and GCSE mathematics, between FSME and non-FSME pupils, has narrowed marginally, but remains much too wide at 28.5 percentage points.

In literacy, while the best practice evidences more complex and extended responses, both orally and in writing, being developed through strategies, including adept questioning and effective group work, literacy requires further development especially where pupils are not provided with enough opportunity to use their literacy skills across all subjects.

Similarly, while the most effective practices in mathematics challenges deeper thinking and develops mathematical oracy skills, there are lessons to be learnt from the lack of development of mathematics across the curriculum.

Sixty-nine per cent (69%) of pupils in the final year of an A-level (or equivalent) course achieved 3 or more A levels at grades A*-C. This figure compares with 66.3% in 2015-2016[64]. In year 14, in 2016-2017, 57.8% of FSME pupils attained three or more A levels at grades A*-C, or equivalent, while 71.5% of non-FSME pupils attained the same standard. The gap of 13.7% between these two groups is an improvement on that of 17.3% in 2014-2015. The narrowing of this attainment gap continues to be a priority.

Over the past three years, the performance gap between grammar and non-grammar for all key headline examination outcomes has decreased year-on-year. There is a greater uptake of vocational subjects at KS4 and post-16 in non-grammar schools, particularly by males. However, there are pupils attaining outcomes in subjects which belong to the same families of examination specifications and, because they are too similar in content, potentially close down pathways and inhibit career potential.

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[63] Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER) documentation

[64] DE Statistical Bulletin 10/2017 Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland 2016-2017.

Overall, 62% of all 16 and 17 year olds in the population are studying A level or equivalent qualifications in schools. This differs substantially by gender; 68% of all females aged 16 or 17 are studying A levels or equivalent in schools compared to 51% of all males. With the increasing proportion of pupils now staying on in schools post-16, there is a need for schools to ensure that the curriculum best meets the needs of their pupils.

Where schools have robust self-evaluation processes in place, discerning criteria is applied when identifying and supporting those pupils at risk of not achieving their potential. The changes in the academic profile of school intakes and variations in geographical demographics in grammar and non-grammar schools make timely the need for an enhancement of the DE benchmarks as they currently exist, given the wide variations in the academic ability of the pupils at the point of intake.

Quality of provision

During this reporting period, inspectors met and talked with the pupils about their levels of contentment and safety at school, learning and teaching and their broader educational experiences. The pupils expressed their learning preferences and how they value the opportunities that motivate and engage them, including working with pupils from other schools in shared learning contexts.

Increasingly, schools are focused on promoting pupil voice through more meaningful consultation. Leadership skills are developed through a range of measures such as: restorative justice initiatives; anti-bullying campaigns; learning mentorship with their peers and national and international charity work. In the best practice, the creation and development of pupil leadership teams engage pupils authentically in making decisions and solving real-life problems about important aspects of school provision.

Many schools are now acting to improve the transition of pupils from primary to post-primary education, especially in the key areas of literacy, numeracy and their care and well-being, including an emphasis on the needs of pupils who need additional support with aspects of learning. However, the effectiveness of transition from primary to post-primary remains much too variable. The better practice is characterised by purposeful curricular links with contributory primary schools.

Too often, schools report, that with a reduction in departmental and inter-departmental working, opportunities for connected learning are being lost. Effective curricular provision at KS3 needs to provide more suitably challenging, connected and contextualised opportunities for pupils to build on and apply their skills and competences.

Inspection evidence shows that the more effective schools are tracking well the staying-on rates[65] and the destinations of their pupils, and are using the information to review curricular

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[65] The percentage of pupils who stay on at school compared with the Northern Ireland average for all schools, in terms of whether the pupil progress their level of study at the same or another school.

provision ensuring that it is focused on providing appropriate pathways. However, curricular issues were identified at both KS4 and/or at post-16. These issues included: a narrow curriculum which is insufficiently matched to the needs, interests, abilities and aspirations of all the pupils; low-impact careers advice and guidance and the appropriateness and effectiveness of transition programmes at post-16. The ETI's Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Examination Entry Practice and Policy in Post-Primary Schools [August 2017[66]] identified the need for schools to review regularly the curriculum offer and the associated CEIAG.

Most pupils generally report that they benefit from CEIAG which is informed by local and global market information and tailored to their individual needs, aspirations and abilities. However, in a minority of cases, there were aspects of CEIAG provision requiring further development, including insufficient planning to provide a coherent and progressive taught careers programme and pupils not being well enough informed about the range of pathways and opportunities available to them. There is a paucity of appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers, particularly in forging better links with employers and securing first-hand experience in industry.

Across the inspection models, 1081 lessons were observed in a range of subjects. Effective learning and teaching, leading to appropriate outcomes, are characterised by: a culture of high expectations for all; strategies that engage better target groups in their learning; regular review of the curricular provision and effective programmes for CEIAG. When these actions are most productive, the schools are putting the learner first in responding well to the challenges which may arise from pupil difference, such as gender, newcomers and FSME.

In a post-primary school, just under one-half of the pupils receive free school meals, and one-quarter are on the special educational needs register.

A year 9 male presented as highly anxious with obsessive compulsive disorder and dyslexia. His parents and teachers had concerns about his welfare and education. Through a multi-disciplinary meeting, strategies were identified that all the teachers could apply.

The pupil was able to access Cognitive Behavioural Therapy through the EA, access to counselling in school was arranged by the school, and additional counselling was provided in the community. The pupil was given a personalised 'tool box' of strategies and the school funded a mentoring programme provided by a very experienced retired teacher to work with the pupil, to monitor his well-being and manage his daily routines and behaviours. A quiet, easily accessible space within school allowed him to relax whenever he felt anxious or agitated.

By year 11, the pupil has grown steadily in confidence, his academic profile has strengthened considerably and he is now considerably more socially integrated. He was awarded a school prize at a public prize night.

Leadership and management

Inspectors found, that when leadership and management is most effective, it places the care and welfare of the pupils and the outcomes which they attain at its core. A coherent school development planning process exists, informed by rigorous self-evaluation, extensive consultation and professional learning for staff, aligned well to improvement priorities.

The leadership at all levels is better when it makes good use of qualitative information and quantitative data analysis to inform and improve learning and teaching and, especially, to address underachievement.

When there are issues with leadership and management, these typically include: ineffective self-evaluation; unfocused action-planning with regard to learning; and insufficient use of data to identify and address underperformance.

In most of the post-primary schools inspected, there was confidence, or a high degree of confidence, in the aspects of governance evaluated. Inspection evidence is that governance is most effective when governors understand and apply appropriately their challenge function, holding senior and middle leaders to account for the quality of learning and teaching and the outcomes attained. They also engage pro-actively in the school development planning and associated monitoring processes. The challenge of budget restraints is a focus for all school leaders.

Safeguarding

In most of the post-primary inspections undertaken during 2016-2018, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflected or reflected broadly the guidance issued by the DE.

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils in seven post-primary schools during this reporting period were evaluated as unsatisfactory. These schools needed to review and improve how they care for and support pupils, including their arrangements for safeguarding and the promotion of positive behaviour. Inspection evidence included: insufficient focus on ensuring pupils are safe and secure at all times of the school day and in all areas of the school site; lack of confidence by pupils in the management and resolution of reported concerns; inadequate record-keeping and risk assessment processes; outdated policies and an insufficient proactivity by safeguarding teams; lack of a relevant code of conduct to guide the work of all staff; lapsed training for staff and governors; and limited promotion of positive behaviour, including inappropriate removal from class of pupils with challenging behaviours. It is a matter of concern that in two schools, in which the pupils reported feeling unsafe because of unacceptable behaviour by peers and ineffective behaviour management, the pace of change in addressing these issues was too slow.
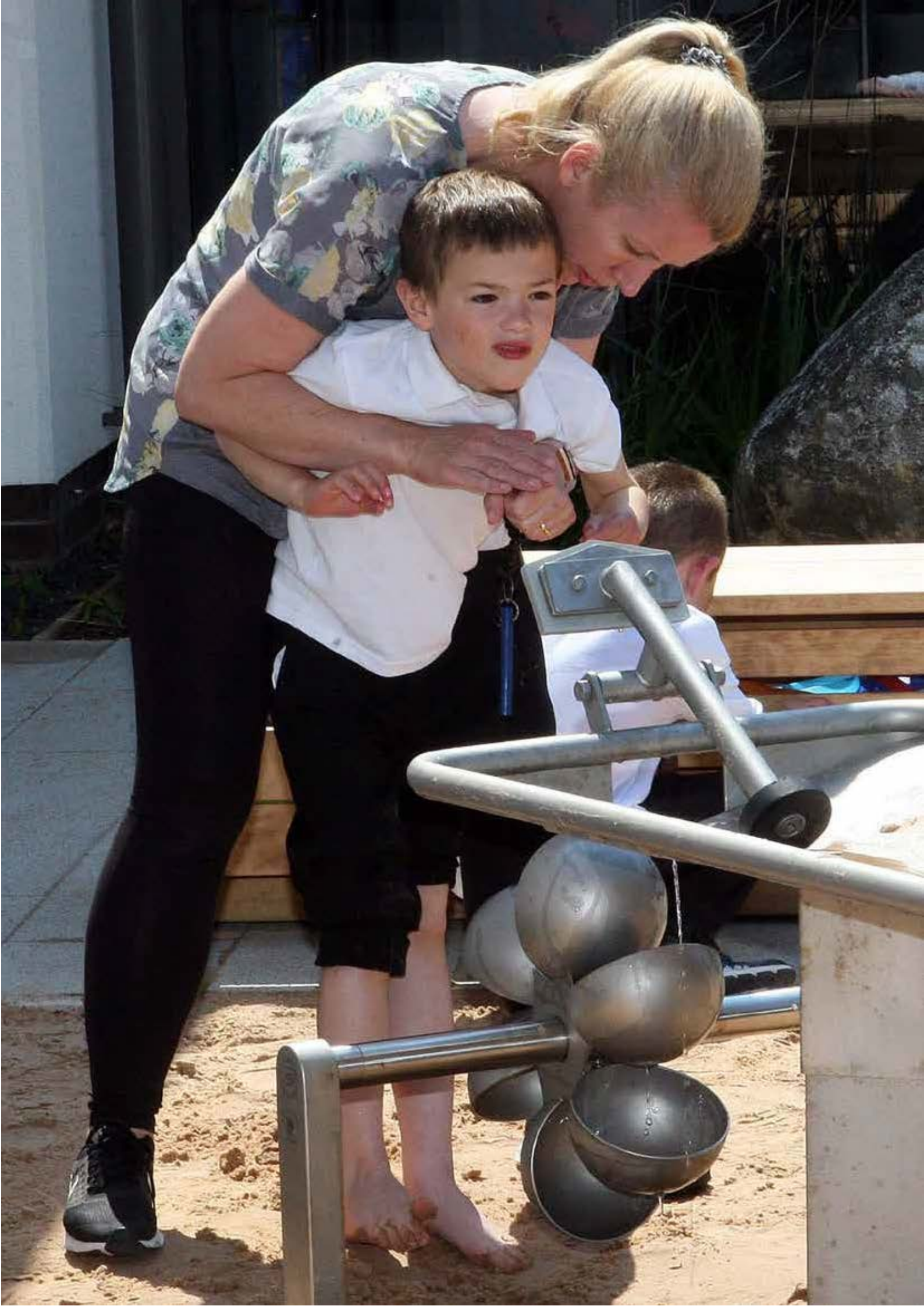
SPECIAL SCHOOL EDUCATION

