Chief Inspector's Report
2012-2014

Education and Training Inspectorate

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The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement

Education and Training Inspectorate

Promoting improvement in the interest of learners.

Contents

Inspection Evaluations

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. These terms 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%

In assessing the various features of provision, inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

Foreword

I am pleased to present my second report as Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate. This report summarises inspection findings for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2014, and therefore represents a different cohort of schools, colleges and organisations than was featured in my last report.

I am pleased to report on the many improvements and the progress being made across the system during the period. However, the levels of variation in terms of standards achieved, the quality of provision and leadership and management need to be addressed if we are to create a world-class educational system.

It is in this context that the messages in this report highlight the need for everyone here to work together to raise aspirations, expectations and enable all learners to achieve well.

An ongoing challenge for everyone involved in education and training is to enable every learner to achieve their potential, regardless of their social, economic or religious background. While most of our primary school children are faring well, many pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Ongoing concerns remain about the achievement gap between those pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not, and the low achievement of boys, in particular.

Our children and young people face many challenges and barriers to their learning, not experienced by previous generations. Schools, colleges and training providers for the most part, continue to provide effective care and support but everyone must play their part. This means that all parents, carers, governors and communities need to place education first, through providing support and by challenging apathy and low expectations, where they exist.

More than ever, Northern Ireland requires exceptional leaders in our schools, colleges and training organisations if we are to overcome the challenges faced by learners. This report demonstrates that while progress is being made in some of these areas, more remains to be done to enable every young person in our society to achieve their full potential as individuals, contributors to the economy and to participate fully and effectively in society.

Noelle Buick

NOELLE BUICK
Chief Inspector
Education and Training Inspectorate

Introduction

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) provides inspection and evaluation services for a range of government departments, mostly the Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), as well as a range of other bodies and agencies[1]. The work of ETI focuses mostly on the inspection of, and reporting on, the overall effectiveness of single organisations such as schools, colleges, training and other providers. In addition, ETI provides professional evaluation services for government departments and other non-governmental organisations through commissioned survey work.

The ETI is led by the Chief Inspector, and three Assistant Chief Inspectors, who together oversee the extensive range of inspection activity across Northern Ireland. Every year, inspectors evaluate thousands of lessons, engage in professional discussions with leaders, teachers, tutors and learners and provide high quality written reports, which guide the organisations on their improvement journeys.

All of the data that is gathered from the vast amount of inspection activity is brought together once every two years and provides the evidence base for the Chief Inspector's Report. This report is underpinned by a strong desire to develop Northern Ireland's education and training system into one that is world-class, not one that accepts too easily, and excuses too readily, the undue variations in the quality of leadership, provision and outcomes.

This report begins with the Chief Inspector's commentary, which invites everyone involved in education to aspire higher, enable more and expect better. The commentary highlights some of the big issues from the phases and provides important messages for the system. Further detail on many of the issues discussed in the commentary can be found in the phase reports.

The ETI recognises that it needs to develop its way of working in order to meet the high demands placed on everyone working in education and training. This report concludes with a short section that is all about the work of ETI and the way ETI is itself, held accountable.

The purpose of all inspection activity is to promote improvement. The purpose of this report is to share ETI's findings from the last two years with the Northern Ireland education and training system, in order to bring about the improvement that is needed.

The ETI remains fully committed to securing the best provision and outcomes for all learners and is an advocate for the learner. In presenting this report, ETI invites all involved in education and training, and leaders in particular, to read, and act upon appropriately, the main messages contained in this report in order to raise educational and training standards and improve the life chances of all learners, particularly the most vulnerable.

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1   The ETI also provides inspection services for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and carries out inspections for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI).

Key challenges for education and training in Northern Ireland

To ensure all learners receive high quality education and training and fulfil their potential, there are a number of key challenges. There is a need to:

- improve outcomes for young people; almost 40% of post-primary pupils do not achieve five GCSEs (or equivalent) 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;

- 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.

Northern Ireland's education and training system has to ASPIRE higher, ENABLE more and EXPECT better

1.   The significant number of educational organisations that have been evaluated as good or better during this reporting period is the result of the hard work of our many excellent leaders, educators and trainers. Many learners of all ages have been supported well by parents, carers and communities who value education and training.

2.   However, Northern Ireland's education and training system has unacceptable variations and persistent shortcomings, which need to be addressed urgently if we are to improve our provision and outcomes from average to world-class. Consequently, the key messages in this Chief Inspector's Report are underpinned by the need for everyone involved in education to **ASPIRE higher, ENABLE more and EXPECT better**.

ASPIRE higher: raising achievements and standards for all

There is a clear link between high expectations and high achievement.

3.   Northern Ireland provides well for a majority of its learners, who are achieving at the standard that is expected, and fewer learners are leaving formal education with no qualifications. Children at 10 years of age perform strongly when compared with their international peers, but, at 15 years of age, outcomes are average.

4.   Inspectors report regularly on the connection between high achievement and high aspirations for, and expectations of, learners. Many of our learners and providers possess such aspirations and attain good outcomes. However, while educational outcomes are improving to varying degrees across all the education and training phases, the variations in provision and achievement reflect a system that serves some better than others. This is unacceptable and redressing this variation is the responsibility of schools, colleges, parents, wider communities and other relevant stakeholders. Everyone working with learners must possess high aspirations and expectations. While the achievements of our children and young people are rising, we need to acknowledge that, in some international studies, English and mathematics scores are decidedly average[2].

> *"To compete effectively in a global economy, Northern Ireland must increase the pace of change for improving the outcomes for all our children and young people."*

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2   *See, for example, the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (2012) study, which can be accessed at: http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PQUK03/PQUK03_home.cfm*

5.   Given that we are becoming increasingly interdependent with local and global economic, social, political and technological developments, there is a need to equip our young people with the knowledge, understanding and skills to participate fully in a rapidly changing world.

6.   Our young people face an alarming range of complex barriers and threats to their learning and well-being including issues related to peer-pressure, sexuality, addictions, cyber-bullying and self-harm. Education and training providers are working hard to address these challenges while at the same time supporting learners' academic and vocational needs.

7.   In this context, issues such as variation in the quality of provision and outcomes for many of our disadvantaged young people and inconsistency in the quality of leadership and teaching remain a challenge across the education system. We need to ensure that our early years settings, schools, colleges and training providers have the capacity, capability and commitment to develop all learners to their full potential. It is, therefore, more important than ever to recognise the need for providing high quality professional development and support services, to help learners overcome challenges to their learning and well-being.

Most children in pre-school and primary settings achieve well.

8.   In pre-school education, the overall effectiveness of 83% of settings was evaluated as good or better compared to 76% in the last reporting period. Achievements and standards were good or better in 89% of the settings inspected. The children were making good or better progress developing their social skills, independence and levels of attention and concentration.

9.   As children move to foundation stage, they generally progress well. Learning and teaching in the foundation stage continues to improve from the last reporting period. Play-based and other learning activities facilitated well the development of early literacy and numeracy skills. However, it is of some concern that in a minority of schools inspected, the benefits of the children's pre-school learning experiences and their prior attainments were insufficiently built upon and, consequently, their progress and development were restricted. Planning and teaching in the foundation stage must take greater account of each child's cognitive ability and stage of development, including their physical development and ensure that provision is matched closely to each child to facilitate progress in the core literacy and numeracy skills.

10.   In this reporting period, the quality of the children's achievements and standards by the end of key stage 2, in English/literacy was evaluated as good or better in 87% of

schools; the corresponding percentage for mathematics was 88%. This strong profile reflects the findings of two international studies in the primary phase[3].

> *"While our performance in international studies at age 10 years is encouraging, a significant number of children still leave primary school unable to count and read at the expected levels. They therefore start their post-primary school with significant shortcomings in aspects of their literacy and numeracy."*

In post-primary, GCSE outcomes are rising marginally, yet attainment is variable across schools; poor standards can be linked to low aspirations both within the school and outside of it.

11.   Inspection evidence indicates that most children achieve well as they move through pre-school and primary education. However, as they progress through and beyond post-primary education, the percentage of pupils achieving at, or above, the expected levels of achievement declines. In 2013, 60.9% of year 12 pupils achieved five or more GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades A*-C including GCSE English and mathematics, compared with 60.1% in 2012. There are fewer pupils leaving school with no GCSEs (or equivalent). While this slight increase in outcomes is welcome there remains too much variation in achievement.

12.   According to SAER data[4], females generally perform better than their male counterparts. In 2012-13, 65.5% of female pupils in year 12 achieved five or more GCSEs (or equivalent) including GCSE English and mathematics, at grades A*-C compared with 56.4% of males. Girls who attend Catholic voluntary or maintained schools achieve particularly well and are generally served well by the system.

13.   Inspection evidence indicates that the quality of achievements and standards in 15% of post-primary schools inspected were evaluated as less than satisfactory, an increase of five percentage points since the previous reporting period. These low standards affect some of the most vulnerable pupils. Despite the fact that most post-primary schools are larger and more complex organisations than pre-school and primary settings, there is a need for higher aspirations and expectations in the schools with inadequate achievements and standards, and in the communities they serve.

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3   PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) December 2012.
4   The Department of Education collects school performance information annually from post-primary schools and collates it in the Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER) statistical release.

14.   Education and training opportunities and the associated progression pathways to employment for young people can be unduly determined by where they live. Low social aspirations, coupled with provision in schools and by post-16 training providers which is not good enough, affect adversely the life chances of too many young people. This tends to be more prevalent in areas of high social deprivation. Consequently, it remains important that the education system takes due cognisance of employability needs and societal expectations, if we are to promote individual dignity, contribute to political stability and enhance economic prosperity.

The outcomes for a majority of year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals are not good enough, while the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training remains too high.

15.   The outcomes for our most vulnerable learners are not good enough. The Programme for Government (PfG) target (2015) for the percentage of school leavers entitled to free school meals (FSM) achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) with GCSE English and mathematics is 49%. In 2012-13, only 34.9% of school leavers entitled to FSM met this target[5]; this percentage drops to 33.9% if year 12 pupils only are considered[6]. Consequently, too many young people attaining these low outcomes may have their choices and life chances impacted adversely.

16.   Significantly, one of the biggest challenges still facing Northern Ireland's educational community is the persistently low GCSE outcomes of boys, especially those who attend non-grammar controlled schools and who are entitled to FSM. In 2013, only 17% of boys entitled to FSM attending controlled non-grammar schools achieved five or more GCSEs (or equivalent) with English and mathematics; this is unacceptable. It is imperative that schools, parents and the wider communities work in greater partnership to redress this outcome, which is stubbornly familiar in certain areas and communities.

17.   Too many young people do not make the transition to education, employment or training beyond the age of 16. These young people are categorised as not in education, employment or training (NEETS)[7] and while the total number of NEETS remains too high, the most recent figures show that this had reduced to 32,000[8] at the time of writing. The young people who are NEETS can be marginalised and are served very poorly by the system.

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5   The PfG commitments and data used are based on the School Leavers Survey (NISRA, 29 May 2014). This can be accessed at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/qualifications_and_destinations_1213.pdf
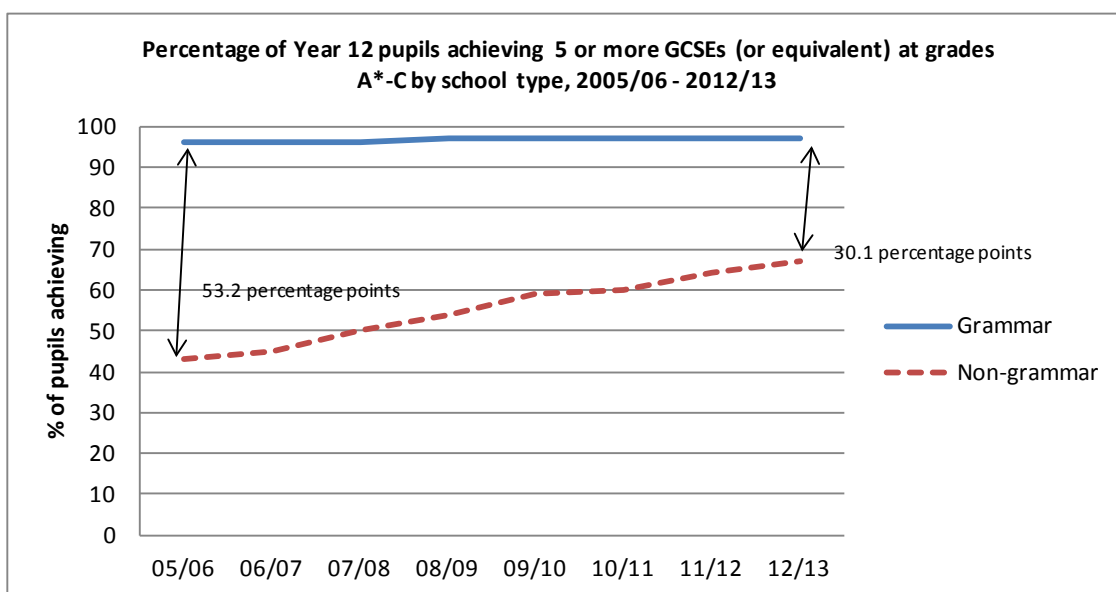6   Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland 2012-2013 (Revised) (NISRA, 27 March 2014). This can be accessed at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/year_12_and_year_14__ examination_performance_at_post-primary_schools_in_northern_ireland_2012-13__revised_.pdf
7   A person is defined as NEET if they are aged 16 to 24 and not in employment, education or training (full-time or part-time).
8   Source: The Ireland Labour Force Survey, April-June 2014. The full report can be accessed at: http://www.detini.gov.uk/lfs_quarterly_supplement_-_april_-_june_2014.pdf?rev=0

It is positive that the performance gap between grammar and non-grammar schools has shown signs of narrowing in recent years.

18.   In 2005-06 the gap between grammar and non-grammar achievement of five or more GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades A*-C was 53.2 percentage points; in 2012-13 this gap had reduced to 30.1 percentage points.

Percentage of Year 12 pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades A*-C by school type, 2005/06 - 2012/13

Source: Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland 2012-13 (Revised) (NISRA, 27 March 2014)

19.   The narrowing of this performance gap is due to a greater increase in the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) in non-grammar schools.

> *"The improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs (or equivalent) in non-grammar schools reflects favourably on the hard work and perseverance of such schools in driving up standards and securing good outcomes for their pupils."*

20.   This improvement is encouraging and may be linked to more appropriate curriculum provision at key stage 4. However, when GCSE English and mathematics are included, there is a widening gap between the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) and those achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and mathematics. Schools need to focus on ensuring

their pupils leave with the expected levels in English and mathematics. In addition, it is unacceptable that over 60% of pupils in non-grammar schools are still not achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and mathematics.

Too many pupils have unacceptably poor attendance; this contributes to low achievement.

21.	Inspectors scrutinise attendance, retention and outcomes in public examinations routinely on inspections. There is a link between poor attendance rates and lower examination outcomes.

"Inspection evidence and other data show that pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds tend to miss more school days and as a consequence, have fewer opportunities to embed and develop their learning."

Absence from post-primary school by free school meal entitlement, 2012/13
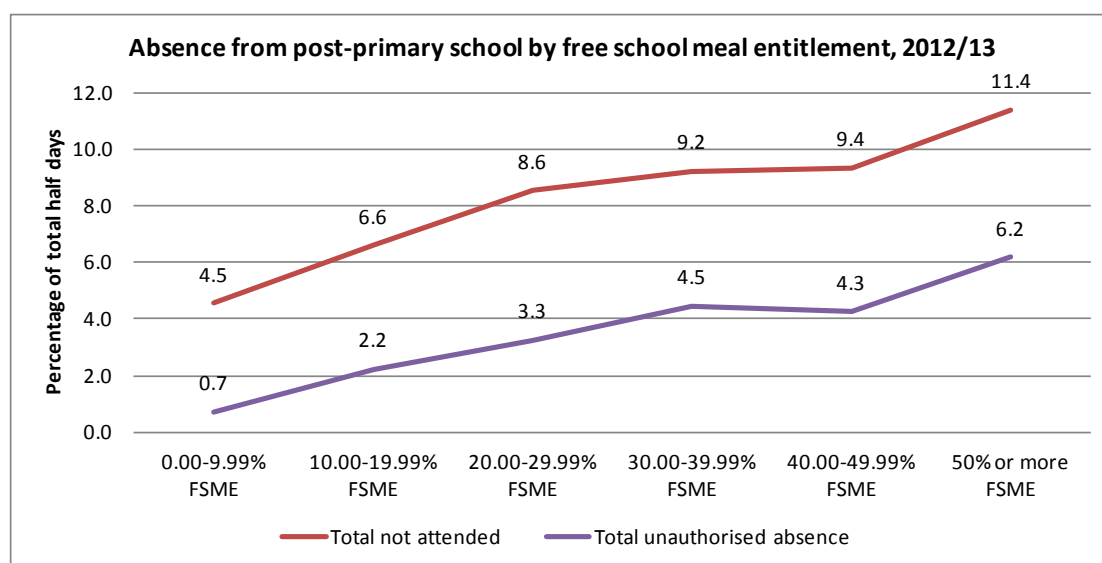
Source:	Attendance at grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools 2012-13 (NISRA)

22.   In the primary sector in the 2012-13 academic year, DE data[9] shows that average overall absence levels generally increase in line with the percentage of pupils enrolled who are entitled to FSM. At post-primary, the trend continues. An attendance rate of 90% equates to missing around one month out of ten months schooling per year. Attendance rates of 90% in schools are simply not good enough. All schools, colleges and training providers need to be proactive in ensuring that they provide welcoming and stimulating learning experiences, particularly for the most vulnerable.

23.   Those post-primary schools which have achieved most success in helping young people to overcome social barriers to their learning and attainment and in reducing the related symptom of poor attendance, have been those where resources and intervention have been targeted specifically, thereby helping individual pupils to attend school more regularly and be more successful. While the strategies which work best are well documented[10], there are too few schools learning from these lessons and applying these methods energetically, systematically and effectively.

Overall outcomes in further education programmes at levels 1, 2 and 3 have improved significantly, with better retention and achievement rates.

24.   Over the past three years, all of the further education colleges in Northern Ireland have been subject to a whole-college inspection; the effectiveness of the further education provision was outstanding in one college, very good in one, good in three and satisfactory in one. In the period 2011-13[11], overall outcomes in further education programmes at levels 1, 2 and 3 improved significantly across the sector.

