



# Summary of the Chief Inspector's Report 2012-2014

Education and Training Inspectorate

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*



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## The Chief Inspector's Report 2012-14

Published on 6 November 2014, this Chief Inspector's Report is based on evidence from across the range of the ETI's inspection activity and the findings relate to the pre-school settings, schools, and learning organisations inspected between 1 July 2012-30 June 2014.

### Main Findings

The 2012-2014 report is written within the context of: the challenge to the education and training system within Northern Ireland of raising the standards achieved by all learners, and in particular those who experience social and economic disadvantage; the need, which is greater than ever, to make better use of scarce resources to provide opportunities for learners from all traditions to secure full participation in society and foster greater community harmony and stability; and the need to have high aspirations both for our providers in enabling, and our young people in acquiring, the necessary skills, dispositions and accreditation to meet the increasing demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Key message

The report's key message is that education and training continues to improve and is serving the majority of learners well but challenges remain. We need to aspire higher; enable more and expect better so that all learners achieve their potential.

#### Going Well

- More organisations evaluated as good or better in this reporting period.
- Improving achievements and standards across all sectors.
- Improvements in provision that was previous satisfactory or below.
- High proportion of good or better learning and teaching.
- Provision for special educational needs has improved significantly.
- High levels of care, guidance and support.
- Improved leadership and management in most phases.

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The Report also identifies a number of key challenges for education and training in Northern Ireland. To ensure all learners receive high quality education and training and fulfil their potential, there is a need to:

- improve outcomes for young people; almost 40% of post-primary pupils do not achieve 5 GCSEs (or equivalents) at grades A\*-C including English and mathematics, rising to 66% for those entitled to free school meals;
- improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy particularly at age 15 and for adults where we compare less favourably with many other countries in international studies;
- build on the mainly good or better quality provision inspected in pre-school, primary, special and further education to ensure all education and training is as good as it can be;
- ensure high quality of leadership and management in all education and training provision but particularly in post-primary schools and work-based learning where approximately a third of those inspected need to improve;
- reduce the variability in the life chances of children and young people which is too dependent on whether they have access to a good pre-school, school, further education college or training provider;
- urge parents, carers, communities, employers and other relevant stakeholders to engage more fully with educators and trainers in order to support children and young people in their learning, challenging weak practice where appropriate;
- ensure all organisations continue to work together to provide learners with access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their learning and training needs and maximises the use of resources;
- continue to raise the ambition and aspirations of all learners through good quality pastoral care and support that meets an increasingly complex range of needs and barriers to learning;

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- develop the capacity of teachers and management in schools to meet the notable rise in the number of pupils who have special educational needs;
  - provide high quality professional development and support for staff; particularly where the quality of learning and teaching needs to improve;
  - build on The Sharing in Education Programme which demonstrated that high quality shared experiences contribute to better learning.

In summary, the education system across Northern Ireland has unacceptable variations and persistent shortcomings, which need to be addressed if we are to improve our provision and outcomes from average to world-class.

### The quality of provision in pre-school settings

#### Going well

- Of the settings<sup>1</sup> inspected, 83% were evaluated as good or better, an improvement of seven percentage points in comparison with the settings inspected during the last reporting period.
- Achievements and standards have improved compared to the last reporting period and were good or better in 89% of the settings inspected.
- In 84% of the settings, children's language and communication skills in relation to their age and stage of development were good or better.
- Most of the provision in each of the six areas of the pre-school education curriculum is good or better.

#### Going Forward

- Key aspects of leadership and management, including self-evaluation and development planning, are in need of improvement in around one-third of settings.
- There is too much variation in the quantity and quality of support available to promote improvement, particularly in the private/voluntary sector.
- The quality of provision in primary education

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<sup>1</sup> The term pre-school setting refers to the private, voluntary and statutory providers of DE's funded pre-school education programme.

## The quality of provision in primary education

### Going well

- The overall effectiveness of 84% of the primary schools inspected was good or better, with 59% of the schools inspected being very good or outstanding.
- There has been an improvement in the overall quality of provision in English and mathematics, with 85% of the schools inspected during this reporting period evaluated as providing good or better provision for English and 84% for mathematics.
- The continuing improvement in leadership is evident through a growing culture of robust self-evaluation leading to improvement in achievements and standards.
- The Irish-medium primary sector continues to grow in size and quality; 40% of all Irish-medium primary settings were inspected during the reporting period and almost all were evaluated as good or better.

### Going forward

- In years 1 and 2, teachers need to build upon children's pre-school learning, set higher expectations for all children to write independently and to develop their thinking skills through numeracy, literacy and play-based activities.
- In the World Around Us area of learning, teachers need to ensure progression in children's skills, knowledge and understanding across the contributory strands of history, geography and, science and technology.
- The quality of provision in post-primary education

### The quality of provision in post-primary education

#### Going well

- GCSE and A level outcomes overall are rising; fewer pupils are leaving school with no GCSEs<sup>2</sup> and in 14% of schools inspected, achievement and standards were evaluated as outstanding.
- There are significant improvements in the quality of provision for pastoral care, careers education, information, advice and guidance and special educational needs.
- Curricular provision is becoming better adapted to addressing the needs, interests and aspirations of young people individually and collectively.