Going well

➢ Highly effective strategic leadership develops curriculum leaders and heads of departments and builds their capacity to bring about improvement.

➢ There is effective, creative, tailored provision for pupils with complex educational, social, emotional and behavioural needs.

➢ There is an improvement in the range of pathways for progression for young people after leaving school.

➢ Where special schools in the same geographical area are working together to promote and sustain improvement, more effective practice is being developed.

Going forward

➢ There is insufficient evidence in the schools to show that the pupils' outcomes reflect fully their abilities and potential.

➢ There are inadequacies in aspects of planning for learning, which fails to meet the needs of all learners.

➢ In almost all of the schools, there is insufficient capacity to meet the needs of the pupils with extremely challenging behavior. The schools report that support from Health Trusts and the EA is insufficient and is often inadequate.

Context

There are forty-two special schools[67] in Northern Ireland providing for some 5,840 pupils[68], normally aged from three to 19 years, who are presenting with increasingly complex and severe learning difficulties.

There were 24 inspections, of all forms, in special schools in 2016-2018.

The effectiveness of special school provision

During 2016-2018, the ETI reported evaluative findings and/or overall effectiveness conclusions in 96% of all forms of special school inspections, in addition to evidence from district inspector visits, policy advice and thematic reviews and surveys[69]. The ETI reported evaluative findings and/or overall effectiveness conclusions in 92% of special school full school inspections.

The overall capacity of special schools varies considerably across the range, from those which have a high level of capacity to those that need to address urgently the significant areas for improvement.

In the follow-up inspections, overall effectiveness conclusions were reported in all of the special schools. Improved leadership is evident in the development of effective systems for evaluating learning and teaching. These improvements are informing curriculum provision more effectively and enabling the schools to respond more accurately to the learners' wide range of needs and ability.

In all sustaining improvement inspections, evaluative findings and/or outcomes were reported. For example, use of sensory stimuli and practical outdoor learning have resulted in the needs of a wider range of pupils being met through a more appropriate focus on functional life skills.

It is not appropriate, in this phase report, to compare detailed inspection evidence with the findings from previous Chief Inspectors' Reports as, since January 2017, there have been different models of inspection, fewer lesson observations and a new ISEF.

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[67] There are thirty-nine grant-aided special schools, a hospital school and two independent schools.
[68] Source: Department of Education Special School and Independent School enrolment data 2017/18.
[69] In all inspections, assurances were provided on safeguarding.

Outcomes for learners

In the most effective practice, pupils attain the skills they require for the next phase of their lives, such as tolerance when coping with new environments, communication skills for basic needs, and a willingness to explore new situations   Creative use of digital and assistive technology also augments the ability of pupils to communicate, benefiting in particular those who are transitioning from school settings.

However, the practice is less effective where there is insufficient development of skills, poor preparation for the next phase of education and scant evidence that the pupils' outcomes reflect their abilities and potential.

One special school has increasing numbers of pupils with inter-related difficulties with behaviour and attention skills. The pupils found it difficult to settle in school and to engage in learning activities.

The principal researched innovative practices used internationally to address the complex range of difficulties experienced by pupils of similar ability. Based on the research information, and in consultation with parents, governors and staff, the school began a pilot study of the use of Rebound Therapy (RT). A number of staff completed accredited training, resources were purchased and timetables reviewed to accommodate regular sessions for a focus group of pupils who were identified as likely to benefit from the therapy.

A baseline assessment of each pupil's behaviour and application to learning was completed by staff. The focus group then received regular individualised RT sessions with comprehensive observations recorded for each session, and the impact on each pupil's behaviour, attention skills and well-being was monitored on their return to class.

The data gathered reflects significant improvement in almost all of the pupils' educational and behavioural targets, with improved engagement in learning a common factor. The school has extended RT to all pupils identified as having the potential to benefit, and training to many of the school staff, teaching and non-teaching, and to other special schools.

Quality of provision

The quality of curriculum provision in special schools is well balanced when appropriate attention is given to the needs of the pupils. However, where there are shortcomings, the provision neither meets the diversity of pupil needs nor is the timetable balanced sufficiently across the week.

In the better practice, to support pupils with particular needs, including sensory, autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties, there is appropriately specialised provision; for example, through play-based learning. Furthermore, the work of nurture units addresses well the behavioural and attachment difficulties experienced by a small number of pupils. However, in almost all of the schools inspected, there is insufficient capacity to meet the needs of those pupils with extremely challenging behavior. The principals report that support from Health Trusts and the EA is limited and, where it is available, inadequate.

Where planning is at its most effective, all of the needs of all of the pupils are being met, which is evident in the sustained engagement by pupils in lessons observed. In the best practice, there is also highly effective detailed tracking and analysis of the pupils' progress and their acquisition of wider skills and capabilities. Where it is less effective, tracking the progress of individuals is unfocused due in part to insufficient baseline assessment and targets being set which are too general. There is a need for more rigorous planning and assessment, with more robust monitoring and evaluation at all levels. There is an improvement, in the range of opportunities for progression for the young people after leaving school.

Leadership and management

In most special schools inspected, highly effective, strategic leadership is pro-active, developing curriculum leaders and heads of departments, all of which builds the capacity of the school to bring about improvement. Weaker practice is characterised by an inability to effect improvement. In these circumstances, school leaders need to clarify the roles of middle managers and build up their capacity to identify appropriate priorities, action plan and monitor and evaluate the impact on the outcomes for the learners.

In the more effective practice, the processes for monitoring and self-evaluation are embedded well throughout the school. Good practice is evident where special schools in the same geographical areas work together to promote and sustain improvement.

Overall, in most special schools inspected, accommodation is insufficient given the rise in numbers and the challenging and changing profiles of the pupils. However, recently built special schools have a wider range of sensory resources and bespoke specialist accommodation which resolve such shortcomings.

In most cases, governors are supportive of school leaders and they challenge appropriately the strategic direction, outcomes and management of the school. Most effectively, governors engage regularly with school leaders and subject co-ordinators to evaluate the provision and outcomes of the pupils. In a minority of the schools inspected, the governors fail to challenge and lack appropriate strategic overview of the schools' provision and outcomes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding children and young people reflect the guidance from the DE in just under one-half of the special schools. Effective arrangements for care, welfare and support in these schools are characterised by purposeful learning which builds the pupils' self-confidence, enabling engagement in, and enjoyment of, learning. In these schools, there is a clear adherence to safeguarding regulations, comprehensive communication and accountability, and appropriate specialist staff training.

In over one-half of the schools, where the arrangements reflect broadly the guidance, there were areas for improvement which included pastoral policies and procedures not being revised or reviewed regularly, such as those related to relationships and sexuality education, risk assessment, intimate care, critical incidents and positive behaviour.

EDUCATION OTHER THAN AT SCHOOL

Going well

➢ In a majority of EOTAS centres inspected, staff work innovatively and effectively to address gaps in the pupils' learning, ensuring that they achieve outcomes that make a significant difference to their life chances[70].

➢ In a majority of the centres inspected, pupil attendance improves over the time of their placement, compared with their school attendance record.

➢ In most cases, baseline assessments of social, emotional, behavioural and academic development are used well to guide individual interventions and monitor their progress.

Going forward

➢ The EA should adhere to the DE's guidance[71] by referring year 12 pupils only in very exceptional circumstances; they should collate the examination performance of all year 12 pupils placed in EOTAS centres.

➢ EOTAS centres report the need for more consistent support from the Educational Psychology Service to assess pupils and develop planning to address their individual learning needs.

➢ The referring schools need to become more actively involved in planning and monitoring EOTAS placements to ensure that the pupils have access to their curriculum entitlement and can to return to their school to continue study.

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[70] There is an increase in the proportion of centres which report that their pupils are achieving five GCSE or equivalent qualifications at grades A*-C.
[71] DE Circular 2014/24: Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) guidance.

Context

There are 34 EOTAS centres in Northern Ireland, providing for the needs of extremely vulnerable pupils aged from five to 16. Six hundred and ninety four pupils were placed in EOTAS provision at October 2017[72], an increase of 42% on the previous year. The number of pupils referred in KS2 and KS3 has almost doubled since October 2016 The Belfast region reported the biggest increase.

There were 20 inspections, of all forms, in EOTAS centres in 2016-2018.

EOTAS centres also report that they are experiencing an increase in the proportion of pupils being referred through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and in pupils with autism.