Although there is variation in the quality of a few of the work-based organisations inspected, overall, the work-based learning sector does much good work in addressing the significant barriers to learning and employment which young people may have.

25.   The overall effectiveness of work-based learning provision was good or better in 11 of the 18 supplier organisations inspected; it was very good or outstanding in six. There are 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 a

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9   *Attendance at grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools 2012/13 (NISRA):*
     http://www.deni.gov.uk/attendance_at_grant-aided_primary__post-primary_and_special_schools_2012_13__
     detailed_statistics_final.pdf
10   *See, for example, An Evaluation of Full-Service Schools and Full Service Community Network, (ETI, 2013) which*
     can be accessed at:
     http://www.etini.gov.uk/an-evaluation-of-full-service-extended-schools-and-full-service-community-network-2.pdf
11   *Source: The Department for Employment and Learning Further Education Leavers Survey 2010-11. Retention*
     is the percentage of enrolments that complete their programme of study. In the case of 2-year courses, it
     is the percentage of final year enrolments that complete their programme of study. Achievement is the
     percentage of completers who gain a qualification. In the case of 2-year courses, it is the percentage of final
     year completers who gain a qualification.

strong focus on re-engagement in learning for those trainees who enter the programme with poor prior educational attainment and low levels of self-esteem.

In English and mathematics, improvements in the quality of provision and learner outcomes remain a priority across all phases.

26.   In previous Chief Inspectors' Reports, the need to improve the provision for numeracy and mathematics has been highlighted. The continued importance of this has been raised again by the results of the recent international comparison studies, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)[12] and the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)[13]. In both studies, the ability of our post-primary pupils and adults to apply their mathematical skills is significantly lower than in many other developed countries.

27.   Appropriately, *Count, Read: Succeed* (DE, 2011)[14] emphasises the shift from knowing and understanding mathematical concepts to being able to use and apply this knowledge and understanding in familiar and unfamiliar situations in other subjects and in everyday life. Teachers of other subjects which require mathematics, particularly the cross-curricular skill of Using Mathematics, need to be confident and competent in using the mathematics related to their own subject.

28.   Staff need to place a greater emphasis on the development of children's mathematical language and thinking in pre-school settings and the early years of the primary phase. Beyond primary, teachers of other subjects need to understand the mathematics required in the discourse of their own curriculum area and ensure that learners experience a coherent approach to mathematics and have help at the point of need when they experience difficulties. Mathematics specialists and curriculum leaders in all phases need to work with teachers to reach a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning and teaching in mathematics, to promote and demonstrate the agreed characteristics of effective practice, and to raise expectations of what learners can achieve.

29.   Improvement in the quality of mathematics provision remains a priority for all phases. During this reporting period, provision in primary schools continued to be stronger than provision in post-primary schools. Critical to addressing this low performance is the quality of mathematics provision in our post-primary schools, particularly the non-grammars. During the reporting period, mathematics provision in 47% of the non-grammar schools inspected was not good enough; this is similar to the previous reporting period.

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12 PISA assesses pupils' skills in reading, mathematics and science. Further information can be accessed at: http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/
13 PIACC assesses adult skills in literacy, numeracy, reading components and problem solving in technology-rich environments. Further information can be accessed at: http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/
14 This can be accessed at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/count_read_succeed_a_strategy_to_improve_outcomes_in_literacy_and_numeracy.pdf

30.   As part of DE's initiatives to meet the PfG targets, it commissioned ETI to undertake an evaluation of the quality of provision for English and mathematics in post-primary schools and to disseminate best practice so that other schools can learn what makes a difference. To fulfil the latter aim and to address recommendation 14 of the Northern Ireland Audit Office report Improving Literacy and Numeracy Achievements in Schools 2013[15], "The Committee recommends that consideration is given to improving the link between the findings from school inspection and the dissemination of good practice," ETI published its findings in its Survey of Best Practice in English and Mathematics in Post-primary Schools and organised two well-attended dissemination events.

31.   The ETI's Survey of Best Practice in English and Mathematics in Post-primary Schools[16] showed that there are schools with high FSM entitlement in which mathematics provision is resulting in pupils achieving high standards.

Effective practice in post-primary mathematics

In these schools, teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can do, they use well-planned schemes of work, have challenging questioning techniques and they follow up the support that pupils receive. In the most effective practice, pupils participate more actively in their mathematical learning as a result of improved questioning and greater opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. When the pupils are given the opportunity to participate actively in their learning, they are more engaged and respond positively to the raised expectations of their teachers. The mathematics departments had high expectations for what the pupils can achieve and focused on having well-planned progression in the schemes of work. In addition, the teachers employed challenging questioning and were rigorous in following through with appropriate support for the pupils.

32.   Outcomes in English in PISA, like mathematics, are similarly undistinguished for Northern Ireland's relatively well-developed education system. Inspection evidence is showing that teachers in all subjects are becoming more aware of their responsibility in helping to promote and develop pupils' literacy skills. In the most effective practice, schools are going beyond providing resources, activities and tasks to promote literacy skills. Rather, they are providing training which enables and encourages teachers to plan for learning through talking and listening; through effective group work and through helping promote reading for pleasure and understanding across all subjects.

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15 NIAO Improving Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Schools (2013). The full report can be accessed at: http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/literacy_and_numeracy_2.pdf
16 The full report can be accessed at: http://www.etini.gov.uk/best-practice-in-english-and-mathematics-in-post-primary-schools.pdf

33.   The overall effectiveness in English in post-primary schools remains largely unchanged since the last reporting period. Around 68% of English departments inspected were evaluated as good or better. Inspectors recognise that teachers understand better the need to plan for learning, rather than just planning to complete tasks and activities. There has been a slight increase in the number of schools whose effectiveness in English has been evaluated as outstanding. Despite these broad improvements, in a significant minority of schools, provision for English and pupil outcomes need to improve.

Effective practice in post-primary English

Evidence of better practice in English included, departments being rigorous in planning to be able to demonstrate coherence and progression in the pupils' learning experiences. Where connections in learning were planned explicitly, they helped pupils to connect their learning meaningfully. In addition, teachers ensured that learning experiences were enjoyable and the balance between teacher direction and intervention, and pupil autonomy, encouraged the pupils to become more independent and able to take greater responsibility for their learning.

Excellent teamwork, holding high expectations and demonstrating a clear process for collaboration and sharing of best practice generated a consistency of approach, especially in the crucial area of the quality of teaching. Furthermore, close working relationships with the special educational needs co-ordinator are a very important element in ensuring all of the pupils' needs are met effectively.

34.   The promotion of good practice is commonplace in many post-primary schools, in order to help teachers of other subjects develop pupils' literacy skills. There are many ways to do this without disrupting the life and work of the school, and it is incumbent on all schools to find the best and most creative approach.

35.   The Survey also highlighted areas which continue to require improvement. These include the key areas of transition, particularly from primary to post-primary, and the need to develop the confidence of teachers outside English and mathematics in developing the cross-curricular skills in Communication and Using Mathematics.

Schools and other organisations need to strengthen transition links in order to build effectively upon pupils' prior learning and address the regression that can occur.

36.   Inspection evidence shows that children benefit from positive learning experiences in pre-school settings. Building on the educational benefits of the pre-school year to ensure an effective transition to foundation stage continues to be a focus of school

leadership so that children have the best possible start in primary school.   Engagement with parents and partnerships with outside agencies to support the early identification of learning difficulties are essential in reducing and alleviating potential barriers to learning.

37.   The Northern Ireland Audit Office report Improving Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Schools 2013 highlighted the importance of dialogue and exchange of data between primary and post-primary schools in order to support pupils and their families, particularly those at risk of underachievement.

38.   Inspection findings indicate that teachers in post-primary schools need to have a more secure understanding of the curriculum of feeder primary schools, and be clear about the extent to which the pupils have, upon entry to year 8, acquired and developed their skills, knowledge and understanding with regard to all aspects of English and mathematics.

> *"It is not enough for teachers to know a child's assessment levels or standardised scores; they must be aware of each child's specific strengths and weaknesses in these areas, in order to inform more effectively planning for learning and teaching."*

39.   Schools need to strengthen the pastoral and curricular links with the organisations that their learners previously attended in order to build effectively upon their experiences and address the regression in learning that occurs too often at the transition stages.

40.   This particularly applies in the transition from primary to post-primary, but also from pre-school to primary. Key to this transition is the need for a reliable form of assessment that is rigorously and externally moderated and linked closely with statements of what the child knows, understands and can do.

41.   The ETI is of the view that appropriately moderated Levels of Progression which secure the confidence of the teaching profession and parents and carers, have significant value in providing appropriate assessment information which informs transition as well as providing the performance outcomes required by the education system.

42.   The most significant, controversial and unresolved transition issue concerns the arrangements for children transferring from primary to post-primary school. While ETI recognises the right of parents to choose the school that meets best their child's learning and pastoral needs, it is a matter of concern that unregulated tests provide the main way for many post-primary schools to select their pupils.

"Children experience the emotional pressure of sitting numerous tests over a short period of time. Consequently, parents, teachers and children experience unnecessary pressures."

43.   The emphasis on gaining entry to a grammar school often does a disservice to many of the non-grammar schools. The ETI recommends strongly that politicians reach consensus on the issue of transfer as a matter of urgency, in the best interests of all children.

There is a need for pupils to acquire good information and communication technology skills, otherwise they are at risk of being socially excluded from the world of work and lifelong learning.

44.   Today's society places a premium value on achieving and using high level literacy, numeracy and information technology skills (ICT).

45.   Digital literacy is a crucial competence for young people to enable them to make confident and effective use of digital media to support their learning, meet their career aspirations and to participate fully in society. It is multi-faceted and includes the ability to access and use ICT, to explore, express, exchange, evaluate and exhibit. Without these digital literacy skills, pupils are at risk of being socially excluded from the world of work and lifelong learning, and society more generally.

46.   Inspection evidence over the reporting period shows that the standards achieved in ICT by schools have improved. In primary schools, just over 60% of the schools were evaluated as having very good or outstanding standards in ICT; this compares to 45% of schools in the last reporting period. Similarly there has been a sharp decline in satisfactory or inadequate standards in ICT from 25% to approximately 12% of schools.

47.   In post-primary schools, there has been a significant improvement in the percentage of schools where the pupils develop good or better ICT skills in their work. It has improved to 63% of the schools inspected, compared to around 50% of the schools in the previous reporting period. The percentage of schools where the pupils attain inadequate standards has declined from 18% to 4% of the schools inspected.

For learners to reach their full potential, it is important that their wider skills and dispositions are developed fully.

48.   During the reporting period, inspectors have been particularly keen to identify and recognise the wider achievements of the learners.

> *"Inspection evidence shows excellent opportunities are being provided for young people to develop very positive attitudes and dispositions in a range of activities from sport and drama to active citizenship and accredited awards."*

49.   Through the inspection process ETI recognises the contribution that schools make in enabling young people to progress to the best of their ability. While examination results and outcomes are important, in evaluating the standards learners reach, ETI includes as part of the inspection process a holistic view of the learner and how an organisation is contributing to their development.

ENABLE more: supporting all learners through high quality learning and teaching, care, guidance and support

High quality learning and teaching are fundamental to enabling learners to achieve their potential.

50.   Through the inspection process ETI observed over 9,000 lessons in schools, over 1,500 lessons and training sessions in further education and work-based learning, over 280 sessions in youth as well as sessions in pre-school, DCAL, DARD and CJI provision. In addition, lessons were observed as part of district inspector visits. The learning and teaching observed was mainly of high quality. In over 80% of pre-school sessions children were enjoying books and engaged in early writing. Given the importance of the early years this is provides a good platform for the children's later learning.

51.   In primary, over 80% of lessons were good or better. The teaching of reading, such an important life skill, was very good or outstanding in 63% of schools. Learning and teaching was also high quality in special schools and in 78% of lessons evaluated in post-primary. It remains a concern that at key stage 4 and post-16 there is still an over reliance on the examination specification and insufficient building on pupils, knowledge, skills and understanding.

52.   In further education 84% of lessons evaluated were good or better but there is a need to continue improving teaching in the essential skills. Around 77% of the lessons observed in work based learning were good or better with good work place experiences for the learners. The quality of sessions observed in youth has improved significantly from the last period. There is more detail on each of the phases in the phase sections of the report.

Inspection evidence demonstrates that the pastoral care provided for learners continues to be a strength across the education and training system, promoting confident learning and high achievement.

53.   A key element in supporting young people's learning is the encouragement of positive health and well-being, underpinned by high levels of individual support and challenge, reflecting providers' high aspirations and expectations. Good quality pastoral care supports learners' social, physical, emotional and cognitive needs. It helps learners to cope with, and manage, challenging situations and the opportunities which life in a complex global society presents. Effective pastoral care supports learners to realise fully their personal and academic potential as well as their contribution to, and participation in, society.

> *"There is a clear link between high quality care, guidance and support and good learner outcomes."*

54.   The PfG gives a high priority to improving well-being; this objective is supported well by inspection evidence that indicates clear links between high quality pastoral care and high learner achievements. The Delivering Social Change framework initiated in October 2012 includes a number of Signature Projects that aim to improve well-being through targeted support and intervention strategies for learners and their families. This includes a pilot of nurture units in a small number of primary schools which is currently being evaluated by ETI. This pilot aims to address positively the impact of adversity on children by intervening both earlier and more effectively to reduce the risk of poor outcomes later in life.

The schools sector, alternative education provision and further education colleges are getting better at identifying and addressing the barriers to learning faced by many children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable.

55.   Since 2009, there has been a nine point increase in the number of children placed on special educational needs registers; this increase is due in part to teachers being able to identify individual needs appropriately. Teachers have benefited from appropriate continuing professional development courses such as the Understanding Literacy course facilitated by Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College, Belfast.

> *"Inspection evidence indicates that schools are making better use of internal data to track pupils who require additional learning support."*

56.   In the best practice, learners benefit from individualised intervention and support strategies, which can include mentoring schemes and one-to-one or small group tuition that is targeted on improving outcomes.

57.   A number of ETI surveys have identified good practice in relation to supporting pupils with special educational needs, as well as making some recommendations for improvements.

> "*The 2013 ETI Evaluation of the Work of Special Schools in Area Learning Communities[17] found that involvement in the area learning communities (ALCs) is valued by special schools and such participation resulted in benefits for learners.*"

58.   The ALCs provide an opportunity for sharing resources and skills and also for collaboration on extending the range and level of courses to suit pupils who require additional support with their learning. The ETI survey report on Transition Arrangements from Special Schools and Mainstream Learning Support Centres to Post-school Provision[18] highlighted good practice which enables effective transition for the majority of pupils. However, too many learners at post-nineteen, face poor choices and experience insecurity; a comprehensive review by the Department of Education and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is required to address these issues.

59.   The ETI evaluation of the Provision to Meet the Needs of Pupils with Persistent and Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools[19] indicated that there is a very small minority of pupils in special schools whose long-term needs cannot be met by current practices and resources. It outlined that some pupils with extremely challenging behaviour require a very different approach, with specific and constant input from multi-disciplinary specialist teams, currently unavailable in the majority of the special schools. The DE, in response, is currently undertaking a planning review to identify how provision can be improved.

60.   In the small number of alternative education provision (AEP) centres inspected during this reporting period, the majority of young people were achieving good or better standards, good opportunities were provided for vocational education and personal development and the good or better quality of pastoral support was impacting positively on the young people.

61.   The further education and work-based learning sectors are required to provide student support services with dedicated curriculum and support staff, to work effectively to support the care and welfare of all learners as part of DEL's Skills Strategy. Additional

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17 *An Evaluation of the Work of Special Schools within the Area Learning Communities (ETI, 2013) The full report can be accessed at:*
   http://www.etini.gov.uk/an-evaluation-of-the-work-of-special-schools-within-the-area-learning-communities.pdf
18 *A Survey Report on Transition Arrangements from Special Schools and Mainstream Learning Support Centres to Post-School Provision (ETI, 2014) The full report can be accessed at:*
   http://www.etini.gov.uk/a-survey-report-on-transition-arrangements-from-special-schools-and-mainstream-learning-support-centres-to-post-school-provision-2.pdf
19 *An Evaluation of the Provision to Meet the Needs of Pupils with Persistent and Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools (ETI, 2013) The full report can be accessed at: http://www.etini.gov.uk/an-evaluation-of-the-provision-to-meet-the-needs-of-pupils-with-persistent-and-challenging-behaviour-in-special-schools.pdf*

support is provided through a range of external organisations, such as Disability Action, to give further support to learners from their initial transition into further education and throughout the learning pathway, providing clear guidance and support on a wide range of personal, social, financial and educational issues. Colleges and work-based learning provide tailored individual support for learners.

> "*There has been significant investment in the provision of mentoring services for learners who require additional help with their learning in further education colleges. This includes the provision of specialist equipment and learning support staff.*"

62. As Northern Ireland becomes increasingly diverse, it is incumbent upon schools, colleges and training organisations to meet the needs of all learners. The number of newcomer children has increased to 10,697 (including pre-school). Inspection evidence shows that schools continue to build their capacity to meet the needs of newcomer pupils, and teachers are increasingly confident in assessing and tracking their progress. There is a strong commitment within schools to the pastoral needs of these pupils and their families through an ethos of inclusion and diversity.

63. There are 974 Irish Traveller children attending pre-school settings or primary, post-primary and special schools[20]. Essential to the efficient and effective integrated support for these young people is the commitment of the school to inclusion, the level of relationship and trust maintained with the Traveller families, and the willingness of Traveller families to avail of, and value, education. The aim of the regional Traveller Education Support Service, established in 2013, is to ensure that teachers, youth workers and inclusion staff continue to increase sharing between the Traveller community and the educational stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for Traveller children and young people. The ETI believes that the expectations and provision for Traveller children should be akin to those for all other children, including access to a full range of educational experiences and high expectations for achievement.

Innovative approaches to supporting many young people who experience social disadvantage are having a positive impact on their learning.

64. The DE through the Extended Schools Programme provides additional support to schools in areas of the highest social deprivation to provide a range of services to enable children to achieve their full potential. Over £10 million was made available in 2012-13 and over £11 million in 2013-14.

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20 *Enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2013/14, Statistics and Research Agency (Feb 2014). The full report can be accessed at:*
    http://www.deni.gov.uk/enrolments_in_schools_1314__-_february_release_-_final_2.pdf

65.   Significant impact has been made by some highly effective practice in north and west Belfast under the auspices of the Full Service Schools initiative. North and west Belfast includes some of the most seriously deprived electoral wards and continues to experience significant economic and social disadvantage, combined with periods of instability. All of these factors contribute to creating barriers to learning which conventional schooling, on its own, cannot address sufficiently.