#### Going forward

- Overall effectiveness needs to improve in the 37% of post-primary schools inspected which were evaluated as less than good.
- The quality and effectiveness of the 22% of lessons observed requires improvement, as do assessment of, and for, learning and the use of ICT by pupils to support their learning.
- Despite the fact that school leadership at senior level, school development planning and action to effect improvement are improving, leadership at all levels, and particularly in middle management, requires further improvement through effective staff development.
- It remains a priority to raise the inadequate achievements and standards in 15% of schools inspected and the GCSE outcomes for pupils entitled to free school meals and in particular, boys in non-grammar, controlled schools.

<sup>2</sup> GCSE qualifications or equivalent.



### The quality of provision in special educational needs and inclusion

#### Going well

- The overall effectiveness of the special schools inspected, 91% of which were evaluated as good or better.
- Leadership and management were very good or outstanding in 55% of the schools inspected.
- Learning and teaching were of high quality with 93% of lessons good or better and 66% very good or outstanding.
- Teachers used assessment practices well to create detailed individual learning profiles to meet the needs of the learners.

#### Going forward

- There is a need to build the capacity of special school staff to assess and meet better the complex needs of pupils.
- Transitions to appropriate post-school placements need to be improved, in order to support better some pupils, particularly those with more significant and demanding needs such as challenging behaviour.

### The quality of provision in further education

#### Going well

- Examples of sector-leading, high quality provision were identified in two out of the four colleges inspected in leadership and management, economic engagement and curriculum planning and innovation.
- Provision was good or better across 90% of the further education professional and technical courses inspected.
- Good or better quality of learning and teaching was evident in 84% of the lessons evaluated, with 47% being either very good or outstanding.
- There was high quality discrete provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the sector.

#### Going forward

- Colleges need to give greater strategic attention to improving the quality of provision in the essential skills, with a particular focus on the quality of learning and teaching.
- Most of the colleges inspected need to implement coherent strategies for the more effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) in learning and teaching, to meet the differing needs of learners.

## The quality of provision in work-based learning

### Going well

- The mostly well-planned opportunities provided for most of the trainees on the Training for Success programme to develop good personal effectiveness, social and work-related skills and wider employability skills.
- The good rates of retention on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme and the Skills for your Life and Skills for Work strands of Training for Success, and the high achievement rates for trainees and apprentices who completed their training programmes.
- A strong focus on re-engagement in training and learning for those trainees who enter the Training for Success programme with poor prior educational attainment and low levels of self-esteem.
- The good or better quality of learning, teaching and training in around 77% of the training sessions inspected.

### Going forward

- There is a need for a more coherent curriculum offer in one-third of the supplier organisations inspected, with an appropriate focus on work-related learning which meets the occupational skills and employability needs of the Training for Success trainees.
- More effective leadership and management are needed in just over one-third of the supplier organisations inspected.

## The quality of provision in youth

### Going well

- Overall effectiveness is good or very good in almost all of the organisations inspected.
- The good or better quality of most of the youth work sessions inspected.
- The ongoing improvement in leadership and management, which was evaluated as good or very good in most of the provision inspected.
- The ongoing development of partnerships between the youth and formal education sectors, which enabled young people to make appropriate connections across their educational experiences.

### Going forward

- The provision of more professional development opportunities for youth work staff.
- The further development of partnerships across and between the youth sector and formal education, to address the key priorities outlined in *Priorities for Youth*<sup>3</sup>.

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3 *Priorities for Youth - Improving Young People's Lives through Youth Work (DE 2013).*

## The quality of provision in the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

### Going well

- Good or very good overall effectiveness in all of the organisations inspected.
- The development of most of the participants to think critically and creatively.
- The continued development of provision to support both the formal and informal curriculum.
- The connections made, for the sharing of best practice, through the Learning Forum<sup>4</sup>.

### Going forward

- There is a need to develop further the self-evaluation processes and, in particular, to identify the impact of the provision on raising the standards and achievements of the participants.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Learning Forum brings together DCAL sponsored bodies to share best practice and strategically link with one another in their aim to enhance education and life-long learning outcomes; support families and add value to the work of schools, youth centres and alternative education providers.*

## **The quality of provision in the Criminal Justice Inspection inspections carried out by ETI**

### **Going well**

- The inspections of Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre (YOC) and Hydebank Wood Women's Prison (Ash House) found physical education was promoted well and prisoners had access to good facilities that were well used and managed.

### **Going forward**

- The quality of learning, teaching and training should be improved to engage all of the prisoners more effectively.
- Leadership and management of learning and skills provision were inadequate in both prisons and co-ordination needed to be improved.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation arrangements were weak and required strengthening, particularly through the more effective collation, analysis and use of data.

## The quality of provision in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development inspections carried out by ETI

### Going well

- The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) was evaluated as very good.
- 93% of the training delivered was good or better, with 61% being very good or outstanding.

### Going forward

- The use of ILT to facilitate better distance learning methods would further improve the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance.



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Department of Education  
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