The effectiveness of EOTAS centre provision

In 2016-2018 the ETI reported evaluation findings and/or overall effectiveness conclusions in 80% of all forms of inspection of EOTAS centres, in addition to evidence from district inspector visits, and policy advice.

Most centres developed and implemented effective diagnostic systems to assess the pupils' social and emotional areas of need and set appropriate individual targets, with associated strategies. There is a clear focus on supporting the emotional well-being of the pupils, innovative strategies to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and to support them when transitioning back to school.

In 2016-2018 the ETI reported evaluation findings and/or overall effectiveness in 83% of EOTAS follow-up inspections. Planning and monitoring of progress improved in all these centres and there were significant improvements to the curriculum, with good outcomes for the majority of pupils.

Small numbers of pupils are achieving GCSE qualifications which enables them to return to school to study at GCE A level. Such effective partnerships need to be consistent across all area learning communities.

It is not appropriate, in this phase report, to compare detailed inspection evidence with the findings from previous Chief Inspectors' Reports as, since January 2017, there have been different models of inspection, fewer lesson observations and a new ISEF.

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[72] Data supplied by the Education Authority to DE on Census Day, October 2017.

Outcomes for learners

According to centre staff, the proportion of pupils achieving five GCSE or equivalent qualifications at grades A*-C is improving. However, the performance of these pupils is not collated centrally. A small number of the centres fail to give the pupils access to a sufficiently wide range of accredited qualifications matched to their individual needs and interests. Furthermore, in a small number of centres, the pupils are not making sufficient progression in literacy and/or in numeracy.

Daily routines and the application of nurturing principles, such as through the breakfast arrangements, improve the pupils' social and life skills and enable staff to gauge their readiness to learn. A majority of pupils are also improving their attendance. In the best practice, assigned mentors help the pupils to reflect on their learning and develop the capacity to regulate their own emotions and behavior.

Quality of provision

In the more effective provision, the curriculum is reviewed regularly and is matched to the needs and interests of all, including the opportunity to attend a vocational education programme. In the most effective lessons observed, planning was highly individualised to meet the learning needs of pupils. Consequently, pupils were fully engaged and positive working relationships ensured they made excellent progress. Most pupils have appropriate work experience placements. Careers advice is facilitating more effective transitions to the next stages of their learning.

In the best practice across EOTAS provision, schools work very closely with the centres; for example, senior school staff observe effective practice in the centres and provide opportunities for their pupils to return to their referring school to study part-time.

Baseline assessments inform planning for the pupils' learning All EOTAS centres now have information management systems, but there is variation in the effectiveness of all centres in using the system: further staff development and training are required.

Where mainstream schools work closely with centres, joint planning to agree objectives and targets and effective monitoring with the schools enable a smooth transition back to school.

EOTAS placement of pupils, especially within KS3, should be considered as a time-bound partnership with service level agreements setting out clearly the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

The centre provides for the needs of approximately 10 pupils who require support with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties for up to fifteen weeks. They attend on a shared placement basis, with attendance in school for part of the week, increasing towards the end of the period of support. The schools provide a written report to the centre each week on the progress of the pupil when in school, which is used effectively by the centre staff to guide discussions with the pupil on their experiences in school.

The pupils, guided by the staff, organise the highly effective breakfast session each morning which develops their social skills, confidence and ability to work with others. The well-conceived reward system motivates pupils to volunteer and undertake cleaning and preparation roles during breakfast. The staff are successful in creating a nurturing start to the day and use the opportunity to assess the pupils' readiness to learn.

All staff and pupils participate in circle time sessions to discuss relevant issues as part of their personal and social education programme. Time is used well to help the pupils reflect on their behaviours and attitudes and to learn how their responses can influence outcomes.

Through training with referring schools, staff adopt a 'solution circle' focused approach to enable schools to clarify the needs and context of their pupils and the reasons behind their behaviours. This approach enables school staff to identify highly effective individualised interventions, with appropriate risk assessments, which make the re-integration of pupils back to school more successful.

The centre's ethos and practice of working closely with the school staff ensure that the improvements made by their pupils, while attending the centre, are sustained on their return to school.

Support from the Educational Psychology Service to assess pupils and inform individualised learning plans and individualised therapeutic programmes is essential, but centres report that support is available only in a small number of cases.

Leadership and management

In one-half of all centres inspected, the leadership and management promote high expectations. The leaders establish a culture which nurtures strong working relationships, positive values and good dispositions for learning. Centre development planning identifies appropriate priorities which improve provision and outcomes.

Poor strategic leadership and a lack of vision are characteristics of less effective practice. Monitoring and self-evaluation of the planning, learning and assessment are underdeveloped in a small number of centres and do not inform learning and teaching. Staff are neither involved collectively, nor committed to the actions identified. There is a distinct lack of opportunity for staff in different EOTAS centres to observe and share the more effective practice.

EOTAS centres are managed and governed by a small number of EA officers. The EA should consider how to facilitate greater involvement of the local community, the referring schools and parents by providing local governance groups for each centre. Better training and local governance representation is required to ensure clear lines of accountability and appropriate challenge.

The EA service level agreements with schools are insufficiently robust with regard to schools' responsibilities as set out in the DE's guidance[73]. Schools and the EA should review their approach to the suitability of school referrals, in particular referring year 12 pupils only in very exceptional circumstances, and ensure that all in-school interventions and other support options with regard to challenging behaviours have first been exhausted.

The EA needs to review transport services to facilitate pupils in centres who are experiencing difficulties in accessing their entitlement to a full education and a return to school.

In a minority of centres, the accommodation does not reflect the same standards for access, security and health and safety required of school buildings. There is a consequent negative impact on the pupils and their learning.

Safeguarding

In all of the centres inspected, the pupils reported that they feel safe. In almost all of the centres, the arrangements reflect or reflect broadly safeguarding requirements. In the very small number of centres where arrangements for safeguarding were unsatisfactory a cycle of policy review needs to be established to ensure that policies are up to date and reflect fully the DE guidance.

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[73] DE Circular 2014/24: Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) guidance.

YOUTH

Going well

➢ Young people are increasingly able to reflect on and discuss confidently their learning, feelings and beliefs and are progressing well into meaningful leadership roles.

➢ Volunteers contribute effectively to youth work as positive, enthusiastic role models, creating purposeful programmes, offering relevant recognised training courses and providing care and welfare.

➢ Where strategic planning is effective across the provision, there is a well-embedded focus on continuous improvement.

➢ In almost all of the voluntary sector organisations inspected, there are well-structured and well-informed management committees characterised by good communication and organisational leadership.

Going forward

➢ One-half of the organisations inspected have either important or significant areas for improvement including the need for the youth workers to develop more focused and reflective practice to help improve the quality of their delivery.

➢ The youth organisations need to monitor and evaluate the provision more thoroughly, with a sharper focus on learning outcomes for the young people in one-third of the organisations inspected, and, in a small number of organisations, on safeguarding.

➢ Further relevant accredited training is required for full and part-time staff, particularly to support the work with young people who present with additional learning needs.

Context

There are some 1,632 youth organisations serving approximately 180,000 young people aged from four to 25 years of age[74]

This report draws on evidence from 27 inspections of youth provision in 2016-2018, in addition to evidence from district inspector visits and policy advice. Eighteen of these were full inspections which were conducted in 14 youth centres, one area project and three headquarters organisations.

The effectiveness of youth service provision

Nine of the 18 organisations inspected, through full inspections, were evaluated as having a high level of capacity, or the capacity, to identify and bring about improvement; nine organisations were evaluated as having important or significant areas for improvement.

Outcomes for learners
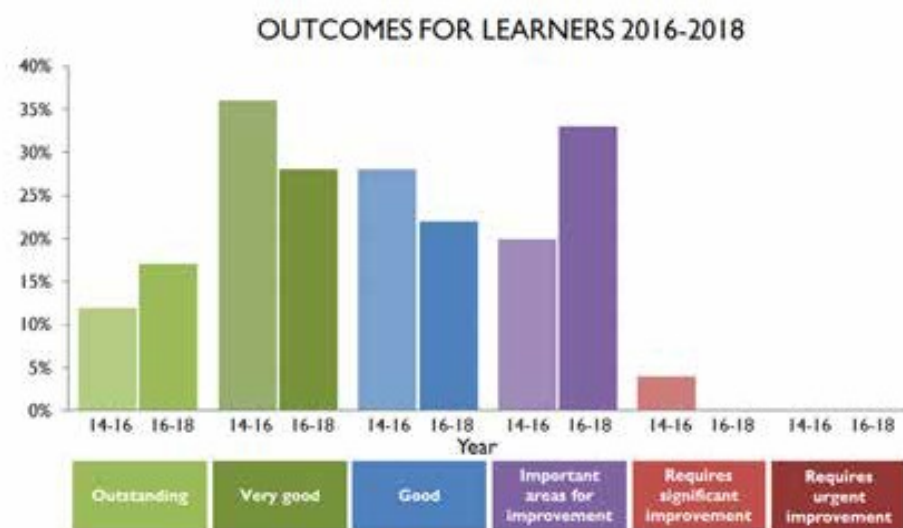
The young people make significant improvements in their personal and social development, with a majority demonstrating confidence, maturity, increased self-esteem and a strong sense of pride in their organisation. The young people participate confidently in decision-making, for example, designing programmes which benefit their physical and mental health.

Good-quality volunteering opportunities enable young people to develop an understanding of their own needs and those of others, developing a sense of social responsibility and leadership skills.

The number of young people achieving accredited qualifications in their youth organisation is low across the sector. More work from providers is needed to give access to a wider range of qualifications, matched better to the young people's needs, and which have value, recognition and can open developmental pathways.

The young people who engage in initiatives associated with Community Relations, Equality and Diversity[75] report how they have developed increased self-awareness and understanding for others; in particular they cite the positive impact of Together: Building a United Community[76] programmes. In a majority of organisations, the young people understand and can articulate clearly how their learning benefits them in their mainstream education and training, and how it augments their applications to progress into further and higher education, enhancing their life chances and future career pathways.