66.   To support these communities in north and west Belfast, DE funds two Full Service Programmes, which are enhancing the life chances of young people by ensuring improved educational attainment through addressing the real and specific needs of learners, their families and the local communities. The two programmes in place are the Full Service Extended Schools (FSES), located at the Belfast Boys' Model School and the Belfast Model School for Girls, with a project board managed by the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) and the Full Service Community Network (FSCN), located at the Whiterock campus of Belfast Metropolitan College, with a project board managed by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). In the FSCN programme the focus is very much on early intervention with the parents of children of pre-school and primary school age. In the FSES programme, the focus is on working with families of learners of post-primary age, while, at the same time, strengthening the links with the children at primary schools and their families.

67.   The changing and more complex learner profile is a growing challenge for all involved in education and training. Too many people in our society have not been served well by an education system which has failed to break the cycle of deprivation or to raise aspirations. For example, in recent years, the relatively low outcomes for boys entitled to FSM attending controlled non-grammar schools have been well documented. It is clear that schools alone cannot break the cycle of low outcomes; there is a need for greater coherence and connections between the learners, their families, their communities, their schools and the wide range of agencies and health and support service providers that play a significant part in their lives.

> *"There is a need, therefore, to focus attention on breaking the cycle of deprivation, and on finding the correct balance between providing support when necessary, and encouraging and developing the skills of learners and their families to support themselves."*

68.   The ETI evaluation report[21] on the FSCN and FSES programmes reported on the need to build more effective partnerships between education and other statutory agencies, and

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21 *An Evaluation of Full-Service Schools and Full Service Community Network, (ETI, 2013). The full report can be accessed at:*
    http://www.etini.gov.uk/an-evaluation-of-full-service-extended-schools-and-full-service-community-network-2.pdf

the need for government departments to work in a more cohesive and connected way to benefit the learners, their families and their communities.

Inspection evidence indicates that most schools and organisations give a high priority to safeguarding children and young people.

69.   Keeping children safe and providing learners with appropriate knowledge and personal resilience skills to cope with risks in the real and virtual worlds remains a key priority for the departments and the education and training organisations. Inspection evidence indicates that most schools and organisations give safeguarding a high priority and have satisfactory or comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. In the minority of schools which had satisfactory arrangements, areas for improvement included the need to update relevant policies and practices. Recent allegations of child sexual exploitation in Northern Ireland led to the commissioning of an independent expert-led inquiry by the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in November 2013. As part of this process, ETI is carrying out a thematic survey of the effectiveness of preventative education and the statutory curriculum in helping pupils to develop the knowledge, awareness and skills to keep themselves safe.

The quality of careers education, information and guidance continues to improve, and is reflected in curricular provision that is informed well by the needs of the local and global economies.

70.   The most effective schools, colleges and training providers match the individual learner's needs to the curriculum, offer appropriate career pathways to further or higher education and employment, particularly priority sectors such as STEM[22] and the digital and creative industries. Furthermore, they have an excellent knowledge of work-related contexts through sustained local, national and international links which provide the organisations with sound, first-hand knowledge that is used to inform their careers provision and curricula.

> *"Working in partnership is pivotal and in a recent Confederation of British Industry survey most school and employer respondents agreed that it was very or extremely beneficial for schools and employers to work together."[23]*

71.   Over the reporting period, the careers education, information and guidance (CEIAG) provided in post-primary schools and in further education has continued to improve.

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22 *STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*
23 *Evaluation of Education and Employer Partnerships in Northern Ireland; (2013) Confederation of British Industry (CBI). The full report can be accessed at:*
     http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2588820/item_5_-_cbi_business-education_report-final.pdf

The quality of the CEIAG provision evaluated as good or better in post-primary schools inspected now stands at 86%. Inspection evidence indicates that, in further education, the quality of the provision was good or better in all of the colleges inspected.

72.   The key strengths of CEIAG provision in the post-primary sector include; well-supported mentoring and tutorial systems; the strong focus on STEM-related progression opportunities; good links with external agencies; and the co-ordinated and well-planned provision for learning for life and work, which enables pupils to develop a range of competences and skills. Across the further education sector, the strengths include; a clearly defined strategic vision for CEIAG, including: learning opportunities and programmes of events; a curriculum that is informed by employers and reflects the needs of industry; initiatives and innovation that reflect the local and global economies; and inclusive and clear progression pathways, from pre-entry to higher education.

73.   Where CEIAG was less than good, learners did not have a clear understanding of the most appropriate progression pathways or development opportunities that matched their career aspirations. Consequently, there were insufficient opportunities to gain experience of the world of work through access to a programme of activities, including study visits, guest speakers and engagement in competitions. Provision for CEIAG did not feature sufficiently in school or college development plans and staff did not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the world of work to benefit the learners.

> *"In addition to providing appropriate CEIAG, it is important that schools underpin this support with a broad and balanced curriculum that is matched to the needs and aspirations of its pupils."*

74.   It is positive to note that 87% of schools are meeting the Key Stage 4 Entitlement Framework 2014 milestone of offering 21 courses. It is important to remember that, when ETI evaluates curriculum provision, the quality of pupils' experiences, appropriateness of courses and the educational and training pathways they create are paramount. Inspection evidence from this reporting period shows that 73% of the post-primary schools inspected had good or better curriculum provision, with clear progression opportunities for the pupils.

Schools and further education colleges are recognising the value of purposeful partnerships and sharing, in order to improve the provision, learning experiences and outcomes for learners.

75.   Schools remain defined by factors such as gender, academic selection, religion and employing authorities. At the time of writing, 92% of the school population is still

educated in either Catholic maintained schools or controlled schools attended mainly by Protestant learners.

> *"In the context of maximising the public value of scarce resources, building a stable society and offering pupils greater choice and opportunities to succeed, it is crucial that schools adopt a less insular and competitive approach and work in purposeful partnerships in the best interests of all children and young people."*

76.   In the post-primary sector, the most effective area learning communities are characterised by very good levels of communication and co-operation amongst schools and between schools and further education colleges; the effective sharing of resources is widening choices for pupils. The move towards the creation of a single body to replace the five existing Education and Library Boards, is to be welcomed as it has the potential to create greater coherence and consistency of support while maximising limited resources.

77.   Shared Education has been recognised appropriately as a core mechanism for raising standards and for building more effective social cohesion and participatory citizenship[24]. In responding to the recommendations of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education, which viewed Shared Education as a core mechanism for improving school and educational outcomes, the Minister of Education highlighted the need to 'put the needs of young people ahead of the interests of institutions'.[25]

78.   Sectarianism and division remain costly and debilitating factors on our society[26].

> *"It is encouraging to note that many schools are making purposeful cross-community links with other schools which are leading to better understanding and sharing."*

79.   The DE strategies and policies such as Community Relations, Equality and Diversity, the Entitlement Framework and Every School a Good School are encouraging schools to be more connected to their wider communities. Moreover, a number of PfG targets identify Shared Education as a priority.

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24 *Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education. The full report can be accessed at:*
    http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/MinisterialAdvisoryGroup/Filestore/Filetoupload,382123,en.pdf
25 *The full Ministerial statement can be accessed at:*
    http://www.deni.gov.uk/advancing_shared_education_-_22_october_2013_docx.pdf
26 *Paul Nolan, Peace Monitoring Report (CRC, No 3, March 2014)*

The Sharing in Education Programme demonstrated that high quality shared experiences contribute to better learning, but more needs to be done so that all pupils can benefit from similar experiences.

80.   The International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP), 2010-13 has contributed to breaking down some of the barriers arising from the historic conflict in Northern Ireland by providing a range of opportunities for young people to learn together and to reach high standards of educational achievement. The ETI evaluated the 19 SiEP projects, in which over 46,500 children, young people and others participated[27].

81.   High quality shared education contributes to developing children and young people as better learners. Pupils in the SiEP benefited from working in relevant, and sometimes unfamiliar, contexts, where their thinking skills and personal capabilities were developed, their attitudes challenged and their inter-personal skills extended. The ETI's Final Evaluation of the Sharing in Education Programme[26] concluded that the SiEP provided reassurance to a wider society of the commitment to look positively to the future and cultivate a common ground to support reconciliation work in schools and other organisations.

> *"The key to success was the strong focus on high quality genuine shared learning experiences and processes matched to the needs of the learners and their communities, rather than seeing shared classes as an end in themselves."*

82.   It is too early yet to assess the long-term impact of the SiEP, but sufficient work has been done to demonstrate the positive impact of shared education for learners. Much needs to be done to develop high quality shared education experiences that are effective, sustained and progressive, particularly in schools that have not begun the process. It is crucial in moving forward that careful strategic planning focuses on ensuring high quality shared education rather than just maximising numbers involved. In supporting the development of shared education, ETI is committed to identifying and disseminating effective practice. To this end, ETI recommends strongly that education and training providers familiarise themselves with, and act upon, the findings of the SiEP report.

The schools in Omagh involved in the Lisanelly programme are demonstrating good levels of commitment to shared education and the programme has the potential to provide a model for wider sharing.

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27 *A Final Evaluation of the Sharing in Education Programme (ETI, 2013) The full report can be accessed at:*
    http://www.etini.gov.uk/a-final-evaluation-of-the-international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme.pdf

83.   The DE's engagement in building shared campuses underpins a strong commitment to the realisation of shared education. A programme of shared education capital projects is one of DE's top priorities and a key delivery target in the PfG. The Shared Campuses Programme[28] provides schools from different traditions with the opportunity to enhance their existing sharing arrangements and access funding which will create or develop shared facilities.

84.   Significant progress has been made already in the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus programme. The Lisanelly programme will result in the construction of six new schools and associated shared education facilities through a significant capital investment of £125 million. Work has been progressing steadily, and the six schools (comprising post-primary and special) are demonstrating very good levels of commitment and engagement in the development of the shared campus.

There is variation in the quality and effectiveness of how schools prepare children and young people for living and working in a divided society.

85.   Inspectors report that there is variation in the quality and effectiveness of how schools prepare children and young people to live comfortably with diversity and how to respond appropriately to differences in cultural identity.

> *"There is a need for continuing professional development for teachers to include opportunities to address these sensitive issues, and enable them to nurture the appropriate dispositions and behaviours that are expected in a modern democratic society."*

86.   A key objective of the Northern Ireland Curriculum is to develop children and young people as contributors to society and key subjects bear responsibility for providing classroom learning that promotes understanding as a foundation for shared education experiences.

History education has an important role to play in preparing young people for living and working in a divided society.

87.   During the reporting period, a small-scale study exploring learning and teaching in history found that there was variation in the quality and effectiveness of history departments with regard to this important role. In the most effective practice, learning in history helped pupils understand the causes, reality, complexity and consequences of the

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28 *Further information about the Shared Campuses Programme can be accessed at:*
    http://www.deni.gov.uk/shared-education-campuses-programme.htm

recent conflict; they developed rigorous critical thinking skills in analysing the past and were able to build effectively on the perspectives of others. In the least effective practice, teachers did not plan carefully enough for engaging pupils effectively with controversial and sensitive issues. Consequently, the pupils' thinking and misconceptions were not challenged.

88. As we move forward in building a shared society, it will be important to ensure that all pupils access the requirements of the current history curriculum and have high quality learning experiences. There is a need for continuing professional development for teachers to include opportunities to reflect deeply on how the past has shaped attitudes, behaviours and actions.

EXPECT better: leading to excellence

There is a clear link between effective leadership which focuses relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching, leading to better learning and higher achievement for all.

89. The most effective leaders in education and training engender a culture of high expectations where staff believe that every learner can succeed and learners are motivated to achieve. They are leaders of learning with a strong focus on promoting high quality learning and teaching. These leaders recognise the importance of the school/organisation, community and home working together to promote and enable success. The fundamental challenge facing all leaders in education and training is how to improve provision in order to attain higher outcomes for all learners, regardless of their starting points, social disadvantage and wider pressures. Inspection evidence indicates that, in the most effective organisations, clear leadership is demonstrated at every level, including middle-managers, co-ordinators, teachers, tutors and support staff.

> *"It is crucial that leaders at all levels place high importance on the continuous improvement of their provision, developing staff professionally, and remain focused on the organisation's vision and values in order to raise the standards that young people attain."*

The quality of leadership is improving across the phases, but was not good enough in too many of the organisations inspected.

90. Leadership and management are a key focus of inspection activity across all phases; the quality of leadership and management is improving across all phases within the schools sector, particularly in primary schools, special education, and also in pre-school, when compared with the previous reporting period. Of note, is the increased proportion of primary and post-primary schools where leadership has been evaluated as outstanding; this equates to just under 19% of primary schools and around 15% of post-primary schools inspected.

Leadership & Management performance levels (full inspections)*						
2012-14	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory
Pre-school	19%	25%	36%	16%	4%	0%
Primary	19%	39%	27%	12%	3%	0%
Post-primary	15%	27%	24%	27%	7%	0%

*Other phases not included due to a smaller number of organisations inspected in the period

> "*While noting there have been some improvements in leadership and management, there are aspects that need to improve across all of the education and training phases. Improving leadership and management remains a priority.*"

91.   In particular, the quality of leadership and management in 34% of the post-primary schools evaluated was not good enough. The quality of the work of a minority of principals, senior leadership teams and middle-managers in these post-primary schools needs to improve. This weaker leadership is characterised by insufficient attention to the effective use of data, poor self-evaluation processes, low expectations which are reflected in variations in the quality of learning and teaching, and unacceptably poor outcomes for pupils which reveal underachievement.

92.   At the time of the previous Chief Inspector's Report, ETI recommended that a more coherent framework of professional development was urgently required, from initial training up to and including school and system leadership development which focused sharply on underperforming schools and on underachievement. While there have been ongoing discussions about the reform of initial and continuing professional development, progress has been insufficient at system level to address this important priority.

93.   The strategic leadership and management of the curriculum was good or better in three out of the four further education colleges inspected; in two of them it was very good or outstanding. In both of these colleges, along with a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all learners, the curriculum offer is not only outward looking and relevant to the demands of the wider economy, but also addresses social exclusion.

94.   All colleges inspected had well-established quality assurance systems in place. Inspection data indicates that, compared with the last reporting period, there was an increased commitment to excellence and quality improvement in the strategic

leadership, and more effective development and improvement planning, including clearly demonstrable actions leading to improvement. In addition, inspectors reported more effective and efficient use of resources, better accommodation and physical resources and improved public value.

95. Leadership and management was good or better in 11 of the work-based learning supplier organisations inspected; it was very good or better in seven of them, satisfactory in five, and inadequate in two. The good or better leadership and management in work-based learning organisations inspected was characterised by a clear strategic vision for the organisation; the provision was learner-centred and pastorally sound, expectations were high irrespective of the prior levels of achievement of the trainees and apprentices, and the processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning were well-embedded, evidence rich and effective. Additionally, the curriculum was coherent and well balanced and employers were involved closely in the key aspects of the provision.

96. Despite this improving picture, there is a need for more effective leadership and management in just over one-third of the work-based learning organisations inspected, including in: raising expectations of what trainees and apprentices can achieve; undue variation in the effectiveness of the co-ordination of individual professional and technical areas; and ineffective systems to track the progress of trainees and apprentices.

97. Leadership and management of the curriculum in the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise was very good; it had a clear strong focus on economic engagement.

The most effective leadership is able to measure and demonstrate clearly the value which their provision adds to each learner's progress.

98. Inspection evidence indicates that the improvements in leadership in this reporting period are characterised by more robust self-evaluation, effective school and college development planning processes and appropriate deployment and support of staff in promoting learning and raising standards.

> *"Highly effective leadership places an appropriate focus on ensuring learners benefit from consistently high quality learning and teaching, it uses self-evaluation processes to identify and implement actions which lead to improvements for learners and it develops the capacity of all staff to support learners to achieve the highest possible standards."*

99. The modest rise in the proportion of schools evaluated as having outstanding leadership reflects the collective commitment of all staff to use performance and other

data, including pastoral information, to ensure learning and teaching are matched to need and ability and where high expectations and high achievement are commonplace. The most effective leadership is able to measure and demonstrate clearly the value which their provision adds to each learner's progress. However, there is a clear need, through the process of self-evaluation, for all schools and providers to recognise explicitly the value which they add to their learners' development and attainment which can then be articulated more widely, including to inspectors.

Parents and the local community need to accept their responsibility by supporting their children's schools and colleges and expect more in terms of outcomes; where standards are not high enough, they should challenge the leadership.

100.   A significant aspect of leadership is related to how well the leaders link with the local community and work in partnership in the best interests of their learners. This has been recognised through a suite of DE and DEL policies and strategy documents, such as Learning to Learn[29], Every School a Good School[30], Priorities for Youth - Improving Young People's Lives through Youth Work[31] and The Skills Strategy - Success Through Skills - Transforming Futures[32].

101.   It is important not to underestimate the role that parents have to play in supporting their children's education. The DE is running an 'Education Works' campaign highlighting the vital role of parents in their child's education[33].

> "*Parents have a responsibility to support all the positive efforts organisations make in ensuring their children achieve well. However, where standards are not good enough, parents should feel empowered to challenge the leadership and governance of the school or organisation.*"

102.   On all inspections, inspectors evaluate the quality of the links and partnerships the organisation has with the communities they serve. This includes taking cognisance of the needs of the economy, employers, stakeholders and other partners who provide support for learners' social needs to allow them to contribute and participate fully in a range of extra-curricular, enrichment and problem-solving opportunities. Where links with the community are more effective, leaders in all education and training settings have a

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29 http://www.deni.gov.uk/learning-to-learn.htm
30 http://www.deni.gov.uk/standards-and-school-improvements/every-school-a-good-school.htm
31 http://www.deni.gov.uk/priorities_for_youth_-_final.pdf
32 http://www.delni.gov.uk/success-through-skills-transforming-futures.pdf
33 http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/education-works

comprehensive understanding of the local area, the role they play in supporting the young people and their families, and they work effectively with a range of partners to improve the provision and the outcomes for children and young people.

Governance is generally effective, but enhancing the challenge role could benefit learners further.

103.   The inspection and evaluation of school governance has been enhanced; there is now a stronger focus on self-evaluation, informed by the quality indicators that have been developed and provided by ETI to support governors in their work and help them to carry out their function.