Where a significant minority of the young people do not progress sufficiently in their learning, the youth work programmes are not meeting their needs, and consequently, these providers are not retaining adequately the young people.

Quality of provision
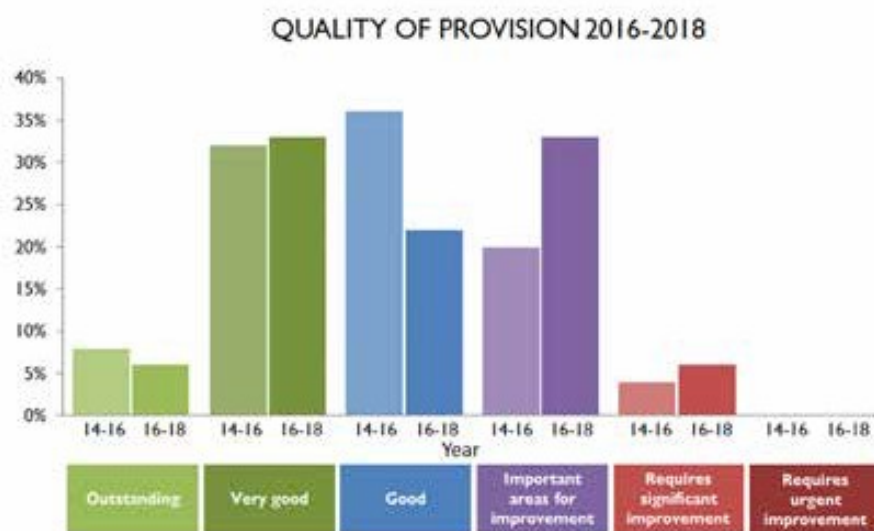
Volunteering continues to be a notable strength across the youth sector, with young people and adults working well together. In a majority of the youth work settings, the curriculum is well-matched to the needs, interests and abilities of the young people; in the best practice, this includes purposeful programmes which empower the young people to deal effectively with current and future challenges in their lives.

Most of the sessions observed, across the youth sector, were good to very good; these sessions were well-planned, young people were fully engaged, the facilitation was of a high standard and there was robust post-session evaluation. While there are good examples of group work delivery in a significant minority of organisations, there remains a need to develop further this practice. There is also a need to review the quality of provision for young people in the 10-13 year age group, where there is often insufficient planning to meet their specific needs.

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[75] Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy
[76] Together: Building a United Community Strategy

In a minority of organisations, young males do not have sufficiently effective youth work provision to engage and sustain their interest. This can often lead to challenging behaviours and the part-time staff need to develop further behaviour management strategies for this age group. Overall, the development of a more skills-based curriculum for younger members would enhance further their learning.

The membership of a young adult centre is open to young people aged 15-25 years and the centre is open six nights a week including weekend extended provision.

The progression of young people into leadership roles is a key feature of the ethos. Through effective support, the young people take on responsibility for determining and leading their own programmes. The youth workers include and actively involve young people in the life and work of the centre, promoting inclusion and widening access for all young people.

The young people are fully involved in planning and designing the curriculum, which is broad and balanced and reflects accurately the needs of the membership. Through programmes such as 'mindfulness', the young people are developing coping strategies and an understanding of stress and how it impacts on their mental and physical well-being. The centre engages a significant number of vulnerable young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender, facing mental health issues and at risk of educational underachievement. A significant strength of the centre is the very good skills demonstrated by the youth workers and the purposeful, positive support that they provide to the young people.

The young people display high levels of sensitivity and understanding of the rights and feelings of others. They are involved in many positive social action groups that are developing a critical understanding of issues affecting them, their community and wider society.

The management committee is made up entirely of young people aged 16-25 years who demonstrate a clear understanding of the purpose of youth work and have a high level of maturity. They are involved in the leadership and management of all aspects of this project; they make strategic decisions and empower one another to progress through the centre.

In line with Priorities for Youth[77], there is better identification and assessment of young people's needs such as the appropriate focus on improving the mental health and well-being of the young people.

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[77] Priorities for Youth outlines a set of priorities within a policy framework for youth work within education, strategically aligned to the overall DE policy.

There is an increase in international youth work defined within a new academic understanding of Global Service Learning (GSL)[78]. Both within the EA and in the voluntary sector, many youth workers are giving young people, especially those who are socially isolated and at risk because of their educational abilities, excellent opportunities to develop their global understanding and widen their citizenship footprint in their own communities and more widely.

There is a need to develop further a model of best practice for international youth work, building, for example, on the GSL model, to include theoretical and ethical considerations and create pathways for young people to re-engage and raise the standard of their educational achievements.

There are increased opportunities for young people to achieve recognition for their achievements through a range of youth leadership awards. However, there are insufficient opportunities for young people to access accredited qualifications linked to career progression pathways.

Through school-based work, the youth workers and teaching staff are developing more effective and collaborative relationships which benefit the young people in and out of school. There is effective support for young people with additional needs, despite the youth workers having limited extra support and training to work with those young people who have a recognised disability or those with an additional learning need.

The planning for outreach and detached youth work is an important area for improvement in most of the settings where this work was provided. In these organisations, the staff do not have a coherent plan which addresses the times of the year when this work is delivered, the low numbers of young people that are engaged and retained, and the need to develop further the relationships with other community-based youth organisations. In addition, there is a need to evaluate more robustly the impact of this work on the young people and their communities While there has been good development of the links between the youth service and formal education, facilitated in the main by the Learning Together Programme[79], there is a disconnect in the strategic planning, particularly in addressing the needs of those young people who are marginalised and vulnerable.

The provision for care and welfare impacted positively on the learning of, and outcomes for, the young people in most of the organisations inspected. In these organisations, the youth workers, including volunteers, create a safe and secure environment for the young people, many of whom have a range of complex social and personal needs. A particular strength is the inclusive ethos, which permeates most of the youth work; in particular, young people who have moved into local communities from other countries are accepted, integrated and supported well.

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[78] GSL is an intentionally designed cross-cultural experience that can help young people understand and manage community issues through collaborative work and solution-based efforts GSL programs provide for a more educated and informed young person (a responsible global citizen) who can use this experience to think critically about the theory of an issue, the real world outcomes and how to change them by hands-on practice. (Cornell Engaged Learning Definition).
[79] Learning Together Programme

Leadership and management

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT 2016-2018
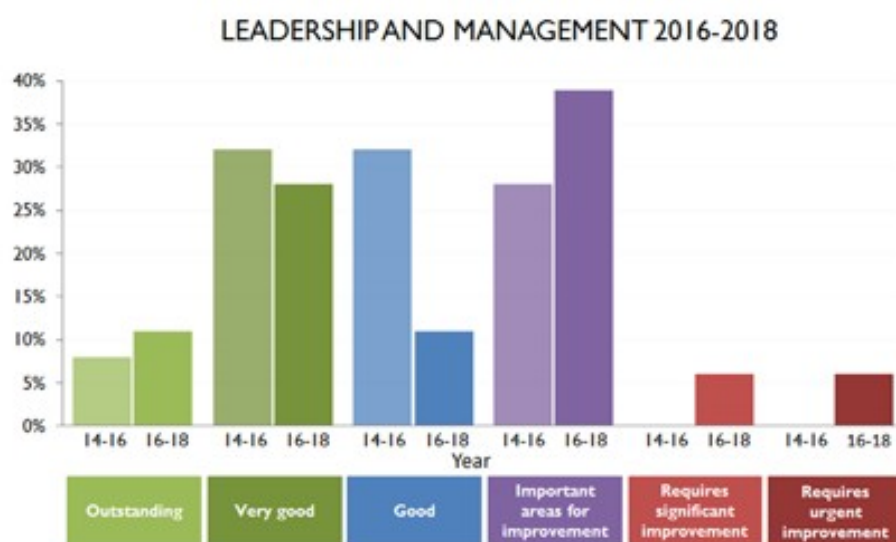
In one-half of the organisations inspected, where leadership and management is effective: the views of the young people on all aspects of the provision are sought, valued and acted upon; strategic planning is characterised by measurable targets, which are reviewed regularly; and there is a well-embedded focus on continuous improvement. In almost all of the voluntary sector organisations inspected, there are well-structured and well-informed management committees.

However, there were areas for improvement in the leadership and management of one-half of the organisations inspected, including underdeveloped action-planning processes that are not sufficiently supported by a comprehensive, professional development programme for all staff. In a minority of the organisations, the controlled delivery agreements/service level agreements lack an appropriate evaluation of the previous year's action plan, or clear timescales for the targets set. The youth workers' planning and evaluation of the progress of the young people in their learning requires improvement.

Safeguarding

In most of the youth organisations inspected, the safeguarding procedures reflected, or reflected broadly, the DE guidance and young people reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. In a minority of organisations, there is an urgent need to embed appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures that are fit for purpose and clearly communicated to staff, young people and parents.

The safeguarding arrangements in three organisations were evaluated as unsatisfactory. All improved within six weeks. The issues identified include: an inadequate registration system for the young people, a lack of clarity about the procedures for making a complaint and the need to update safeguarding policies and procedures. In addition, the EA policy for safeguarding for youth provision remains at an interim stage of development.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Going well

➢ The good or better professional and technical skills developed by most trainees and apprentices.

➢ The continuous improvement in the quality of learning, teaching and training.

➢ The good or better quality of most of the apprenticeship training inspected.

➢ The arrangements for care, welfare and support provided by almost all of the training suppliers enable trainees to make good progress from what are often very low starting points.

Going forward

➢ Supplier organisations need to improve the proportion of trainees and apprentices who complete their programme of training, attain the full framework and progress to higher levels of training, further or higher education or employment.

➢ There is a need for consistency in the quality of training across the work-based learning sector and better access for trainees to suitable, varied work-related learning experiences in the workplace.

➢ Supplier organisations need to offer young people the best access in-hyouse to good careers education, information, advice and guidance.

Context

There are 29 supplier organisations contracted by DfE to provide Training for Success (TfS) and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. This represents a reduction[80] from the previous period.

There were 28 inspections, of all forms, of supplier organisations in 2016-2018.

The number of trainees registered on the TfS programme has continued to fall over the reporting period to 4,955[81]; this is around 8% down on the previous reporting period. The reasons for this include demographic changes and more young people staying on at school, post-16. Some 72% of trainees on the TfS programme are male. Data from the DE[82] for school leavers in 2016-2017 shows that the proportion of males (14.5%) entering training is almost three-times that of females (5%) and that FSME pupils are twice as likely to enter training. Since 2013-2014, registrations to TfS have fallen by just under 40%[83]. Overall, just under one-third (31%) of the trainees have a registered disability.

Over the reporting period, the number of apprentices registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme increased by around 9% to 8,064. Of these, 38% were working towards level 2 qualifications and the remainder towards level 3. The highest numbers of apprentices are to be found in the professional and technical areas of engineering, food manufacture, construction and hospitality; three of these areas are priority skills areas as identified by the DfE. Based on the DfE's August 2018 occupancy data[84], female apprentices make up just 3% of all STEM-related apprenticeship registrations.

Too many young people, particularly boys, are leaving school and entering training with very low levels of attainment; almost one quarter (23%) of trainees registering on the TfS programme, across the organisations inspected, have no prior qualifications. Only 19% of them had attained four or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* - C, which drops to 11% when English and mathematics are included. On the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, across the organisations inspected, 44% of the apprentices had achieved four or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* - C including English and mathematics, on entry.

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[80] There is a range of reasons for this, including supplier organisation closures, mergers and acquisitions.
[81] Department for the Economy Statistical Bulletin Training for Success 2013/17. (March 2018)
[82] Department of Education Statistical Bulletin 4/2008 Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2016/17. (May 2018)
[83] Review of Training for Success Skills for Your Life and Skills for Work 1 strands; Department for the Economy. (Published May 2018)
[84] Department for the Economy, ApprenticeshipsNI Statistical Bulletin Tables, August 2018.

Over the reporting period, no inspections of further education provision were commissioned by the DfE, although the work-based learning provision in three of the further education colleges was inspected. All of the colleges' self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes were subject to a scrutiny inspection in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. In addition, five of the six colleges were included in the evidence base of a survey evaluation of the TfS (2017) programme[85] carried out between September 2017 and March 2018. The survey evaluation was included as part of the ongoing ETI work-based learning[86] inspections, along with a number of additional visits to supplier organisations outside the formal inspection schedule. The findings from both the scheduled inspection visits and the survey evaluation are included in the analysis below.

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[85] An evaluation of the Training for Success (2017) programme to support and help inform the design and continuous improvement of future youth training provision in Northern Ireland

[86] Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes inspections; this included full work-based learning inspections, follow-up inspections, interim follow-up visits, and baseline inspection visits.

The effectiveness of work-based learning provision

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS CONCLUSION 2016-2018
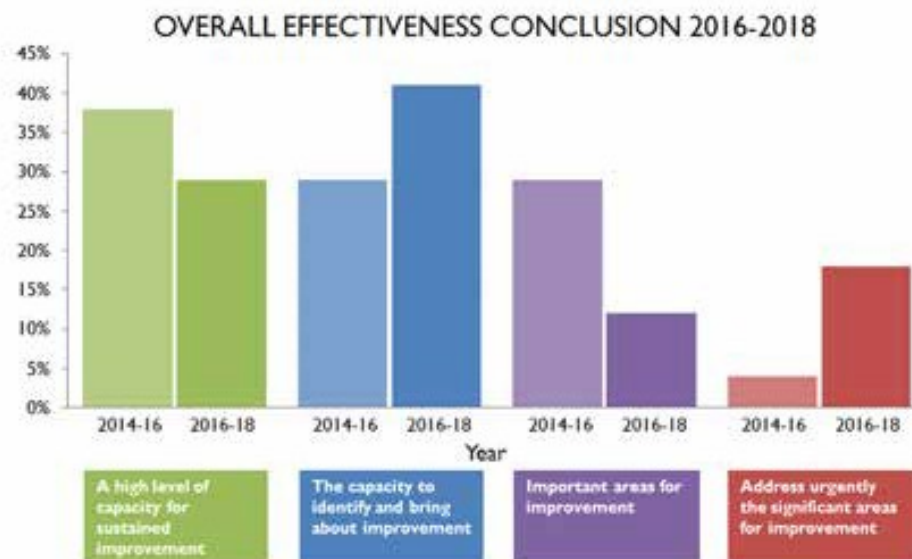
Over the period, 71% of the organisations inspected were evaluated as having either a high level of capacity, or capacity, to identify and bring about improvement. While caution is required in comparing organisations inspected in different reporting periods, this represents a small improvement when compared with the last reporting period of 67%. Just under 30% of the organisations, however, needed to address important or significant areas for improvement within their provision.

There was follow-up inspection activity in the work-based learning provision in 11 supplier organisations, including significant aspects of the provision in a further education college. Just over one-half (55%) were specific to provision in a number of professional and technical areas or in the essential skills.

Nine of the organisations improved, although one remains in the follow-up process. In the remaining two organisations, provision did not improve.

Outcomes for learners

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS 2016-2018
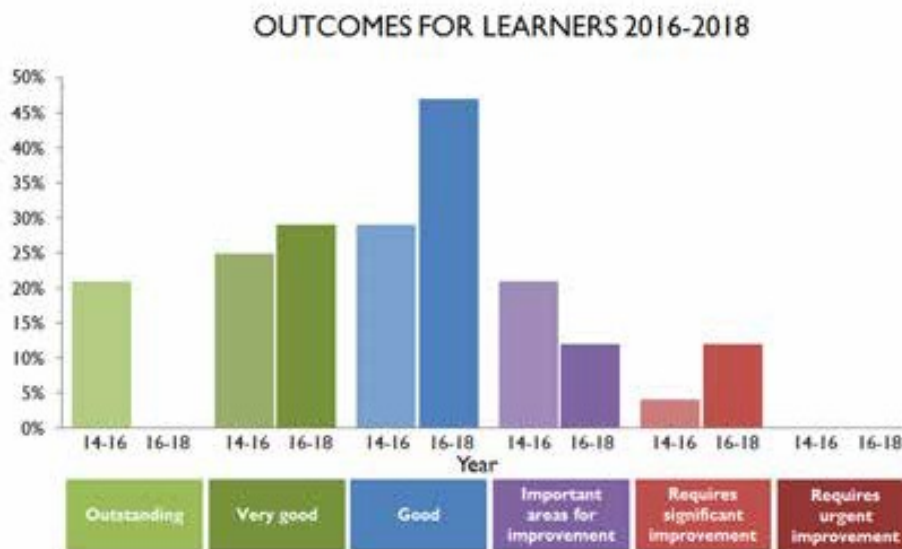
In 76% of the work-based learning provision inspected, the outcomes for the trainees and apprentices are good or better. This is in line with the last reporting period. Most of the trainees and apprentices develop good or better professional and technical skills and knowledge. Most of the apprentices, and those trainees with relevant work placements, engage positively in off-the-job and on-the-job training activities developing their occupational skills and knowledge in line with employers' requirements and industry standards. The trainees and apprentices apply well their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in the workplace. They also improve steadily their personal skills and capabilities. Over the period of their training they become more self-confident, show initiative, solve problems and communicate effectively with customers and work colleagues.

Where the outcomes for the trainees and apprentices are very good and expectations are high, there is: a systematic approach to the development of economically relevant skills both in directed training and in the workplace; a consistent focus on building the trainees' and apprentices' essential skills and wider capabilities through their professional and technical work; close, collaborative working between the training supplier organisation and employers; and the provision of up-to-date industry-standard training facilities, equipment and resources.

In 24% of the supplier organisations inspected, the outcomes for trainees and apprentices are not good enough. In these organisations, too many of the trainees and apprentices make overly slow progress in the development and application of their professional and technical skills. They do not attain or apply their essential skills at a sufficient pace or level and their employability skills are underdeveloped. For apprentices, the directed training and workplace training lack sufficient stretch and challenge. Too few trainees have access to, or make sufficient use of, work-experience placements in order to consolidate and develop further their occupational and employability skills.

While the retention rate[87] on the TfS programme, across the supplier organisations inspected, is broadly in line with the previous period at 60%, it remains too low. The inspection evidence does show, however, that the capacity of young people presenting on the TfS programme has changed markedly, particularly in terms of the lower levels of prior attainment, more complex barriers to learning, and personal challenges. Also the retention rate on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, for the organisations inspected, has fallen from 80% in the previous period to 72%. There continues to be a need to improve retention rates across the work-based learning provision.

The average achievement rates[88] for those trainees and apprentices who complete their training programmes have remained high at 91% and 97% respectively. Progression rates to higher training, further education or employment vary; only two-thirds of the trainees who complete the TfS programme progress and it is a concern that just under two-fifths (39%) of those who complete a level 2 apprenticeship progress to level 3 apprenticeship job roles and associated training.

Since September 2017, a significant minority of the providers inspected face challenges adapting to the revised essential skills assessment arrangements for literacy and numeracy. In about a quarter of the work-based learning suppliers inspected, too many trainees and apprentices do not attain or apply their essential skills at a sufficient pace or level. In the better organisations inspected, the trainees and apprentices transfer and apply their literacy and numeracy skills to good effect to support their professional and technical work and in the workplace. Although around one-third of the trainees and apprentices progress to higher levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy over the training period, this is too low and represents a progression barrier for some trainees to apprenticeship training.

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[87] Retention in work-based learning is calculated as the proportion of trainees/apprentices enrolled after four weeks of year one, who complete their programme/framework. The percentages are based on the data provided by the organisations at the time of the inspection.

[88] Achievement rates are calculated as the proportion of trainees/apprentices who complete their occupational training framework, and who fully achieve their framework qualification.