104.   In evaluating governance across the system, ETI recognises fully the extensive time and commitment given voluntarily by governors in schools and other organisations. During this reporting period, in the majority of primary and post-primary schools, ETI evaluated positively the effectiveness of school governance.

> "*In the most effective practice, the governance arrangements provided an excellent and effective balance between leadership, challenge and support.*"

105.   Governors were involved fully in the work and life of their school. They provided support for the principal and staff in shaping the strategic direction of the school and they monitored the progress and impact of the targets set for improvement. Consequently, the targets and actions were reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis, often using first-hand evidence presented to them from a range of leaders at different levels within the school. Where aspects of governance could be improved, these included the need for governors to be better informed in order to challenge poor practice and performance.

The follow-up inspection process has resulted generally in improved leadership and management and improved overall effectiveness.

106.   During the reporting period, 137 organisations had follow-up inspections (FUIs). Some of these FUIs will have been in schools that entered the Formal Intervention Process (FIP). In the period between DE launching Every School A Good School in 2009 and 30 June 2014 (based on inspection reports published), 45 schools entered FIP, 29 exited (5 closed) and 11 remain in the process.

107.   There was a significant improvement across the phases in which a FUI was completed. Of those organisations that had a FUI in the period April 2013-March 2014, 80% improved by at least one performance level compared to the original inspection outcome. The reason why so many organisations improve is that they acknowledge and accept that improvement in certain aspects of their work is required. Consequently, they

focus on implementing actions that bring about improvement in the experiences and outcomes for the learners.

> *"The key characteristics of improving organisations were the more effective use of data to inform the provision, better planning, teaching, learning and assessment, more robust governance and shared ownership of the improvement agenda."*

The ETI is developing leadership capacity through its associate assessor programme.

108.   The ETI has a key role in developing leaders in education and training to promote improvement through developing their capacity to self-evaluate robustly. To this end, a major supporting tool for self-evaluation is ETI's series Together Towards Improvement[34] and Improving Quality: Raising Standards (IQ:RS)[35] in further education and work-based learning. This series of documents presents quality indicators which have been developed to support organisations in their own self-evaluation processes. Another means by which ETI is developing leadership is through the involvement of associate assessors (AA) in the inspection process. The number of AAs recruited since 2010 has increased to 190; this increase reflects ETI's commitment to transparency in our work and involving others in the process of inspection. The current cohort of AAs is representative of leadership at middle and senior levels, such as vice-principals and heads of department in school settings, and leaders from professional and technical areas in further education and work-based learning.

109.   The role of AAs on inspection has been enhanced to include greater responsibility for contributing towards the evaluation of specific aspects of the work of an organisation. In order to equip AAs to undertake their role, appropriate professional development has been provided by ETI, including how to evaluate the quality of learning experiences, together with understanding inspection processes, procedures and protocols.

110.   The AAs are current practitioners who, as members of an inspection team, have an opportunity to observe practice which can inform the improvement process within their own organisations. As current practitioners, they support and complement the knowledge, experience and expertise of ETI's inspectors. The AAs gain a clear understanding of how inspection works in practice and develop further their understanding of the improvement process. Consequently, AAs are able to share their knowledge and understanding with the wider system.

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34 *Together Towards Improvement can be accessed at: http://www.etini.gov.uk/together-towards-improvement.htm*
35 *IQ:RS http://www.etini.gov.uk/improving-quality-raising-standards/iqrs-work-based-learning-2014-2015.pdf*

111. The professional development is a two-way process. The AAs contribute to the inspections as well as the development of processes and procedures, while sharing with inspectors their extensive knowledge and understanding of current practice and issues. The ETI value the significant contributions the AAs make to the inspection process and to the wider education and training system.

112. Earlier this year, the publication of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) study[36] compared the evaluation and assessment systems of 26 countries including Northern Ireland and reported positively on ETI's inspection process. This report made a very strong positive statement on the role of the AA:

113. 'The OECD review team highlights the engagement of "Associate Assessors" (AAs) to join school inspection teams as an excellent mechanism to bring in up-to-date experience from schools. AAs are senior staff from schools, normally principals, vice principals or senior teachers. This works as a mutually beneficial professional development exercise: it brings up-to-date practical knowledge from the field into ETI and also serves as useful training in evaluation techniques for participating AAs. During specific professional development days, ETI shows AAs how to undertake classroom observation and what to look for in evidence'.

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36 Shewbridge, C. et al. (2014), OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing.
    The full report can be accessed at: http://www.oecd.org/education/school/Reviews%20of%20Evaluation%20 and%20Assessment%20in%20Education%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf

Conclusion

Northern Ireland has a good education and training system, which serves the majority of its learners well, but not well enough to be considered world-class.

114.   Inspection evidence has indicated that Northern Ireland has significant strengths in its education system such as the high academic outcomes for certain groups of learners, the very good care, guidance and support provided to children and young people and the high quality of leadership provided by many across the education and training system. While there are many who gain from the system, there are many who do not.

115.   Going forward, the most pressing challenge facing Northern Ireland's education and training system is to raise the standards achieved by all learners and, in particular, those who experience social and economic disadvantage. In addition, there is a greater need 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 in order to achieve a shared future.

116.   Finally, if we are to have a world-class education and training system, we need to have high aspirations, expect more of our providers and enable our young people to acquire and develop the necessary skills, dispositions and accreditation to meet the increasing demands of the 21st century.

Pre-school settings

❝

The overall effectiveness of 83% of the pre-school settings inspected was evaluated as good or better.

❞

Going well

- Of the settings[37] 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.

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37 *The term pre-school setting refers to the private, voluntary and statutory providers of DE's funded pre-school education programme.*

# The effectiveness of provision in pre-school settings

Context

117.   The number of children in funded pre-school provision has continued to grow from 23,178 in 2011-12 to 23,507 in 2013-14. It has increased by two percentage points since 2011-12. There are currently 720 pre-school settings: 96 nursery schools; 228 nursery units and 396 voluntary and private settings. The total number of settings also continues to grow with four additional nursery units and six additional private and voluntary settings established in the last two years.

Inspection evidence	
Voluntary/private sector (pre-schools)[38]	109
Nursery schools	24
Nursery units	53
Nursery units (continuation of previously unfinished inspection)	4
Pre-school baseline inspections	14
Nursery unit baseline inspections	8
Follow-up inspections (all pre-school settings)	33
Interim follow-up visits (all pre-school settings)	51

Overall effectiveness

118.   Most of the pre-school education evaluated was of a good or better quality. The vibrancy of the sector and the commitment of staff to develop quality provision in the best interests of young children was evident in the 83% of provision which was evaluated as good or better across all types of settings, an improvement of seven percentage points in comparison with the settings inspected during the last reporting period. While the overall effectiveness across the pre-school sector has improved, there were fewer settings evaluated as very good or outstanding.

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38 Voluntary/private includes funded provision within playgroups and day nurseries.

Overall effectiveness
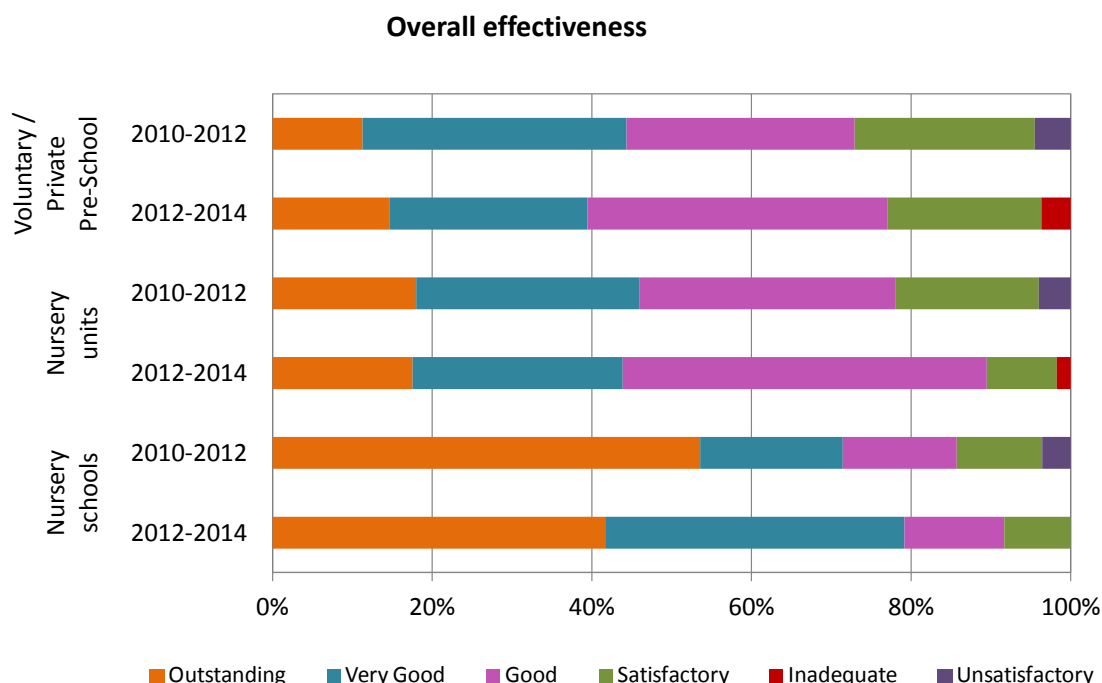
119.   The percentage of statutory settings[39] evaluated as good or better has increased to 90% and most of this improvement is within the nursery unit provision. The provision in the voluntary and private sector continues to improve with 77% of the settings inspected during this reporting period evaluated as good or better.

120.   The Irish-medium pre-school sector continues to grow and improve; a majority, 74%, of the Irish-medium pre-school settings inspected during the reporting period were evaluated as good or better. The key strengths include the good quality immersion provision and the effective links and partnerships with parents, other providers and the wider community, to identify and meet the current and future needs of children. Where improvement was required, the shortcomings included ineffective observation and assessment of the children's learning and weaknesses in the planning to meet individual children's needs.

Achievements and standards

121.   Achievements and standards were good or better in 89% of all pre-school settings inspected, an increase of nine percentage points compared with those settings inspected during the last reporting period.

122.   In 83% of the voluntary and private settings, achievements and standards were good or better. Across the statutory sector, the achievement and standards in nearly all of the nursery units and all of the nursery schools inspected were good or better. In this high

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39 *Statutory includes nursery schools and nursery classes or units within a primary school.*

quality provision, the children had good or better opportunities to develop personally, socially and emotionally, with positive attitudes and dispositions to current and future learning. The children's language and communication skills, in relation to their age and stage of development, were good or better in 84% of settings with particular strengths in the development of the children's oral language and listening skills. Similarly, the children's early mathematical skills and physical development and their interest in arts and creative play, were good or better in most settings.

Quality of provision for learning

123.   The quality of provision across the sector was evaluated as good or better in 82% of settings. While statutory settings have improved considerably in the current reporting period with 89% of provision evaluated as good or better, the overall quality in the voluntary and private sector remains unchanged at 76%. There has been a significant drop in the percentage of provision evaluated as outstanding, with the largest drop seen in the nursery sector, down from 67% of provision evaluated as outstanding to 38% in the current reporting period. There was unacceptable variation in the quality of provision in the reception classes evaluated as part of primary school inspections during this period, particularly when small numbers of children were enrolled in classes with children from at least one other year group.

124.   In most settings, there were good or better opportunities for children to progress and develop in their learning across all six areas of the pre-school curriculum[40]. It is positive that over 80% of pre-school settings encourage children to enjoy books and engage in mark making and early writing through age-appropriate play-based activities. The quality of the children's early mathematical experiences was good or better in most pre-school settings, though in most settings there were too few opportunities for children to develop their auditory and visual learning and mathematical language through music-making, singing, rhyme and rhythm. These are all pre-requisite skills for the early development of literacy and language that need to be given a higher priority in one-quarter of settings, to include better planning and the up-skilling of staff to implement these important curriculum areas more effectively.

125.   The children's own creative ideas were valued and developed well in most settings and a significant minority of settings have recognised the importance of planning effectively for outdoor learning. As a consequence, there has been an improvement in the provision for physical development and movement and outdoor play in these settings.

126.   There is considerable scope for most improvement in the World Around Us curriculum area; inspectors found that there were too few opportunities for children to explore, experiment and discuss the world around them or to observe and care for living things through the provision of a stimulating learning environment. It is a concern that across one-quarter of settings, there were few or no opportunities for children to make creative and appropriate use of ICT.

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40 *Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education, CCEA, http://www.deni.gov.uk/pre_school_guidance_pdf*

Effective practice

Evidence from a range of inspection activity showed a gradual improvement in the quality of special educational needs provision across the pre-school sector. Much of this improvement is due to staff having access to high quality training provided through DE's capacity building pilot. This is having a positive impact on the early identification of need, appropriate intervention and support strategies and better quality tracking and recording of the children's progress. There has been an increase in the opportunities for pre-school providers from across the sector to meet and share their knowledge, expertise and experience in relation to special educational needs. Such sharing of information and expertise needs to be developed further, so that the children's earlier experiences and progress are built upon when they enter the foundation stage in primary school.

127.   The quality of pastoral care was good or better in nearly all settings. Key features of the good or better provision were the positive and child-centred ethos and the high levels of care, guidance and support provided by the staff, for the children. Based on the information available at the time of the inspection, in 79% of settings safeguarding arrangements were comprehensive, an improvement of seven percentage points over settings inspected during the previous reporting period. By contrast, a small number of settings were evaluated as having unsatisfactory safeguarding arrangements, due to issues such as: inadequate recording systems, insufficient training and not having a designated person on the management committee.

Leadership and management

128.   The quality of leadership and management were evaluated as good or better in 80% of all settings inspected. It was satisfactory in 16% and inadequate in a small number of nursery units and private and voluntary settings.

129.   There was undue variation in the overall quality of leadership and management across the sector. It was good or better in 92% of nursery schools, 84% of nursery units, and in 76% of private and voluntary settings. While there were examples of outstanding leadership in all types of setting, the highest percentage was evident within nursery schools. While the opportunities to share outstanding practice through visits and dissemination events are valued by, and beneficial to, the sector, a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to continuing professional development and sharing of best practice, across departments and sectors, would benefit pre-school education.

130.   The leaders within a majority of private and voluntary settings inspected during this reporting period did not have qualifications at a high enough level to provide them with the specific skills required for strategic leadership and management. In addition, these groups often have higher levels of staff turnover and face difficulties recruiting and retaining effective management committees. As a result, strategic leadership in 26% of voluntary and private settings, and governance in 30% of settings, was evaluated as satisfactory or less. Moreover, the quality of self-evaluation was an area for improvement in over 30% of all settings, characterised by development planning that was less than good.

131.   The quality of the support provided to voluntary and private settings by the early years specialists was good or better in 80% of settings, satisfactory in 13%, and inadequate in the remainder. Where the early years specialist support was effective, it was valued highly by the voluntary and private pre-school sector. The ETI evaluation of the role of the early years specialist[41] recommended that DE guidance for this role[42] is revised to reflect more accurately the current needs of the sector.

132.   The quality of the links and partnerships has continued to improve and was good or better in 88% of settings. It remains important that all settings involve parents as fully as possible, to ensure that there is a good exchange of information, which can aid the ongoing development of each child. Similarly, there is a need to ensure that pre-school settings and primary schools share such information.

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41   An evaluation of the role of the early years specialist (ETI, 2014). The full report can be accessed at:
     http://www.etini.gov.uk/an-evaluation-of-the-role-of-the-early-years-specialist.pdf
42   The Role of the Qualified Teacher or Early Years specialist, DENI
     http://www.deni.gov.uk/preschooleducexpanprog.pdf

133.   The lack of coherent area-based planning for pre-school provision across Northern Ireland can lead to settings being established with small numbers of funded children, thus limiting the children's opportunities to develop socially and emotionally. In addition, fluctuations in enrolments result in a small number of private and voluntary settings becoming unviable. To ensure the needs of all children are met effectively, the employing authorities and the Pre-school Education Advisory Group should consider how best to provide a high quality service that is sustainable and effective within an area-based model. To effect this improvement, there needs to be more coherent strategic planning and co-operation between government departments and across sectors to ensure that all children receive a good quality pre-school education.

Primary education

The overall effectiveness of 84% of the primary schools inspected was evaluated as good or better.

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 effectiveness of provision in primary schools

Context

134. In October 2013, there were 162,253 children in 839 primary and preparatory schools in Northern Ireland. The number of schools has decreased by 34 since October 2008, largely as a result of rationalisation of the schools' estate.

Inspection evidence	
Primary	207
Primary (continuation of previously unfinished inspections)	13
Follow-up inspections	48
Interim Follow-up Visits	78
Sustaining Improvement Pilot	20
Lessons evaluated	4,464

Overall effectiveness

135. Overall effectiveness was evaluated as good or better in 84% of the schools inspected during this reporting period with 59% being very good or outstanding. This is a notable increase from the 78% of schools inspected which were evaluated as good or better in the last Chief Inspector's Report.

136. The Irish-medium primary sector continues to grow and improve in quality. Almost all of the schools inspected in this reporting period were evaluated as good or better. The key strengths included the effectiveness of the leadership and management in maintaining a sharp focus on the quality of learning and the very good standards achieved by children in literacy and numeracy.

Overall effectiveness

Legend: Outstanding, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Inadequate, Unsatisfactory
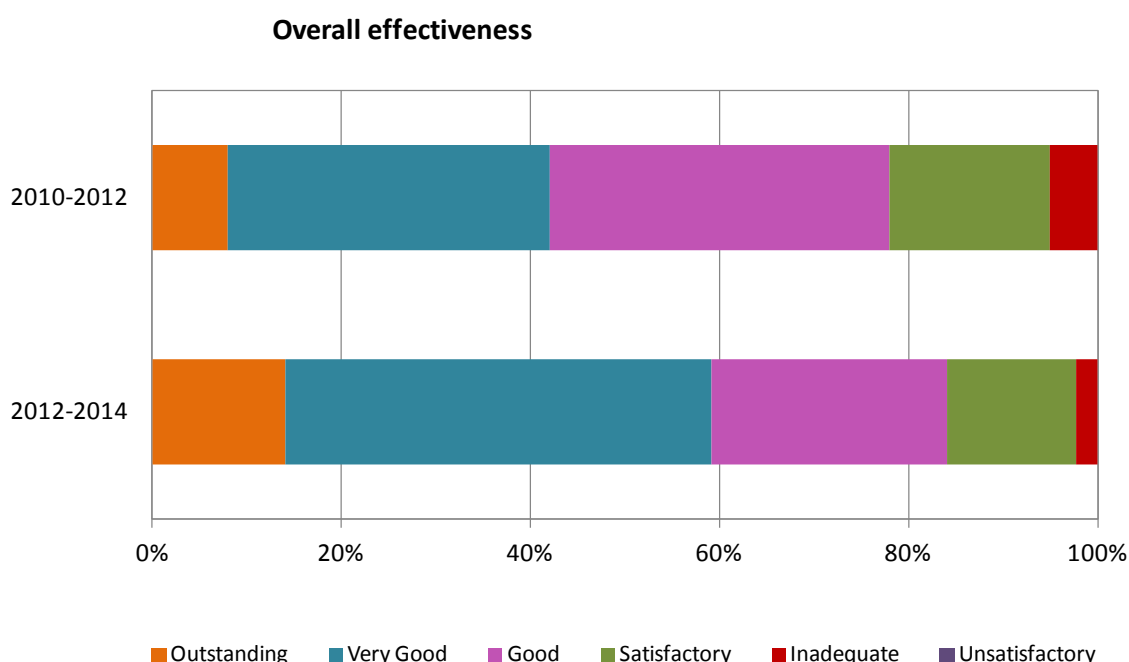
Achievements and standards

137.   The quality of the children's achievements and standards were evaluated as good or better in 87% of the schools inspected, which constitutes a notable increase from 79% for the cohort of schools inspected during the previous reporting period. This strong profile reflects the findings of international studies conducted by PIRLS and TIMSS[43]. The findings showed that nine and ten year-old children performed well in both the reading and mathematics components, to the extent that Northern Ireland was the highest performing English-speaking country in both scales.

138.   There remains an undue variation in the overall achievements and standards of the children attending schools which serve communities with higher and lower levels of social deprivation[44], as measured by entitlement to FSM. During this reporting period, 95% of schools with low levels of social deprivation had achievements and standards evaluated as good or better. This represents an improvement from the previous Chief Inspector's Report 2010-12, in which 84% were evaluated as good or better. For schools inspected with high levels of social deprivation, 77% had achievements and standards evaluated as good or better, demonstrating an improvement of 16 percentage points compared to schools

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43 *PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) December 2012.*
44 *Lower levels of social deprivation are taken to be schools with a FSM entitlement of up to 29.99% and higher levels are those from 30% and above.*

inspected in the last period. While this is encouraging, it remains a priority to continue to raise further the standards achieved by all children.

139.   There has been significant improvement in the standards that children achieve in the use of ICT, with 90% being good or better. This improvement is also reflected in a decline in satisfactory or inadequate standards in ICT from 24% to 10% of schools.

140.   Where achievement and standards were high, teachers led and managed well the continuous improvement in children's learning and exploited fully the opportunities provided in the curriculum to develop the children's knowledge, understanding and skills in a coherent, meaningful and progressive way.

141.   In Irish-medium schools and units, a main strength was the very good standards achieved by the children in numeracy and literacy (both in Irish and English). A key factor in the recent improvement in Irish-medium primary education is the development of monitoring and evaluation of learning, teaching and outcomes, particularly in mathematics, Irish and English. It will be important going forward, for schools to disseminate more effectively the very good and outstanding practice in learning and teaching within their own schools and throughout the sector, to improve further the high standards achieved.

142.   In a minority of the primary schools inspected, where the quality of the achievements and standards was evaluated as less than good, too many children were not achieving in line with their ability and the expected level. This was due to weaknesses, such as poor quality teaching, low expectations and intervention programmes that did not meet the needs of individual children. In addition, leadership at all levels did not understand what constituted high quality classroom practice or intervene swiftly or adequately on matters of concern.

Quality of provision for learning

143.   The quality of provision for learning was evaluated as good or better in 85% of the schools inspected. In the best practice: the provision is informed by the effective use of a range of data, including standardised tests[45]; underachievement is identified and addressed appropriately; and the children's progress is tracked closely.

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45 *A standardised test requires children to answer a common set of questions, under the same test conditions, from which it is possible to compare their scores with sizeable groups of the wider population.*

144. Planning, learning and teaching in the foundation stage continues to improve by approximately eight percentage points from the last reporting period when 75% of these aspects of provision was good or better in the schools inspected. In most of the lessons observed, the children had good or better learning experiences through play and well-structured lessons that enabled them to acquire early literacy and numeracy skills.

145. In a minority of schools inspected, the benefits of the children's pre-school learning experiences and their prior attainments were insufficiently built upon and, consequently, their progress and development were restricted.

Lessons evaluated

Primary 4,464

1% 0% 14% 15% 32% 38%

- Outstanding
- Very Good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Inadequate
- Unsatisfactory

146. There has been an improvement in the overall quality of provision in English since the last reporting period, with 85% of the schools inspected, evaluated as having good or better provision for literacy.
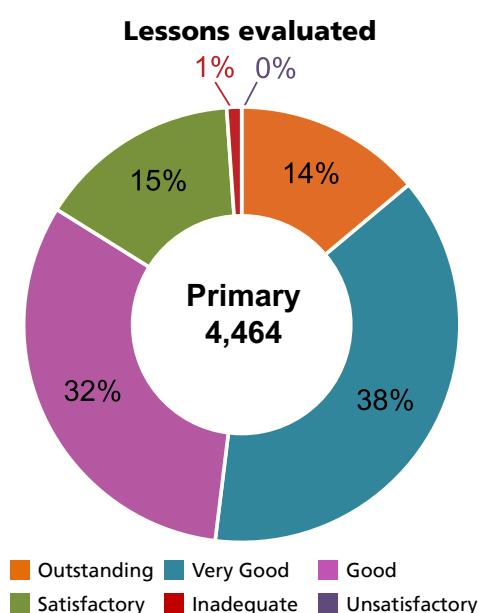
Effective practice in literacy

In most schools, the teaching of reading was good or better and in 63% it was very good or outstanding. In the most effective practice, teachers ensured that the children acquired and developed a broad range of reading strategies such as re-reading and using syntax, contextual, and visual cues to aid self-correction. An appropriately structured phonics programme enabled the children to identify and generate spelling patterns and blend sounds.

147. Where schools have given careful consideration to how they use additional reading support and intervention programmes, these were used effectively to improve the children's reading skills and promote better reading habits; they were often led by highly skilled classroom assistants.

148. There has been an improvement in the quality of provision in mathematics since the last reporting period with 84% of schools inspected having good or better provision for mathematics.

Effective practice in numeracy

Teachers used a greater variety of learning and teaching strategies, including mental mathematics sessions which provided opportunities for children to apply core mathematical concepts.

In 82% of the schools inspected, the children benefited from good or better opportunities to investigate and solve problems in mathematics. There has also been an improvement in teachers' promotion of mathematics in other areas of learning. In the best practice, teachers identified opportunities for children to apply core mathematical skills and knowledge across other curricular areas and in real-life contexts. This is an essential element of learning if children are to recognise the relevance of mathematics in their everyday lives.

149.   Using mathematics across other areas of the curriculum enriches and broadens the learning experience for the children and provides a deeper and more meaningful understanding of mathematics in different contexts.

150.   During 2013-14, ETI carried out an evaluation of the World Around Us[46] area of learning. The strengths included the children's enjoyment and engagement and the high quality of learning and teaching, which was evaluated as good or better in 86% of the lessons observed. In the very good or outstanding practice, the teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of progression in the children's skills, knowledge and understanding in history, geography, and science and technology and took good account of how children learn. Going forward, there is a need for the most effective practice to be shared more widely to assist all teachers to enable progression in the children's learning across the contributory strands of history, geography, and science and technology.

151.   Assessment has been a significant issue during this reporting period; in particular, the use of computer based assessment (CBA)[47]. The findings of an ETI evaluation of CBA in 2013[48] indicated that the majority of the schools surveyed did not find CBA useful for diagnostic purposes or planning for improvement. The schools reported that CBA should only be implemented when the system is efficient, user-friendly, accurate, standardised

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46 *The World Around Us is one of seven areas of learning in the NI primary curriculum, comprising of the three contributory subjects of history, geography, and science and technology.*

47 *In September 2012, two new diagnostic computer based assessment (CBA) tools known as the Northern Ireland Literacy Assessment (NILA) and the Northern Ireland Numeracy Assessment (NINA) were introduced on a voluntary pilot basis, replacing the Interactive Computerised Assessment (INCAS) tool.*

48 *The full report can be accessed at:*
    http://www.etini.gov.uk/a-survey-of-computer-based-assessment-in-primary-schools-across-northern-ireland.pdf

and compatible with other assessment tools. In line with the recommendations of ETI's evaluation, the centrally provided CBAs, the Northern Ireland Numeracy Assessment (NINA) and the Northern Ireland Literacy Assessment (NILA), have been offered for use by schools on a voluntary basis from the 2013-14 academic year.

152.   During the reporting period, primary school principals, governors and the teachers' unions have raised concerns with DE regarding the revised assessment arrangements, particularly around how well they support learning and teaching and how assessment data is used outside schools for accountability purposes. The ETI recommends that DE and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) prioritise, as a matter of urgency, these ongoing concerns, in the best interests of the children.

153.   The percentage of schools providing good or better additional learning support for those children who have barriers to learning has improved from 83% to 88%. However, a minority of schools are failing to ensure that those children who need additional support with their learning acquire sufficient skills to work with confidence as independent learners as they progress through the education system.

154.   The quality of pastoral care was good or better in almost all of the schools inspected. Schools were taking greater account of, and responding to, a wide range of health and social issues affecting the children in their care, including working effectively with relevant outside support agencies. Safeguarding and child protection were evaluated as comprehensive in most of the primary schools inspected. In around 20% of primary schools, there is a need for the governors and staff to meet comprehensively the statutory requirements relating to policies, training and practices, including those related to e-safety.

Leadership and management

155.   In 85% of the schools inspected, leadership and management were evaluated as good or better with 58% evaluated as very good or outstanding; this profile is more positive than for the cohort of schools inspected in the previous reporting period. Inspection evidence shows that the most important variable for school improvement is the quality of leadership.

156.   The most effective principals, as leaders of learning, place a focus on children's achievement and they motivate and work collaboratively with their children, staff,

parents and the wider community. In 15% of the schools inspected, the quality of leadership required improvement. In these instances, there was a need for effective school development planning processes, incisive use of relevant data, and learning and teaching that is closely matched to the needs and abilities of the children.

157.   There are still schools in areas of social disadvantage which are not meeting the needs of all of their children well enough. In contrast, there are other schools in similar contexts which achieve much better outcomes for their children. The characteristics common to the schools which perform well in challenging circumstances are: high quality leadership, highly skilled and motivated staff, a combination of rigorous internal self-evaluation supported by robust external evaluation, active involvement of parents and informed commitment by key stakeholders.

158.   The evaluation of governance was very positive in the majority of schools inspected. The most effective practice included appropriate support for the principal and staff in the implementation of the school development plan and the positive contribution made to the life and work of the school. Where aspects of governance could be improved, these included the exercise of their challenge function, where appropriate, on a range of issues such as leadership, learning and teaching and standards.

Post-primary education

> **The overall effectiveness of 63% of the post-primary schools inspected was evaluated as good or better.**

Going well

- GCSE and A level outcomes overall are rising; fewer pupils are leaving school with no GCSEs[49] 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 FSM and in particular, boys in non-grammar, controlled schools.

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49 GCSE qualifications or equivalent.

The effectiveness of provision in post-primary schools

Context

159.   In the first year covered by the Chief Inspector's Report (2012-13), there were 215 post-primary schools. This reduced to 210 in 2013-14 as a consequence of the closure and merger of smaller post-primary schools in response to changing demographics. In 2013-14, of the 142 non-grammar schools: 20 were integrated schools and one was an Irish-medium school. There were 68 grammar schools.

160.   Of the 143,973 post-primary pupils, 81,339 attended non-grammar schools in 2013-14, a fall in age-related numbers from 83,059 in 2012-13. In 2013-14 there were 5,515 teachers (full-time equivalents) in non-grammar schools giving a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 14.7 to 1.

161.   The number of pupils attending grammar schools has remained steady in both years of this report at around 62,600 pupils. In 2013-14 there were 3,835 teachers (full-time equivalents) in grammar schools giving a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 16.3 to 1.

| Inspection evidence	
Post-primary inspections	57
Post-primary (continuation of previously unfinished inspection)	2
Baseline inspections for "Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics" project	19
Follow-up inspections	42
Interim follow-up visits	46
Sustaining Improvement Pilot inspections	5
Lessons evaluated	4,234

Overall effectiveness

162.   Post-primary schools are working with a greater number of pupils who experience a more complex range of social, behavioural, emotional, cognitive and linguistic barriers; at the same time, the political, economic and social expectations of what education and, in particular, schools should be able to do in this context, are growing. Given this increasingly demanding context, in 63% of post-primary schools inspected, the overall effectiveness of the quality of education is good or better. However, in the remaining 37% of schools, much more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils can avail fully of the benefits of a good school.

Overall effectiveness
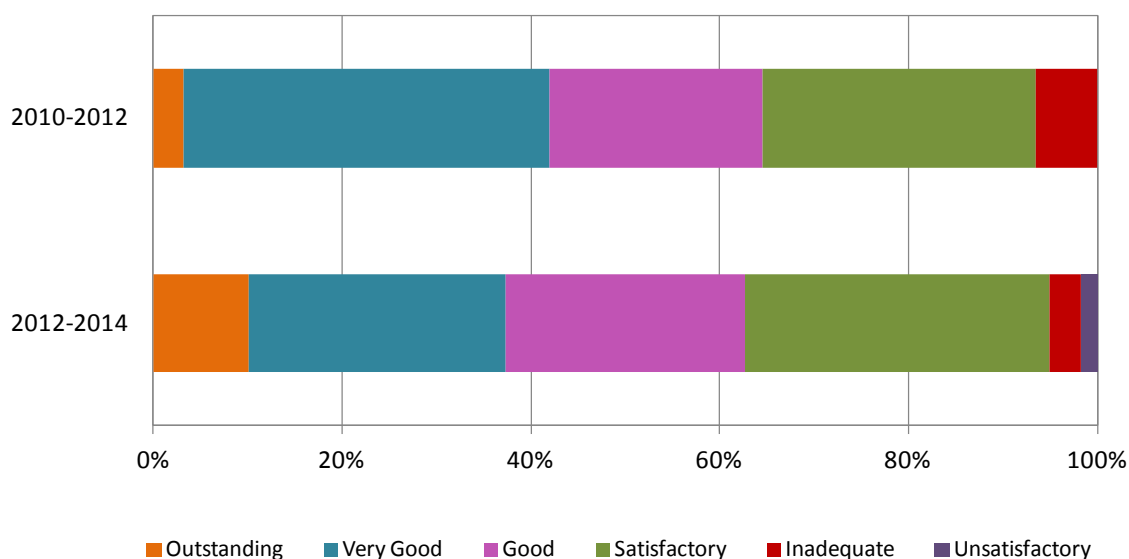
Achievements and standards

163.   The majority of young people develop and achieve well through their post-primary education. Schools are responding, with good effect, to the increasing complexity of the social and emotional needs of young people by developing their critical and reflective thinking, a strong sense of personal and social responsibility, communication and resilience; all of which prepare them well for the next stage of their learning, and for life and work.

164.   Over the reporting period, attainment at GCSE level and in post-16 examinations has continued to rise. The proportion of schools which were evaluated as having outstanding achievements and standards has improved from a low base of 3% in 2010-12 to 14% in

this period. The percentage of pupils who attain five GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and mathematics, has also increased, modestly, since the last reporting period from 60.1% in 2010-11 to 60.9% in 2012-13[50]. The improvement has mainly taken place in non-grammar schools.

165.   This improvement results from better strategic senior leadership; an effective focus on ensuring the curriculum and the examination entry policies match more closely the needs and aspirations of the pupils and more effective learning and teaching that is matched to pupils' needs and linked with effective care, guidance and support.

166.   Despite these improvements, the quality of achievements and standards was less than satisfactory in 15% of schools inspected over this reporting period. Where achievements and standards are inadequate, it is important that teachers respond more proactively to the differing needs and abilities of individual pupils.

167.   Raising the standards attained by those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and with significant barriers to their learning remains a top priority for action. Only 33.9% of year 12 pupils entitled to FSM achieve the expected outcomes[51] by the end of their formal schooling; only 17% of year 12 boys entitled to FSM in controlled non-grammar schools achieve at this level[52].

168.   Additionally, while the percentage of year 12 pupils leaving school with no GCSEs or equivalent has dropped from 2.2% to 0.2% (and 0.7% for FSM pupils)[53], it is a concern that 8.9% of young people from minority ethnic groups left school without a GCSE qualification[54]. These achievement issues need to be addressed urgently if we are serious about achieving a more equitable society.

169.   For all post-primary schools, examination benchmarking data from DE shows that overall attainment in public examinations tends to fall as social deprivation, as defined by FSM categories[55], rises.

170.   On inspection, the evaluation of overall achievements and standards in post-primary schools comprises a more holistic evaluation than attainment in public examinations alone. It includes, for example, an evaluation of progression and of wider skills and dispositions.

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50 *Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland 2012-2013 (Revised) (SAER). For further information, see: http://www.deni.gov.uk/school_performance.htm*
51 *Five GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades A*-C including GCSE English and mathematics.*
52 *Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland 2012-2013 (Revised).*
53 *Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland 2012-2013 (Revised).*
54 *40 pupils out of 450 pupils.*
55 *See the benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.*

The ETI inspection outcomes demonstrate a wide variation in achievement and standards. Notably, for non-grammar schools inspected, these outcomes varied from outstanding to inadequate, both for schools which serve pupils from communities with low levels of social deprivation and for those with high levels[56].

171.   During this reporting period 43% of non-grammar schools inspected, which serve communities with lower levels of social deprivation, had achievements and standards evaluated as good or better. This figure compares with 57% of non-grammar schools inspected in the previous reporting period. In contrast, 11% of non-grammar schools with high levels of social deprivation had achievements and standards evaluated as good or better, compared with 38% of non-grammar schools inspected in the period of the last Chief Inspector's Report[57]. It must be remembered that these are different cohorts of schools in each of the reporting periods. However, it indicates that, while there is a need for improvement in all schools, the need is greater in schools in areas of higher deprivation.