Quality of provision
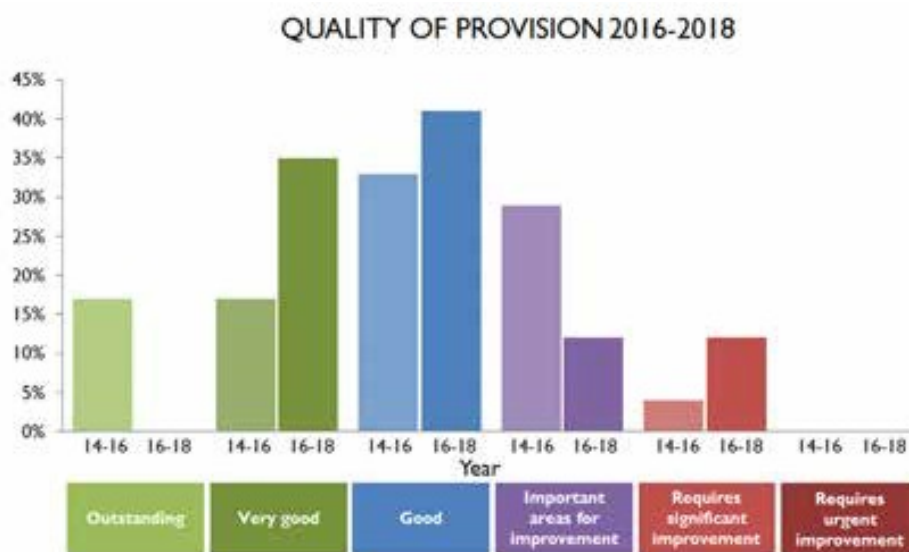
The quality of the provision is good or better in 76% of the organisations inspected: it is very good in 35% of them. The more effective organisations work hard to ensure: a responsive, curriculum that engages the trainees and apprentices, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable; high expectations for young people to be successful; effective, productive partnerships with employers; good access to appropriate workplace experiences and work-related learning; good progression in the trainees' and apprentices' essential skills; and regular, well-targeted guidance on progression pathways.

However, the quality of training across the individual professional and technical areas and the essential skills inspected is not of a consistently high quality; as a result, follow-up inspection activity was necessary in at least one professional and technical area or in the essential skills in just over one-half (55%) of the organisations inspected.

The apprenticeship brand remains strong and this provision is mostly effective It is notable that most (86%) of the apprentices, across the organisations inspected, are in professional and technical provision that is good or better; just under two-fifths of them are in provision that is very good (31%) or outstanding (6%).

The quality of 86% of the training sessions observed is good or better, a small improvement on the previous reporting period; around one-third (35%) of the sessions observed are very good or outstanding. Improvements by the work-based learning phase in the effectiveness of learning, teaching and training have been sustained over the reporting period. The most effective learning, teaching and training are characterised by respectful, supportive relationships, high expectations of what the trainees and apprentices can achieve and active learning strategies which engage well the learners.

Most of the tutors have relevant professional and technical knowledge and skills, and appropriate industrial experience There is an appropriate focus on the dissemination of best practice and well-considered investment in high quality learning resources, including modern workshops and technology-enhanced learning that promote successful learning

Where the learning, teaching and training are ineffective, in a minority of sessions observed, work is overly tutor-led, with low levels of challenge and weak planning leading to passivity among the trainees and apprentices, failing to cater sufficiently for the learning and support needs of the often wide ability range

It is a concern that, in around one-quarter (24%) of the organisations inspected, there are either important or significant areas for improvement in the quality of provision. In these organisations, curriculum planning is often weak, resulting in a range of programmes that are neither matched well enough to the needs and aspirations of the trainees and apprentices nor to the needs of employers. All too often, the trainees experience too many of the curriculum attributes that disengaged them in school, such as didactic teaching and over-exposure to classroom-based learning experiences. Employer-engagement is often underdeveloped, resulting in too few opportunities for the trainees to secure meaningful work placements, and limited collaborative working for apprenticeships

A majority of the trainees on the TfS programme are provided with access to the workplace, where they build their confidence and self-esteem within the world of work and acquire the skills that enable them to sustain employment and/or progress to further training The number of trainees benefiting from suitable work-experience placements, however, is much too variable across the organisations inspected.

In organisations where there is high quality professional and technical training, there are well-established, collaborative partnerships and links with a wide range of employers to ensure the curriculum is designed to deliver relevant training matched closely to current workforce development needs, and also to the learning needs, of the trainees and apprentices. In particular, there are well-resourced, contemporary, industry-standard training facilities which provide the trainees and apprentices with a well-balanced blend of practical and theory training to develop both their occupational skills and knowledge to the range and standard required by employers. This includes well-considered project-based learning activities that provide opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to develop independently their research, organisational, problem-solving and collaborative-working skills. In addition, the trainees and apprentices have structured work-based learning opportunities with supportive mentoring, a progressive range of occupational tasks to apply and consolidate learning, and regular and purposeful assessment reviews.

The provision for the essential skills is better in the organisations inspected in this reporting period; it is effective in ensuring progression and achievement of the targeted qualification in 75% of them, as compared with just 45% over the previous period.

Across the supplier organisations inspected, the quality of their in-house CEIAG is effective in 71% of the organisations inspected. However, it is not good enough in the remainder. In the best practice, there is a high level of employer engagement to prepare effectively the trainees for the workplace, developing in a timely manner their occupational and employability skills and providing an increasing number of well-planned and appropriate work-placement experiences. However, areas for improvement include: variability in the quality of the initial assessment process; insufficient rigour in the placement of the trainees at particular levels of training; and limited awareness and understanding by them of all available progression pathways.

The care and welfare provided for the trainees and apprentices in work-based learning impacts positively across most (82%) of the supplier organisations inspected. In the best practice, the managers and tutors demonstrate a strong commitment and a coherent approach to planning, identifying and supporting the trainees' and apprentices' individual needs, helping to support them in their learning, to remain on their programme and to achieve success.

Leadership and management

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT 2016-2018
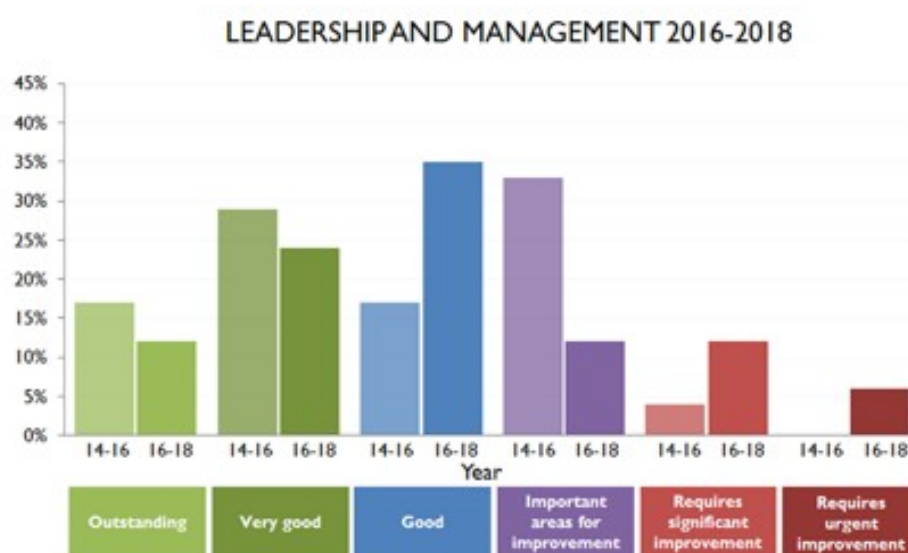
The quality of the leadership and management is good or better in the majority (71%) of the organisations; it is very good or outstanding in 35% of them. In the remaining 29% there are important or significant areas for improvement.

In those organisations where the leadership and management was evaluated as very good or outstanding, it is characterised by: a well-defined strategic vision for ongoing curriculum development to meet best the needs of the current cohorts of trainees and apprentices; a culture of high expectations and ambition for the trainees and apprentices; the use by senior and middle leaders of timely and accurate collated data to analyse and improve performance; and well-embedded, impactful self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes to identify and address areas requiring improvement.

In these more effective organisations, the curriculum review and planning process is reflective, collaborative, working with a wide range of stakeholders, and aligned well to key government priorities for economic and social development. Consequently, curriculum planning at strategic and operational levels is well informed and attentive to the needs of employers, trainees and apprentices. The learning experiences, as a result, provide the trainees and apprentices with well-structured, relevant, progressive learning pathways to employment or higher training programmes, and tailored guidance and support in order for each trainee and apprentice to fulfil their potential.

In 29% of the organisations inspected, where leadership and management is not good enough, there is insufficient strategic oversight of the leadership and management functions to ensure that the curriculum provision is sufficiently meeting the training and progression needs of the trainees and apprentices. In particular, there is inadequate curriculum planning to provide the trainees and apprentices with a broad and relevant range of learning experiences which develops their occupational skills and knowledge, essential skills and personal capabilities to an appropriate standard and at the right pace.

Most of the work-based learning supplier organisations continue to invest in resources to support their training provision, which are managed well. Increasingly, the training facilities are contemporary and equipped to industry standard. They are more stimulating for trainees and apprentices, with better integration of digital technology applications to enrich the learning experiences. The high levels of occupational expertise and professionalism of the training staff ensure that most of the training is to an appropriate industry standard and provides largely effective links to the workplace.

Since September 2017, a significant minority of the supplier organisations inspected faced challenges adapting to the revised essential skills assessment arrangements for literacy and numeracy. This was characterised by insufficient analysis of the available data to inform the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes and a lack of robust tracking systems to monitor the progress made by learners and to intervene to help those who need tailored support.

In a majority of the supplier organisations inspected, the quality improvement planning process is well-embedded and effective. A range of processes is in place to promote self-evaluation, at all levels, across the organisations. Increasingly, a pertinent range of accurate data is used effectively to inform the self-evaluation reports and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the quality improvement plans. In a minority of organisations, key performance data, particularly retention, achievement and progression rates, are not used systematically enough to identify issues in a timely manner to inform the necessary actions for improvement. Consequently, they do not make critical enough evaluations of performance or identify with sufficient clarity the key areas for improvement.