172.   The most effective schools are themselves proficient in measuring and reporting clearly the value which they add to a young person's progress, their wider dispositions, skills and attainment. However, too many schools are not effective in identifying the value they potentially add to their pupils' progress and levels of achievement. There is a need for schools to recognise and acknowledge value-added outcomes more explicitly. Through their processes of self-evaluation, schools should identify the value they add to their pupils' development and attainment, which can be shared with governors, parents, the wider community and with inspectors.

173.   Pupils' progress relative to their respective starting points is the most important determinant in ETI's evaluation of achievements and standards. Progress measures can override examination outcomes where it is demonstrated clearly by the school that pupils are making progress and the school is adding value for those pupils. The DE needs to provide schools with further guidance and support on value-added measures.

Quality of provision for learning

174.   The quality of the lessons observed during inspections was comparable with the previous period with 78% evaluated as good or better. It is a concern that 22% of all lessons observed had areas which required improvement to meet better the needs of the pupils.

175.   Inspectors report that at key stage 3, planning for lessons and for the longer term, was strong in most schools inspected. However, at key stage 4 and post-16, the quality of

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56 *Lower levels of social deprivation are taken to be schools with a FSM entitlement of up to 29.99% and higher levels are those from 30% and above.*
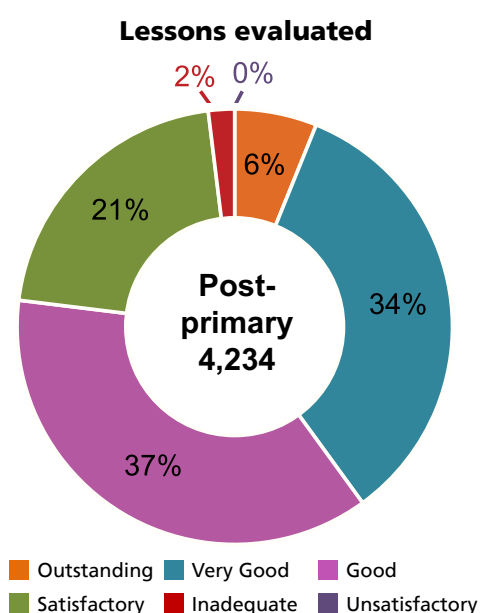57 *Owing to the small number of non-grammar schools with high levels of social deprivation inspected during this reporting period, this percentage needs to be treated with caution.*

planning was less than good in over one-third of schools, as planning was over-reliant on the examination specification alone and did not respond to, and build well enough on, the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. As schools make changes in examination boards selected, there is an opportunity to improve the quality of their teaching schemes.

176.   The effective use of ICT to enhance teaching, in particular, has improved significantly, being good or better in 63% of schools; this represents an improvement of 17 percentage points over those schools inspected in the previous reporting period. Nevertheless, fuller returns from government's significant investment in ICT resources, in terms of the educational experiences of pupils, the professional development of teachers and the effective analysis and use of data to inform decision-making, have yet to be realised. Inspection teams report frequently that there is insufficient use of technology by pupils to support their learning; teachers need to give pupils opportunities to engage more fully with online and digital media to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills.

177.   Assessment of, and for, learning remains a weak aspect of provision for the post-primary phase; it was less than good in 46% of all schools inspected.

Lessons evaluated

2%   0%
6%
21%
34%
Post-primary 4,234
37%

- Outstanding
- Very Good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Inadequate
- Unsatisfactory

Effective practice

Where assessment practice was strong, schools analyse and share performance and pastoral information with staff and provide training on how to use the information effectively to inform planning and practice. In addition, and appropriately, pupils are provided regularly with information to give them an insight into their own progress.

The quality of care, guidance and support was good or better in 86% of post-primary schools inspected; in 23% it was outstanding. In schools where pastoral care was most effective, the teachers used pastoral and performance data to inform pedagogy so that pupils were supported well to learn and to attain the highest possible standards. In many instances, senior pupils played an important role in the pastoral care of younger peers and benefited from participation in a range of high quality leadership opportunities.

178.   There are, mainly, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. A minority of the schools had satisfactory arrangements, including areas for improvement such as the need to update relevant policies and practices.

179.   The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly since the last reporting period; 76% of the provision was evaluated as good or better. The provision for special educational needs has been enhanced by the use of DE's resource file and much of the improvement can be attributed to higher teacher expectations, better planning and practice, access to effective professional development and a sharper focus on assessing, tracking and communicating pupils' progress. Given the increasing numbers of pupils being placed on special needs registers, schools need to use resources more effectively and efficiently to avoid an over-reliance on external support.

180.   Curriculum provision is good or better in 73% of the schools inspected. However, in a small number of schools, curriculum provision is unsatisfactory. In the best practice, senior leadership teams provide pupils with a suitably wide range of progression pathways and review regularly the provision to meet their individual needs and aspirations. As schools work towards meeting the Entitlement Framework targets for 2015, much work remains to be done to ensure that every pupil has access to an appropriate curriculum which has a broad and appropriate offer of general and applied subjects.

181.   Over the reporting period, the quality of the careers education provision has continued to improve significantly and in 86% of the post-primary schools inspected, it was evaluated as good or better. In particular, there is an improving trend in the

quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs. In the most effective practice, the pupils benefited from well-considered and meaningful work experience placements, and career planning that was well-informed by labour market intelligence. In addition, there were purposeful links with external agencies, further and higher education providers and other stakeholders. In a minority of instances, the pupils had insufficient opportunities to participate in activities, including study visits, events with guest speakers and engagement in competitions.

Leadership and management

182.   The quality of leadership and management at all levels has improved modestly; it was evaluated as good or better in 66% of schools inspected compared to 61% for post-primary schools inspected in the last period. The most significant improvements are in the strategic leadership given by the principal and the senior leadership team. In the best practice, leaders at all levels, including the governors, focus persistently on actions to effect improvement, by embedding through the school's ethos and values, strongly self-evaluative development planning. This work is underpinned by shared values, good relationships and communication; it supports pupils, addresses underachievement and raises attainment.

183.   In the 34% of schools inspected where leadership and management needed to improve, the actions to effect improvement, including effective use of data and first-hand classroom observation, were undermined by ineffective communication and a lack of a shared vision that focused on pupil-centred values.

184.   The effectiveness of middle management has improved overall from 66% in the last reporting period; it is now good or better in 73% of the schools inspected. However, effectiveness was evaluated mainly as good, rather than very good or outstanding; therefore, to improve further, staff development is required to enable middle managers to have a greater impact on effecting improvement in learning and teaching.

185.   The ETI evaluated the effectiveness of school governance consistently well in terms of the governors' role to both support and to challenge school leaders, including their knowledge of benchmarked standards. However, in just over 40% of schools inspected, there was scope for improvement in important aspects of governance. These areas included the need for governors' to be better informed in order to challenge poor practice. Governors can make use of ETI's self-evaluation questionnaire to support them in developing their understanding of their role.

Special educational needs and inclusion

> Almost all of the special schools inspected were meeting effectively the educational, pastoral and social needs of their pupils.

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.

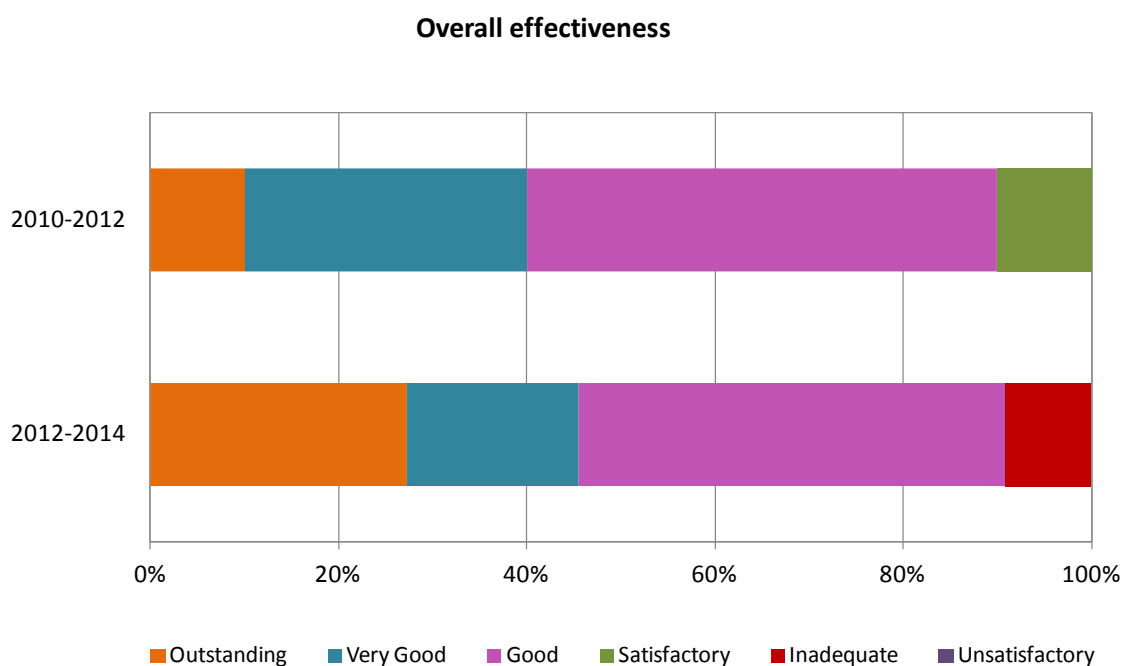# The effectiveness of provision in special schools

Context

186.   There are 41 special schools in Northern Ireland, including the Belfast Hospital School (BHS). These schools form an integral part of the education system and provide an invaluable service for 4,904 of the most vulnerable children: this figure includes the BHS whose enrolment may include some pupils who attend other special schools. In 2013-14, children and young people with a statement of special educational needs represented 4.6% of the total school population. Over this period, 1.4% of the total school population attended special schools.

Inspection evidence	
Special inspections	10
Special (continuation of previously unfinished inspection)	1
Follow-up inspections	2
Sustaining Improvement Pilot	4
Lessons evaluated	491

Overall effectiveness

187.   The overall effectiveness was good or better in 91% of the special schools inspected. Almost all of the special schools inspected were meeting effectively the educational, pastoral and social needs of their pupils. The schools focus strongly on how children learn, and use appropriate resources and learning strategies to excellent effect. The pupils, many of whom have complex and significant learning and personal needs, benefit from an appropriate curriculum and learning experiences which help them feel secure, engaged and achieve appropriately.

188.   Special schools continue to place a significant emphasis on whole-school initiatives. For example, there is a focus on vocational learning and improving the pupils' social and independent skills for living, accreditation and transition. Access to further education is now central to the curriculum and accreditation choices for those pupils leaving special schools are better as further education colleges have improved the range and quality of their offer to this sector.

Overall effectiveness

Legend: Outstanding, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Inadequate, Unsatisfactory
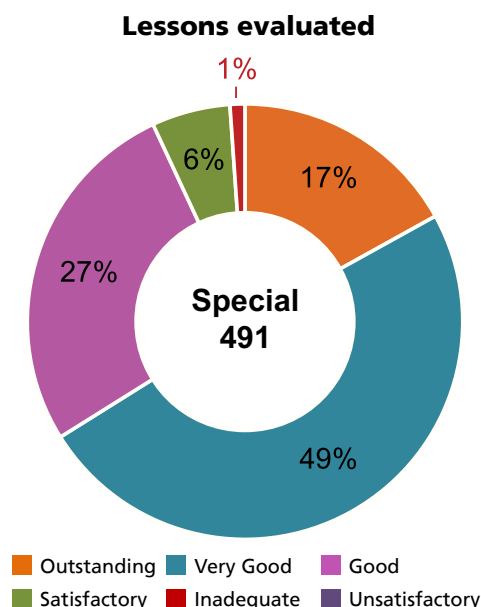
Achievements and standards

189.   Almost all pupils were achieving well in the schools inspected. They develop an appropriate range of knowledge, understanding and skills, which enables them to move on to the next stage of their education, training or employment.

190.   The broadening of the curriculum and the efforts to make it relevant and practical, have resulted in the pupils achieving well, becoming better learners, developing their thinking skills and personal capabilities and particularly their skills in self-management. As a result, the pupils become more confident, independent and organised and they develop their capacity to work well with others in various settings.

Quality of provision for learning

191. The provision for learning has been of high quality during this reporting period, with provision in nearly all schools inspected being evaluated as good or better. Inspectors observed consistent and coherent planning for all areas of the curriculum; this was informed by individual learning profiles and assessment information. The learning profiles detailed how pupils learn best and the strategies to help enable learning. Comprehensive assessment information focused on securing appropriately high outcomes for pupils. The increasing success of planning for, and meeting, longer-term pupil profile targets resulted in improved learning.

Lessons evaluated

1%
6%
17%
27%
Special 491
49%

■ Outstanding ■ Very Good ■ Good
■ Satisfactory ■ Inadequate ■ Unsatisfactory

192. Learning and teaching was good or better in 93% of lessons evaluated and very good or outstanding in 66% of lessons.

Effective practice

The best teaching observed was underpinned by comprehensive planning for collaborative lessons across classes. The teachers provided innovative and creative lessons with appropriate practical activities which the majority of pupils responded to with enthusiasm and enjoyment. In addition, learning was complemented by teachers and classroom assistants working effectively together, using a range of strategies and resources to make lessons fun, interesting and relevant. Features of this effective practice included the good use of information and communication technologies and engaging lessons in music, art and, in particular, physical education.

193. The pupils followed a broad and balanced curriculum with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and an appropriate focus on vocational learning, which prepared them well for the transition to the next stage of their learning and development. Personal development was of high quality, and careers support was well embedded. Pupils benefited from the high levels of pastoral care and support which, in most instances, was characterised by a welcoming learning environment which gave the pupils a sense of well-being and confidence. The ETI survey report on Transition Arrangements from

Special Schools and Mainstream Learning Support Centres to Post-school Provision highlighted where pupils make effective transitions but stated that post-19 too many learners faced poor choices and experience insecurity.

Leadership and management

194.   Leadership and management across special schools were key strengths in this reporting period and were evaluated as very good or outstanding in 55% of the schools inspected. This was characterised by a clear strategic vision for the development of the school which has been shared and agreed with all the staff. Professional development of staff and excellent links with parents, the wider community and with other providers in the health and education sectors, were also given high priority.

195.   In the most effective practice, there were robust systems for monitoring, evaluating and celebrating pupils' achievements. In addition, the schools' leadership worked relentlessly to engage with pupils who are particularly vulnerable and hard-to-reach. In the less effective practice, there was a need for leaders to build the capacity of staff to assess and meet better the complex needs of pupils.

196.   In most of the schools inspected, there could be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. In the most effective practice, governance provided both support and challenge, thereby promoting improvement. Where governance was less effective, aspects such as the challenge function were underdeveloped.

197.   A key strength of the leadership and management during this reporting period was the high quality of the links and partnerships between the schools and other stakeholders. This was confirmed by an ETI evaluation of The Role of Special Schools in Area Learning Communities, which indicated that almost all special schools are consolidating and extending their good practices and benefiting from collaborative working within ALCs[58]. All of the special schools inspected during this reporting period had effective links with mainstream schools, further education colleges and others, to share expertise and resources. These links encourage an inclusive ethos and assist with meeting pupils' current and future needs.

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58 The full report, 'The Role of Special Schools in Area Learning Communities,' (2013) can be accessed at:
    http://www.etini.gov.uk/an-evaluation-of-the-work-of-special-schools-within-the-area-learning-communities.pdf

Education other than at school (including alternative education provision for pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4)

Going well

- The overall effectiveness of the small number of education other than at school (EOTAS)/AEP centres inspected, with 71% evaluated as good or better.

- In the majority of centres inspected, the quality of pastoral care, guidance and support was good or better.

- The strategic leadership was evaluated as good or better in the majority of centres inspected.

Going forward

- EOTAS/AEP centres need to develop more effective links with schools and plan jointly the personal education programme and targets for each young person.

- Aspects of governance need to be developed further to ensure that all provision is monitored more effectively.

Context

198.   There are 36 EOTAS centres in Northern Ireland (including AEP) for pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4. They provide for the needs of vulnerable children and young people aged from five to sixteen years. In 2012-13 approximately 600 children and young people attended EOTAS centres.

Inspection evidence	
EOTAS/AEP inspections	7
Follow-up inspection	1
Interim follow-up visits	2
Lessons evaluated	105

Overall effectiveness

199.   Seven EOTAS/AEP centres were inspected during this reporting period; 71% of the centres were meeting effectively the needs of young people who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of young people referred to EOTAS/ AEP provision has not changed significantly, although most centres report an increase in the number of young people with mental health and anxiety-based conditions; this reflects the need for more effective capacity building in mainstream schools to help meet the challenges of young people who are presenting with multiple complex social, emotional and learning needs.
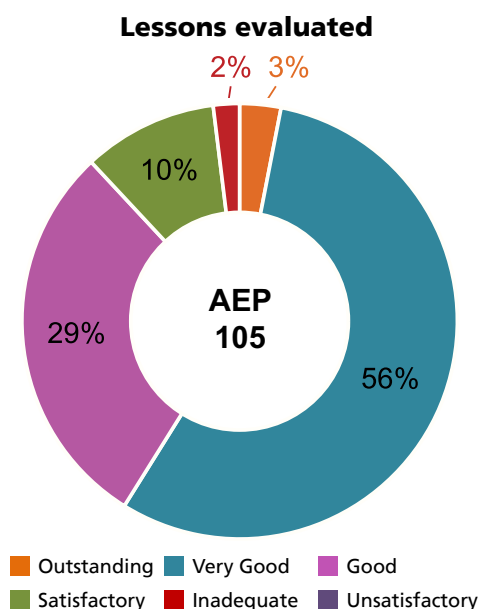
Achievements and standards

200.   In 71% of the centres inspected, the young people achieved good or better standards. This is reflected in the effective engagement of young people, and as a result, they are becoming more confident and are developing their capacity to learn, develop new skills and interact positively with their peers.

201.   The staff inspired the young people in their learning and created challenging and achievable personal targets for them. The young people benefited from the increasing number of subjects available to study and opportunities provided through vocational education. Through the well-planned and effective personal development programmes, the young people acquired good social skills and most of them gained sufficient accreditation to move to the next stage of their education or training.

Quality of provision for learning

202.   The quality of the provision in 71% of the centres inspected was good or better, characterised by high expectations and a positive ethos with a particular emphasis on enabling young people to overcome barriers to learning. These centres focused strongly on the academic and personal development of the young people and were successful in supporting year 12 pupils to obtain meaningful accreditation, leading to entry into further education, training or other study.