Safeguarding

Almost all work-based learning suppliers take due cognisance of arrangements for safeguarding trainees and apprentices. Over two-fifths (41%) of the organisations inspected have arrangements in place for safeguarding which reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. A further 53% of the organisations have arrangements which reflect broadly the guidance and have a small number of areas to review or update.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Going well

➢ Most participants enhance their work-readiness, personal and social skills and display increased levels of confidence and self-esteem.

➢ The appropriate curriculum offer, with flexible, tailored provision, meets well the complex needs of the participants.

➢ The effective leadership and management by almost all project promoters is receptive to the findings from external evaluation and committed to ongoing quality improvement.

Going forward

➢ There is a need to develop further and embed the processes of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning.

➢ There is a need to improve strategies which demonstrate the overall impact of the provision on the participants, through sharper measurement of the softer skills they develop and the progress they make.

Context

The strategic aim of the ESF Programme in Northern Ireland (2014-2020) is to combat poverty, enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. The provision is targeted at young people not in education, employment or training, people of all ages who are unavailable for work due to illness or caring responsibilities, families affected by economic inactivity and participants with a disability and who are out of work. Over 2016-2018, DfE funded 62 ESF projects.

Although some of the ESF project promoters are also supplier organisations for work-based learning, the target audience for participation in an ESF project is wider than the TfS programme. It is often a good foundation upon which young participants, who are not in education, employment or training, can progress to TfS provision. With the exception of those participants with a disability, the ESF curricular provision is largely at level 1 or below and focuses on developing the participant's personal, social and employability skills in preparation for work.

Following on from a programme of structured supportive visits, the ETI completed baseline inspection visits to each of the project promoters which identified more formally the key strengths and areas for improvement, including feedback on the arrangements for safeguarding participants. The evidence is clear that almost all of the project promoters engaged positively and pro-actively to address the areas for improvement.

Subsequently, between October 2016 and March 2018, all 62 projects were formally inspected.

The effectiveness of European Social Fund provision

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS CONCLUSION 2016-2018
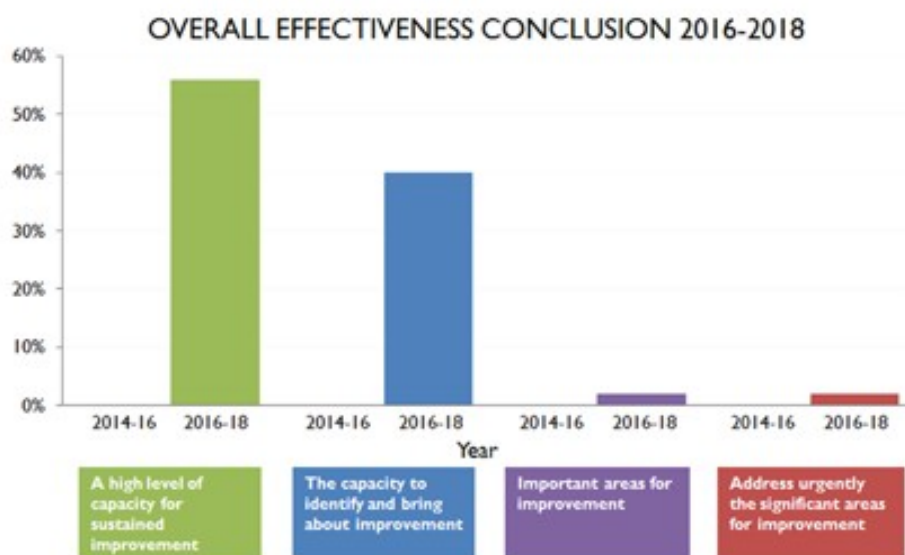
The inspection outcomes for the ESF projects are very positive, reflecting the attention given by the project promoters to the feedback they received during baseline and other visits. Over the period, 97% of the project promoters inspected were evaluated as having either a high level of capacity, or capacity, to identify and bring about improvement; 56% of them were evaluated as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.

Outcomes for learners

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS 2016-2018
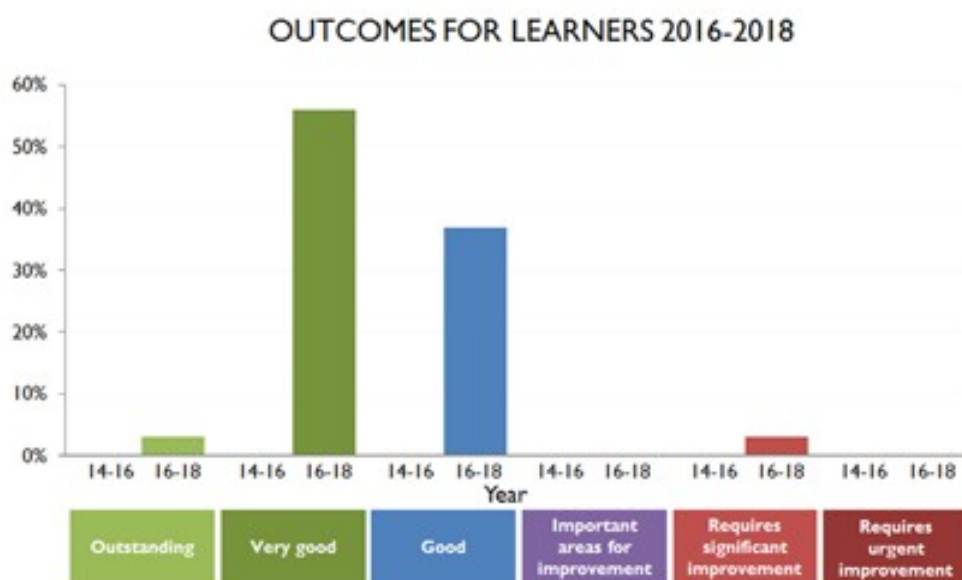
The outcomes attained by the participants are good or better in 97% of the projects; they are very good or better in three-fifths (60%) of them.

A majority of the participants are able to demonstrate good standards of work, including in the workplace. In the more effective practice, they are developing well their readiness for work and wider employability skills. In almost all of the projects, the participants enhance their personal and social skills and display increased levels of confidence and self-esteem. Almost all of the projects attain good to very good outcomes for the participants' recruitment, achievement and progression. Most of the participants who require the essential skills make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Across the projects, there is a need for better measurement of progress made by the participants, in particular their development and application of the softer skills. Many of the participants make good progress in their vocational training and the essential skills, largely at level 1. They would benefit from better links and partnerships with other providers to improve progression opportunities to level 2 professional and technical training.

While the target-setting process with regard to the outcomes the participants attain across the projects is in line with the ESF guidance, in some cases they lack sufficient rigour.

Quality of provision

QUALITY OF PROVISION 2016-2018
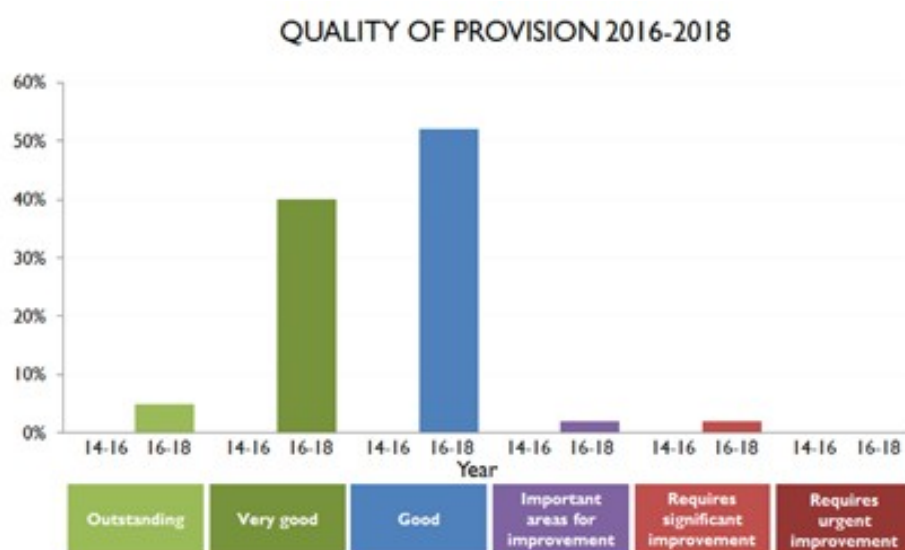
The quality of provision is good or better in 97% of the projects; it is very good or outstanding in 45% of them. A key strength of the work of the ESF projects is the extensive support, mentoring and specialist help they provide to the participants on entry to enable them to access and engage in formal training and/or employment.

A majority of the project promoters provide an appropriate curriculum, which is flexible, aligned well to the needs of the participants entering the project and comprises a good balance of accredited and non-accredited provision. When ready, most participants have access to work- related learning and experiences, where they are supported well.

The one-to-one mentoring of the participants is effective in building their confidence, self-esteem and belief in themselves. They develop well coping strategies which support their transition to further education, training and, sometimes, sustained employment. Most of the programmes also include the provision of a good range of accredited short courses that build confidence and improve the participants' employability.

The projects have developed good collaborative partnerships with a wide range of employers and work hard to ensure the participants are provided with the opportunity to engage in a relevant work-experience placement matched well to the participants' interests, capabilities and capacity to cope and where they acquire and apply a range of skills. An innovative social enterprise model is used to good effect in a small number of projects to support the transition of the participants towards employment.

Good evidence of coherence in curriculum provision and associated progression opportunities for participants, particularly the younger participants, was found in those organisations which delivered ESF provision along with the TfS programme. As a result, these participants had the opportunity and time to avail of support to address many of their barriers, settle into the provision, sample vocational areas and begin to undertake qualifications and work-related learning and experiences. They were also able to access level 2 training when they were ready.