Lessons evaluated

AEP 105

■ Outstanding	■ Very Good
■ Satisfactory	■ Inadequate

■ Good

■ Unsatisfactory

Effective practice

The most effective centres inspected were developing learning programmes that were relevant and focused on the needs and interests of the young people, enabling them to learn successfully. The curriculum was broad, balanced and accredited appropriately. Planning to meet the needs of the young people was highly developed and there were effective partnerships between the referring schools and the further education or training organisations who provided further academic and vocational opportunities. The centres have built effective partnerships with schools and when possible, young people attended some classes with their peers in the mainstream school.

203.   Where provision was less effective, the quality of learning and teaching was weak and the lack of vocational education and appropriate career pathways meant that the young people were at risk of further marginalisation. In such provision, the curriculum was limited, young people were not sufficiently supported in their learning and had little confidence in their ability to succeed academically. Their behaviour and attendance were poor. The centres had not developed firm partnerships with the referring schools. These schools had little contact with their pupils and there was poor strategic planning for the next steps for each young person. The quality of accommodation and resources in a significant minority of centres inspected were inadequate.

204.   In 71% of the centres, the quality of pastoral support was of a good or better standard, which impacted positively on the young people's confidence and improved attitudes. Given that these are young people who are at risk of marginalisation, the supportive ethos in these centres has ensured that their emotional health and well-being is prioritised.

Leadership and management

205.   The overall quality of leadership and management in the majority of EOTAS/AEP centres inspected was evaluated as good or very good. Strategic leadership was good or better in 57% of the centres inspected. The governance by the management committees and groups in the majority of EOTAS centres is effective, in terms of having an overall understanding of the centres' policies, structures and finances. Aspects of governance need to be developed further to ensure that all provision is monitored more effectively. While links between the centres and mainstream post-primary schools have improved, in 43% of the small number of centres inspected, opportunities for collaborative working were not realised sufficiently.

Further education

The overall effectiveness of the further education provision was very good or outstanding in two of the colleges inspected; it was good in one college and satisfactory in the other.

99

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 effectiveness of provision in further education

Context

206.   There are six further education colleges in Northern Ireland. Based on the most current data available, (2011-12 to 2012-13)[59], total enrolments on further education professional and technical accredited courses up to level 3 increased slightly from 141,760 to 145,353. For 2012-13, enrolments at level 2 accounted for 47% of the total provision, entry level and level 1 for 23% and level 3 for 30% of the provision. Part-time provision is significant and accounts for 82% of the total enrolments.

Inspection evidence	
Number of whole-college further education inspections	4
Number of district inspector scrutiny inspections	12
Number of follow-up inspections	1
Number of lessons/sessions evaluated	742

Overall effectiveness

207.   The overall effectiveness of the further education provision[60] was very good or outstanding in two of the colleges inspected; it was good in one college and satisfactory in the other. Over the past three years, all six further education colleges have been subject to a whole-college inspection. Overall effectiveness was evaluated as outstanding in one college, very good in one, good in three and satisfactory in one.

208.   In the four colleges inspected during this period, the overall quality of the provision for further education courses was mostly good or very good. Excluding the provision in the essential skills, in over 90% of the professional and technical areas inspected the quality of the provision was good or better, and in just over 60% of them it was very good or outstanding.

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59 *Source: The Department for Employment and Learning Further Education Statistical Record (FE Recurrent provision plus other Department funded programmes and cost recovery courses).*

60 *The four whole-college inspections carried out in this period included an evaluation of their provision for work-based learning. The main findings from these inspections are included in the work-based learning section of this report.*
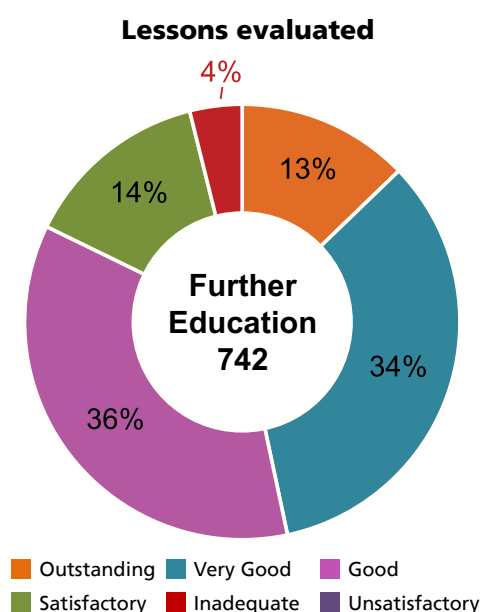
Achievements and standards

209.   Across the four colleges inspected, achievements and standards were very good in two, good in one and satisfactory in one.   Achievements and standards were consistently good or better in applied science, art and design and media, childcare, computing and information technology, engineering, hospitality and catering, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and sports studies. In the essential skills, achievements and standards were good or better in two of the colleges and satisfactory in the other two.

210.   According to DEL's data[61], over the period 2011-13, overall outcomes on further education programmes at levels 1, 2 and 3 have improved significantly across the sector. The improvements are due to more effective tackling of underperformance by senior managers in most of the colleges, leading to ongoing improvements in retention and achievement rates over the period; average retention rates, for example, improved from 88% to 92% and average achievement rates improved from 79% to 87%.

211.   While there are clear ongoing challenges in the management and delivery of the essential skills, there have been significant and sustained improvements in success rates in further education. For the mainstream funded provision, average success rates have improved from 60% in 2010-11 to 71% in 2012-13. Success rates have improved significantly for each essential skill. It is noteworthy that success rates in the ICT essential skill have improved from a low base of 57%, to 69%.

Quality of provision for learning

212.   The quality of learning and teaching was good or better in 84% of the lessons evaluated in the colleges inspected. This represents a slight improvement on the previous reporting period. Around 47% of the lessons observed were very good or outstanding.

Lessons evaluated

Further Education 742

4%	
13%	Outstanding
34%	Very Good
36%	Good
14%	Satisfactory

Outstanding   Very Good   Good
Satisfactory   Inadequate   Unsatisfactory

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61 *Source: The Department for Employment and Learning Further Education Leavers Survey 2010-2011. Retention is the percentage of enrolments that complete their programme of study. In the case of 2-year courses, it is the percentage of final year enrolments that complete their programme of study. Achievement is the percentage of completers who gain a qualification. In the case of 2-year courses, it is the percentage of final year completers who gain a qualification.*

Effective practice

Where the learning and teaching was effective and of a high standard, the key features included good planning, practical work to embed theoretical learning, rigorous and well-organised assessment, contextualised learning experiences, appropriate pace and challenge and high expectations of the learners.

213.   There have been significant advances in the functionality and capacity of online learning platforms and assessment tools, including e-portfolios. In the best practice ILT is used to support, challenge and motivate learners to work better independently and achieve higher standards.

214.   However, with the exception of one college, the effective use of ILT in teaching, learning and assessment varies considerably. This is due, in the main, to a lack of coherent and inclusive whole-college strategies for the effective use of ILT to support the main aims of the college development plan.

215.   The quality of care, guidance and support was good or better in the colleges inspected; it was outstanding in two of them. The quality of the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision is improving; it was good or better in all of the colleges inspected, with one college having outstanding provision.

216.   The overall quality of the essential skills provision in the colleges inspected varied; it was good in two and satisfactory in two. In the better practice, the senior management team has a clear strategic vision for the essential skills and plays a proactive role in the implementation, underpinned by effective monitoring, of the essential skills provision. The main areas for improvement include, for example, ineffective monitoring of the progress of learners, and the need to improve learning and teaching, as 36% was evaluated as less than good.

217.   It is appropriate that DEL raised the requirements to teach the essential skills both in terms of the tutor's subject expertise and pedagogic development. It is also timely and appropriate that DEL has developed a continuous professional development module with the University of Ulster with the aim of improving the quality of learning and teaching in the essential skills.

218.   Three of the colleges inspected have engaged to good effect with community and disadvantaged groups, as part of their community and economic engagement strategies, to meet the needs of adult learners with essential skills and other employability needs.

Leadership and management

219.   The strategic management of the curriculum was good or better in three of the colleges inspected; in two of them it was very good or outstanding. In both of these colleges, along with a strong commitment to meet the needs of all learners, the curriculum offer is outward-looking and relevant to the demands of the wider economy, but also addresses social exclusion. The high quality discrete provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is characterised by a curriculum provision which meets well the personal, social and employability skills of the learners; they acquire and apply good team-working skills, along with effective communication and social skills. In one college, however, the curriculum planning lacks appropriate coherence and is insufficiently aligned with the emerging skills needs of the local and regional economy.

220.   The senior curriculum management teams in three of the colleges inspected have developed robust data management systems to inform curriculum planning, and to track the progress of learners and underpin the self-evaluation and quality improvement strategies. The availability of benchmarked data from DEL, along with the econometric analysis of this performance data, has focused and helped colleges and the sector considerably in this regard.

221.   There is good evidence in three of the colleges inspected of effective action being taken by senior management teams to address underperformance. This has led to a significant improvement in course planning, timetabling and overall outcomes for the learners.

222.   The levels and impact of economic engagement were good or better in all of the colleges; it is noteworthy that they were outstanding in two of the colleges inspected. It is evident that the colleges are now becoming key strategic hubs in supporting industry, particularly in the new priority skills[62] and STEM-related areas; they are making a significant contribution in the efforts to rebalance the Northern Ireland economy.

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62 *The sectors identified to rebalance the economy are: business services/ICT; financial services; food and drink processing and manufacturing; advanced manufacturing; advanced engineering. The sectors identified to rebuild the economy are: hospitality and catering/tourism; retail.*

223.   The colleges inspected provide mostly high quality educational and training programmes to pupils in post-primary and special schools as part of the Entitlement Framework. With the exception of one college, the provision at key stage 4 and post-16 is broad and balanced and supports well the career aspirations of the pupils, particularly in STEM-related areas.

224.   Most lecturing staff in the colleges inspected are well-qualified and experienced and have opportunities to enhance their professional and technical skills. The DEL has piloted a teaching module for part-time lecturers, through the University of Ulster. The ETI evaluation of this pilot identified key strengths in the management of the module and its impact on developing the pedagogic practice and wider skills of the participating lecturers.

225.   With the exception of one college inspected, the quality of the accommodation, specialist resources and ICT infrastructure were at least good; in two colleges, it was very good, with some facilities being outstanding.

Work-based learning

> **The overall effectiveness of provision was good or better in 11 of the 18 supplier organisations inspected; it was very good or outstanding in six of them.**

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 effectiveness of provision in work-based learning

Context

226.   There are currently 44 supplier organisations contracted to provide Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. In early 2014[63], 6,951 trainees were registered on the Training for Success programme. Of these, 4,350 were on the Skills for Work strand, 2,218 on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship[64] strand and 383 on the Skills for Your Life strand. Just under two-thirds of the trainees on the Training for Success programme are male.

227.   At the same time, a total of 7,257 apprentices[65] were registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Of these, around one-half were on level 2 apprenticeship programmes and the remainder were working towards a level 3 apprenticeship. The highest proportions of apprentices are in engineering, hospitality and catering and health and social care.

| Inspection evidence	
Number of work-based learning inspections	18
Number of district inspector scrutiny inspections	67
Number of follow-up inspections	6
Number of directed training sessions evaluated	794

Overall effectiveness

228.   The overall effectiveness of work-based learning provision was good or better in 11 of the 18 supplier organisations inspected; it was very good or outstanding in six of them. In two of the supplier organisations inspected, however, there were significant areas for improvement identified. Over the reporting period, six follow-up inspections were completed. One organisation improved by two performance levels and the remainder improved by one level.

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63 *Training for Success and Programme-Led Apprenticeships Statistical Bulletin, Department for Employment and Learning (May 2014).*

64 *The Programme-Led Apprenticeships strand has been discontinued; under the Training for Success 2013 contracts, no further registrations onto the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand were permitted.*

65 *ApprenticeshipsNI Statistical Bulletin, Department for Employment and Learning (May 2014).*

Overall effectiveness
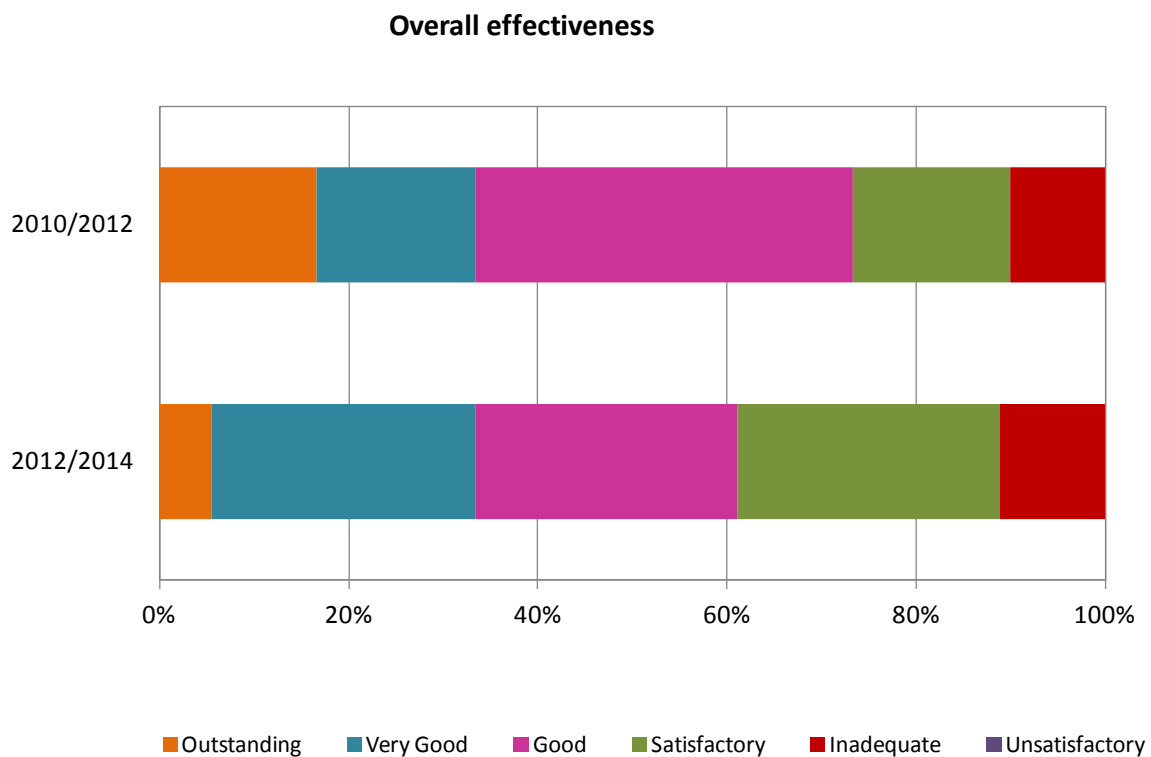
229.   Although there is some variation in the quality of the provision in a few of the supplier organisations inspected, overall, it needs to be recognised that the work-based learning sector does much good work in addressing the significant barriers to learning and future employment with which many young people present.

230.   During the reporting period a significant and fundamental policy review of both the apprenticeship and youth training provision in Northern Ireland has been ongoing; in June 2014, DEL published Securing our Success: The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships. The strategy, which will provide progression pathways between levels 3 and 8 for apprentices, will be further complemented by the ongoing review of youth training, designed to facilitate progression for trainees to a level 3 apprenticeship, level 3 further education provision, or employment.

Achievements and standards

231.   Achievements and standards were good or better in 13 of the organisations inspected; they were very good or better in five of them. Where achievements and standards are very good or better, an ethos of high expectations pervades the organisation. Workplace and directed training are closely aligned and the trainees and apprentices develop and apply good technical skills. There are also good opportunities for them to improve their literacy, numeracy and wider employability skills.

232.   In most of the supplier organisations inspected, well-planned opportunities are provided for trainees on the Training for Success programme to develop good personal effectiveness, social and work-related skills. However, a minority of the trainees in the supplier organisations inspected have too few opportunities to develop or apply a sufficiently broad range of skills to enhance their employment prospects.

233.   An increasing number of the supplier organisations inspected place a high priority on the provision of good quality, closely monitored work experience opportunities for trainees. These organisations work hard to engage and collaborate with local employers and it is clear that the trainees benefit through higher levels of motivation and better work-readiness and employability skills.

234.   On the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, in around 30% of the professional and technical areas inspected, the standards are highest when the supplier organisations are committed to excellence in apprenticeship training and have established strong, collaborative links and partnerships with employers and relevant industry representative bodies. Importantly, most of the employers provide the apprentices with an experienced, expert mentor to oversee and support their occupational skills development, and give them the opportunity to progress to higher level education or training.

235.   Across the organisations inspected, the overall average rate of retention[66] was satisfactory at 67%, slightly lower than the previous reporting period. The average rate of retention was highest for the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes at 73%, and lowest on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success at 46%. The average rates of retention on the Skills for Your Life and the Skills for Work strands inspected were good or better at 65% and 78% respectively.

236.   The average rates of achievement for those apprentices[67] who complete their programmes are high at 94%. Achievement rates are also very good or better for those trainees who complete their programmes on the Skills for Your Life and the Skills for Work strands inspected at 94% and 90% respectively. Overall achievement rates on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand are satisfactory at 76% as are progression rates to employment or further training at 60%.

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66 *Retention in work-based learning is calculated as the proportion of trainees/apprentices enrolled after 4 weeks of year one, who complete their programme/framework.*
67 *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 for learning

237.   The quality of provision for learning was good or better in 12 of the supplier organisations inspected; it was very good or better in five of them.

238.   Around 77% of the directed and workplace training sessions were evaluated as good or better. It is noteworthy that there is some very good practice across the work-based learning sector, with around one-third of the directed and workplace training sessions evaluated as very good or better. The evidence is clear that trainees and apprentices are more engaged when the training and learning is varied, practical, active, and includes good workplace experiences.