In meeting the needs of long-term unemployed and economically inactive participants, the project uses a five-stage support menu which includes: individual needs assessment and personal development; employability skills and job skills management; addressing the barriers to education and training; coherent work-experience and employment initiatives; and tailored post-employment support. Other key features include a curriculum offer matched well to the needs of the participants and to local priority skills development areas, underpinned by close, productive working relationships with local employers. There is also close collaborative working with other ESF projects to ensure participants are signposted to provision which best meets their needs. The project's ethos is based on high quality provision and high expectations for achievement and progression, which are matched well and appropriately to the varied and complex profile of the participants.

Almost all of the learning and development sessions observed were good or better; it is noteworthy that around 40% of them were very good. In the most effective practice, there was a very good rapport between staff and participants, planning was tailored to meet the participants' needs and there was a good range of activities and questioning strategies which engaged and motivated the participants well.

The care and welfare provided for the participants impacts positively on their development across all of the project promoters, including in the workplace. In almost all projects, there is effective signposting of participants to specialist support services.

Leadership and management

The ESF projects are led and managed effectively. The quality and impact of the leadership and management is good or better in 95% of them; it is very good or better in over one-half (58%) of them.

In the most effective practice, project promoters have a clear strategic vision for the project and what it can achieve for the participants; they have effective governance arrangements and good collaborative partnerships with employers, referral and other agencies and support providers. Consequently, the participants develop good personal, social and employability skills, often overcoming extremely complex barriers and with very low starting points in terms of prior attainment in education or training.

Over the reporting period, there is good evidence of improved and increasingly sophisticated management information systems and processes to collect, collate, monitor and evaluate data. They are now well placed to use the available data better to analyse trends in performance across office locations, but also in partnership organisations.

The project promoters have successfully established and embedded more effective arrangements for quality assurance, self-evaluation and action-planning for improvement. They must continue to build upon the good start they have made, including better use of performance data, stakeholder feedback and more rigour and use of first-hand evidence in their own evaluations, particularly of the overall quality of learning, teaching and training.

Safeguarding

The projects have made good progress developing and embedding appropriate arrangements for safeguarding the participants. In 44% of the projects inspected over the period, the safeguarding arrangements reflect the issued guidance, with the remainder reflecting broadly the guidance.

WORK FOR OTHER COMMISSIONING DEPARTMENTS

INSPECTIONS PROVIDED FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION NORTHERN IRELAND

Context

The ETI inspects purposeful activity within prisons, evaluating the quality of prisoner work roles, education, training and skills. During 2016-2018, the ETI contributed to two prison inspections and the evaluations were incorporated into the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI NI) published inspection reports.

The effectiveness of prison education provision

The ETI inspected purposeful activity in two unannounced prison inspections over the reporting period, Magilligan prison in June 2017 and Maghaberry prison in April 2018. The provision in both prisons had improved from the previous inspections. In Magilligan, the prison demonstrated the capacity to identify and bring about improvement while Maghaberry prison needs to address important areas for improvement in the interests of the prisoners.

Overall, there are positive signs of sustained improvement in the education, training and work provision across the prisons in Northern Ireland. This is characterised by the enhanced levels of involvement of the further education sector, the implementation of a core day which prioritises participation in education and skills and more cohesive, strategic management of the provision. At the highest level, there is a clear determination for further improvement. More needs to be done, however, to ensure a broader and more relevant curriculum offer and higher levels of participation in the essential skills and constructive activities.

In Magilligan Prison, an unannounced inspection in June 2017 found that considerable progress has been made in improving the quality and impact of the purposeful activity since the last inspection.

The senior management team has set an ambitious, strategic vision focused on understanding and meeting the rehabilitation needs of the prisoners. The senior and middle managers have established effective, collaborative partnerships with the North West Regional College and other external organisations to ensure the needs and interests of many of the prisoners were met. The self-evaluation process needs to be more inclusive of all of the provision in the prison.

The range of education and vocational courses available have been extended since the last inspection and the majority of them are now available up to level 2, a level that is recognised more readily by potential employers. Some gaps in accredited training remain, particularly at the higher levels.

The quality of the learning, teaching and training observed was good or better, with some of it outstanding. The collaborative partnership with the further education college contributes to this improved quality. The working relationships between staff and prisoners are good and the staff work hard to support them in their learning and skills development.

The number of prisoners achieving vocational training qualifications has significantly increased since the last inspection. At the time of inspection, almost all prisoners remained on the accredited training programmes and achieved the qualifications. The number of accredited training places had increased and prisoners were encouraged to achieve their qualifications within more acceptable timescales. The number of qualifications achieved in essential skills has been consistently high and, appropriately, more prisoners are now progressing to level 2 communication, numeracy and ICT accreditation.

In Maghaberry prison, an unannounced inspection in April 2018 found that the quality of purposeful activity had improved steadily since the last inspection in May 2015, although more needed to be done to address some areas for improvement that remained.

A cohesive, effective management team for education, learning and skills has been established, combining to good effect senior managers from the Northern Ireland Prison Service, Belfast Metropolitan College and senior officers. Good partnership working is evident, along with a clear ambition and desire, at all levels across the prison, for the further improvement of the provision.

At the time of inspection, the curriculum was overly narrow, had remained largely static during the past number of years and did not adequately meet the varying needs of the prisoners. While there are some recent instances of curricular improvement, overall it is not well enough aligned to realistic opportunities in the labour market or employer requirements. Good attention was paid to ensuring prisoners on short sentences could access provision and attain accreditation in the essential skills and other short courses. The quality of the learning, teaching and training varied, but was good or better in most (77%) of the sessions observed; around one-third were very good or better.

Almost all of the prisoners started from a low base in terms of prior attainment. Nevertheless, most who took part in education and skills made good progress and those who completed courses achieved part or full qualifications, largely at entry level or level 1. Far too few prisoners progressed to, or attained, qualifications above level 1. Attendance at education classes varied, but was low on too many occasions, especially in the essential skills classes. Attendance at work and in the workshops was better.

The outcomes for the prisoners who completed the essential skills courses during the past year were good with an achievement rate of 71%, mostly at entry level or level one. Across the essential skills, more needs to be done to ensure better uptake, retention and progression to higher levels.

INSPECTIONS PROVIDED FOR THE HOME OFFICE – EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT

Context

The ETI undertakes tier 4 educational oversight and annual monitoring review inspections (for provision up to, and including, level 3) on behalf of the Home Office[89]. There were five such inspections in 2016-2018.

The effectiveness of private language school provision

Across the private language schools, three annual monitoring review inspections and two full educational oversight inspections were carried out during the reporting period; all of them were evaluated as having either a high level of capacity, or capacity, to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners and, consequently, they meet the requirements for educational oversight.

Outcomes for learners

Almost all learners progress well in their learning and develop their language skills and spoken English to a good or better standard. The quality of their written work is mostly good or better, with sound evidence of independent writing.

The outcomes attained by the learners in the non-examination, examination preparation and examination programmes offered across the language schools are very high.

Quality of provision

Across the organisations inspected, the curriculum offer is broad and flexible, designed well to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners from different backgrounds and cultures.

The overall quality of the learning and teaching observed was mostly very good; the better practice is characterised by effective planning for learning and differentiation, the development of English language skills and social and cultural awareness through project-based learning and the effective use of information and learning technology.

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[89] Home Office Tier 4 Guidelines

Care and welfare impacts positively on the learning experiences and outcomes of the learners. Appropriate additional learning support is also in place for those learners who require it.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management across the private language schools, at both strategic and operational levels, is consistently very good. Effective management information systems are in place and these are used well to manage the recruitment of learners, plan the learning programmes and monitor how well the range of programmes offered is impacting on the development of the learners' English language skills. While the processes used for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning have improved steadily across the organisations, there is a need to continue to embed and develop these processes further in order to sustain the quality of their provision.

Effective links and partnerships have been established, at local, national and international level, with a range of external organisations to support programme delivery and further develop the breadth and diversity of the curriculum provision.

Staff across the private language schools are highly experienced in the delivery of English language programmes, highly-qualified and provided with good opportunities to engage in relevant continuing professional development.

The quality of the accommodation and physical resources, across the private language schools, is very good.

Safeguarding

All of the private language schools have arrangements in place for safeguarding young people and adults at risk which reflect or reflect broadly the guidance issued by the DE.

ETI EVALUATION SURVEY REPORTS 2016-2018

- ➢ An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Mental Health and Wellbeing support for pupils in schools and EOTAS centres - (in press)

- ➢ An Evaluation of Extended Schools – Effective Clustering - (to follow)

- ➢ Report of a Survey of Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools - (to follow)

- ➢ The Shared Education Signature Project Evaluation Report - October 2018

- ➢ SureStart Evaluation Report - September 2018

- ➢ An Evaluation of the Training for Success (2017) programme to support and help inform the design and continuous improvement of future youth training provision in Northern Ireland - September 2018

- ➢ Learning Leaders: Planning for the Future of Teacher Professional Learning - November 2017

- ➢ An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Examination Entry Practice and Policy in Post-Primary Schools - August 2017

- ➢ An Evaluation of the Youth Training pilot programmes at level 2 and the ApprenticeshipsNI pilot programmes at level 3 provided by the six colleges of further education in Northern Ireland - August 2017

- ➢ An Evaluation of the Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics (PIEM) Project - April 2017

- ➢ An Interim Report on the Shared Education Signature Project - February 2017

- ➢ Learning Leaders: An Evaluation of Department of Education's Strategy on Teacher Professional Learning and case studies - December 2016

- ➢ Learning Leaders: Lessons on Professional Learning from other professions and other education Jurisdictions 2015-16 - December 2016

- ➢ Learning Leaders: Teacher Professional Learning Next Practice Case Studies - January 2017

➢ An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Delivering Social
   Change: Improving Literacy and Numeracy Signature Programme   - November 2016

➢ Attendance in Schools - ETI Good Practice Report and
   24 school case studies   - November 2016

➢ Evaluation of Extended Services Funding 2016   - September 2016

Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

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 organisation:

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners (for schools: it requires external support to do so). The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Education and Training Inspectorate

CHIEF INSPECTOR'S REPORT

2016-2018