Directed training sessions evaluated

Work-based learning 794

🟧 Outstanding	🟦 Very Good	🟪 Good
🟩 Satisfactory	🟥 Inadequate	🟪 Unsatisfactory
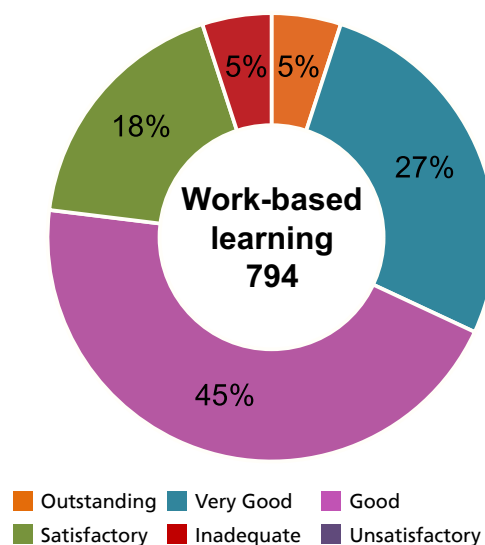
Effective practice

In the more effective Training for Success provision, the trainees are motivated by a coherent and appropriately challenging curriculum which supports them well to develop good vocational and other relevant employability skills. In the best practice in the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, the apprentices develop consistently high-level occupational skills and technical knowledge but also demonstrate good flexibility and initiative in solving problems, have well-developed ICT, communication and writing skills, are numerate and are able to work independently using industry-standard equipment.

239.   In six of the Training for Success suppliers inspected, the experiences of the trainees are characterised by a disjointed curriculum offer which is insufficiently underpinned by a realistic work-related context or content.

240.   The personal training plan process is used to good effect in the majority of the supplier organisations inspected. In these suppliers, the plans are individualised, reviews of the trainees' and apprentices' progress are systematic, and employer input is regular and evaluative.

241.   The quality of provision for the essential skills of literacy and numeracy was good or better in the majority of the organisations inspected, with the remainder evaluated as satisfactory. In the good or better provision, the planning is clear and coherent with high levels of support by senior managers for the essential skills tutors. The trainees and apprentices have opportunities to achieve the essential skills at more than one level, including level 2.

242.   In contrast, the satisfactory provision continues to be characterised by: irregular timetabling or end-loading of the essential skills for apprentices; a lack of pace and challenge in learning and teaching; and poor alignment of the trainees' entry profiles with their target levels in the essential skills. This results in not enough trainees being encouraged to achieve at level 2. It is, therefore, appropriate that DEL is placing significant emphasis on targeting level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications in its review of youth training.

Leadership and management

243.   Leadership and management was good or better in 11 of the supplier organisations inspected; it was very good or better in seven, satisfactory in five, and inadequate in two.

244.   Where the leadership and management are most effective, a clear strategic vision for the organisation exists; the provision is learner-centred and pastorally sound; expectations are high irrespective of prior levels of achievement of the trainees and apprentices; the processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning are well-embedded, evidence-rich and effective; the curriculum is coherent and well-balanced; and employers are closely involved in the key aspects of the provision. In these organisations, there is good and ongoing investment in high quality accommodation, industry-standard equipment and resources and staff development.

245.   The main areas for improvement for leadership and management, in just over one-third of the organisations inspected, are raising expectations of what trainees and apprentices can achieve, and addressing the undue variation in the effectiveness of the co-ordination of individual professional and technical areas. There also needs to be a focus on the ineffective systems to track the progress of trainees and

87

apprentices, and poor levels of communication with key stakeholders such as employers and sub-contractors.

246.   Over the reporting period, the use of ILT to support learning, teaching and training and assessment across work-based learning remains an area for improvement.

Adult employment programmes (Steps to Work)

> The overall effectiveness of the Steps to Work provision inspected was good.

The effectiveness of provision in Adult Employment Programmes (Steps to Work)

Context

247.   The Steps to Work adult employment programme was introduced in September 2008. Its aim was to assist people who were unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment. The Steps to Work programme has been replaced with the Steps 2 Success (NI) programme, which has been operational since October 2014.

Overall effectiveness

248.   During the reporting period, a very limited amount of inspection work was requested by DEL across the Steps to Work adult employment programme. This was largely as a result of the imminent changes to the programme through the contracting of the new Steps 2 Success (NI) employment programme. As a result, ETI inspected only one organisation during this period.

249.   Due to a change in lead contractors, a two-phase longitudinal inspection was completed. This was evaluated as good overall, characterised by robust quality assurance processes, tailored partnerships with employers and efforts to increase the number of participants gaining work experience placements in the private sector. The inspection did, however, identify the need for the lead contractor to improve the progression rate of participants to sustained employment and to reduce the backlog of participants waiting to progress on to the programme.

250.   A follow-up inspection was also completed and the overall effectiveness of the lead contractor had improved.

Youth

> The overall effectiveness of 92% of the youth provision was evaluated as good or better.

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[68].

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

# The effectiveness of provision in the youth sector

Context

251.   The youth service consists of provision managed directly by the Education and Library Boards and the voluntary youth sector, which includes community and church-based youth centres and uniformed organisations. In 2012, there were approximately 177,500 young people[69] involved in registered youth centres and projects in Northern Ireland.

Inspection evidence	
Youth club	21
Area inspection	2
Headquarter organisation	1
Outdoor Education Centre	1
Follow-up inspections - youth club	3
Interim follow-up visits - youth club	2
Sessions evaluated	287

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69 *Youth Council for Northern Ireland, The Youth Service In Northern Ireland: A Statistical and Geographic Report of the Registered Youth Service in Northern Ireland, 2012 data cycle.*

Overall effectiveness

252.   The overall effectiveness of 92% of the youth service provision inspected was evaluated as good or very good, which is notably better than in the previous reporting period. The percentage of organisations where the overall effectiveness was evaluated as very good or better has doubled to 56%.

Overall effectiveness
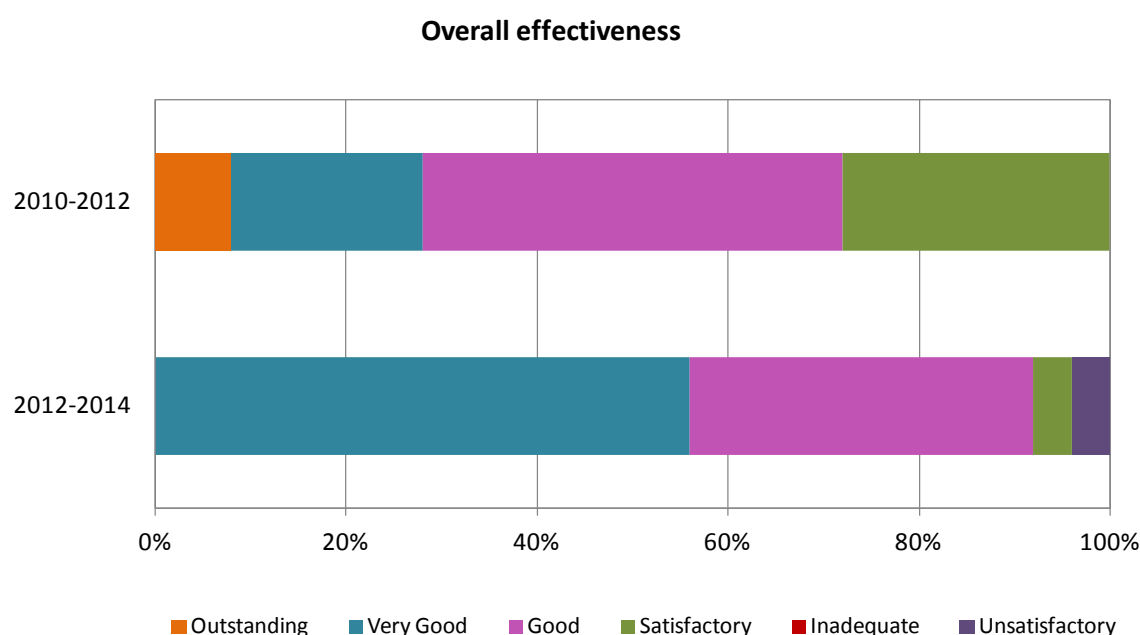
Achievements and standards

253.   The quality of the achievements and standards of the young people were evaluated as good or better in 92% of the organisations inspected.
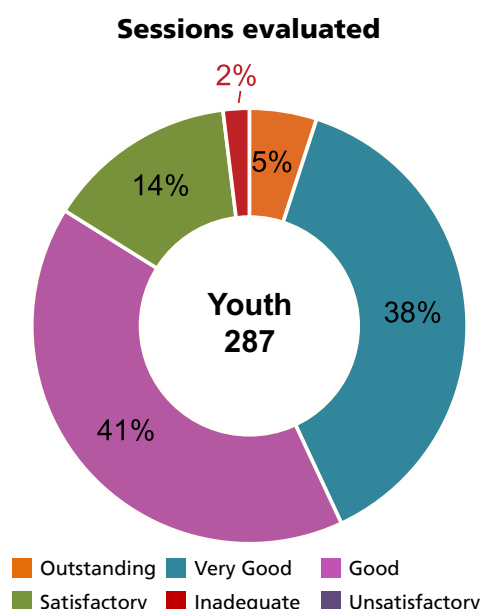
254.   Inspection evidence has identified good examples of young people who are articulate, politically engaged and who participate well within their communities; they negotiate, reach agreement and achieve change through discussions with one another, their youth workers and other relevant stakeholders. For example, these young people advocate on behalf of their peers to bring about positive changes to their areas, such as clean-up campaigns, or voice their opinions on a range of issues such as youth rights.

255.   In the best group work practice, the young people participated fully in the planning, decision-making and management of their youth work programmes. Those who accepted responsibility for leadership roles in their youth organisation, improved the quality of their own experiences, as well as those of their peers.

256.   There was evidence from discussions with the young people that they had used transferable skills from their courses to progress into other education and training opportunities. In addition, the youth service provided a range of personal development and youth work accreditation opportunities for young people to develop new skills, which prepared them for employment in the youth and community sectors. It continues to be important that the currency and value of these accreditation opportunities are developed further, to open up other progression pathways into training and employment.

Quality of provision for learning

257.   The quality of the youth work planning, practice and assessment was evaluated as good or better in almost all of the organisations; a significant improvement compared with the previous reporting period.

Sessions evaluated

Youth
287

2%
5%
38%
41%
14%

Outstanding   Very Good   Good
Satisfactory   Inadequate   Unsatisfactory

Effective practice

The most effective provision was matched appropriately to the needs of the young people and supported them to consolidate, develop and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. The youth work staff set realistic expectations and achievable targets to support the young people's personal and social developmental needs. In particular, they encouraged the young people to value and respect the views of others, and promoted a culture of inclusion.

258.   Where there were effective partnerships established with local schools, the learning experiences for young people were well connected, and the skills of the youth workers complemented and supported the work of the teachers. In almost all of the provision, the young people benefited from high levels of care, guidance and support. In the less effective

practice, the group work skills of the youth workers were underdeveloped and further professional support and training was required. In addition, the young people needed to be involved more fully in the planning and on-going evaluation of the programmes.

259.   The standards of pastoral care, guidance and support in the youth service were very high with 92% of organisations inspected evaluated as very good or outstanding. In the most effective practice, there was a seamless integration of pastoral care and learning and a high priority was given to mental health and well-being issues, including initiatives to keep young people safe.

Leadership and management

260.   The overall quality of leadership and management was evaluated as good or very good in 88% of the provision.

261.   In the most effective practice, self-evaluation and action-planning systems were in place and were monitored effectively and regularly. Consequently, the quality assurance processes informed well the programme planning and decision-making at all levels.

262.   Where the leadership was less effective, the self-evaluation processes were underdeveloped and did not record adequately the progress of the young people. There is a continued need for the monitoring and evaluation of the provision to be more thorough and have a sharper focus on the outcomes which the young people achieve.

263.   Where links with the community were particularly strong, the youth work staff had a comprehensive understanding of the local area, of the role they played in supporting the young people and their families, and worked effectively with other agencies to enrich provision for the young people.

264.   Across the youth sector, senior managers have started to streamline youth work policies, planning and quality assurance procedures; this is leading to a more coordinated and consistent approach. Since the last reporting period, the Priorities for Youth - Improving Young People's Lives through Youth Work policy document has been published which sets the overarching policy framework for the future delivery of the youth service. In addition, a Regional Advisory Group consisting of stakeholders, with expertise and experience in youth service policy and delivery, was set up in June 2014 to provide advice to inform the development of a Regional Youth Development Plan.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

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The overall effectiveness of the organisations inspected that are sponsored by DCAL is good or better.

99

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[70].

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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70 *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 effectiveness of provision in organisations sponsored by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Context

265.   The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) supports programmes to enhance education and life-long learning outcomes; support families and add value to the work of teachers, schools and in AEP.

Overall effectiveness

266.   In the small number of evaluations conducted during this reporting period, the overall effectiveness of one organisation was evaluated as good and the other two as very good.

267.   During the reporting period, inspection activity has continued to focus on the embedding of the quality indicators by the culture, arts and leisure organisations sponsored by DCAL and how they address DCAL's top priority: to promote social and economic equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion.

Achievements and standards

268.   The quality of the outcomes demonstrated by the participants across the programmes supplied by the DCAL sponsored bodies was consistently good. There was evidence of the appropriate development of skills and dispositions, and an increased understanding of the participants' own cultures, their past experiences and the communities to which they belong. Most of the participants worked well with one another to improve their ability to think critically, be creative and solve problems. In one example, teachers attended training, through one of the Creative Learning Centres[71], to develop their skills in the creation of educationally focused computer games in order to challenge and engage more effectively pupils at risk of disaffection. This led to an increase in pupil engagement and the development of their creative and problem-solving skills.

269.   In the most effective practice, across both the Language Summer Schools and the Creative Learning Centres, the participants benefited from the opportunities for personal and social development, which enhanced their self-esteem and confidence. In addition, they developed their literacy skills through a variety of enriching experiences, including storytelling, drama, arts and the use of digital technologies to convey information to a range of audiences.

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71 *The Creative Learning Centres deliver professional development programmes for teachers and youth leaders and programmes for schools and young people in the use of new creative digital technologies.*

Quality of provision for learning

270.   The quality of provision for learning across all of the programmes inspected was evaluated as good or very good.

Effective practice

The facilitators provided appropriately supportive and challenging learning opportunities, which were guided by each participant's needs and interests; such as a bespoke programme for pupils working in an economically challenged environment to help them to use digital technology creatively to support their learning and to develop their career choices.

The training provided by the Creative Learning Centres for teachers and youth workers was tailored to meet their specific needs, through a robust planning process before the delivery of the courses. Facilitators also created appropriate resources, which were well conceived and linked coherently to the formal curriculum to guide the work of teachers in the programmes they deliver within their schools.

271.   The DCAL sponsored bodies are continuing to develop links and share best practice with one another through the Learning Forum. In the most effective practice, within the Language Summer Schools, the staff visited other local educational venues to engage and encourage the participants, and consequently reinforce many aspects of the formal curriculum. This has led to more connected, coherent and enjoyable learning experiences for the participants.

Leadership and management

272.   The quality of leadership and management in all of the DCAL sponsored bodies was evaluated as good or very good. There was very good evidence of effective links with parents and local communities to engage actively their intended participants. In the most effective practice, the leadership of Northern Ireland Screen was well informed and had a sound focus on social and economic equality, including addressing issues of poverty and social exclusion.

273.   Where the learning was identified and prioritised within the development plan of the school or youth centre receiving the training from the DCAL sponsored body, the provision was evaluated as most effective. There needs to be further development of self-evaluation processes to demonstrate more clearly the impact of programmes on raising the standards and achievements of participants.

The Criminal Justice Inspection and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

During the reporting period, ETI provided inspection services for the Criminal Justice Inspection and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Inspection services provided for the Criminal Justice Inspection

Context

274.   During the reporting period, ETI provided inspection services for the Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI). The work is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding and, on a yearly basis, by a Service Level Agreement.

Overall effectiveness

275.   In February 2013, ETI inspected the learning and skills provision of Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre (YOC) and Hydebank Wood Women's Prison (Ash House). An unannounced inspection of the learning and skills provision in Magilligan Prison took place in June 2014, but the report is not yet published by CJI and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP).

276.   In both the YOC and Ash House, levels of attainment and accreditation were too low, particularly in the important areas of literacy and numeracy. At the time of the inspection, too few prisoners were involved in suitably challenging work with the opportunity to acquire a qualification at a level acceptable to, and recognised by, employers.

277.   Overall, the learning and skills provision in both the YOC and Ash House was inadequate. The quality of learning, teaching and training should be improved to engage all of the prisoners more effectively. In just under one-half of the lessons inspected, the quality of learning, teaching and training required improvement. The curriculum did not meet sufficiently the needs, interests and aspirations of the prisoners and required breadth to improve their opportunities for future employment.

278.   Physical education was promoted well and the prisoners had access to good facilities that were well used and managed.

279.   Leadership and management of learning and skills were inadequate in both the YOC and Ash House, and co-ordination needed to be improved. The quality assurance and self-evaluation arrangements were weak and required strengthening, particularly through the more effective collation, analysis and use of data.

Inspection services provided for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Context

280.   During the reporting period, ETI provided inspection services for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The work is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding and, on a yearly basis, by a Service Level Agreement.

Overall effectiveness

281.   An inspection of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise's agriculture, essential skills, equine and food provision was carried out in February 2013.

282.   Overall, achievements and standards were very good in further education, and good in the work-based learning provision. The outcomes on level 2 and level 3 programmes were consistently high, for both full-time and part-time courses and in the essential skills.

283.   Learners receive high quality training; 93% of the training delivered was good or better, with 61% being very good or outstanding. Innovative solutions are being used by the college to address the increasing demand for courses. This includes training opportunities at satellite centres using well developed links with industry to provide practical training opportunities. The quality of provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance was evaluated as outstanding in further education and good in work-based learning. Going forward, the use of ILT to facilitate better the distance learning methods would further improve the provision.

284.   The quality of leadership and management of the curriculum was very good, with a very strong focus on economic engagement. The curriculum was matched well to industry requirements and the courses were designed to meet the needs of the learners, with the inclusion of additional qualifications to improve their employment opportunities.

The work of the Education and Training Inspectorate

The ETI is seeking to improve the way it inspects education and training provision.

285.   The ETI carried out 541 full inspections in the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2014. In addition, where provision was satisfactory or below, interim follow-up and follow-up inspections were undertaken as outlined in the phase reports.

286.   The ETI seeks to improve the way it inspects education and training provision and continues towards greater transparency in its work. For example, through more involvement of the organisational leader in the inspection process.

287.   During this reporting period, a formalised procedure for involving a representative from the organisation being inspected more fully in the inspection process, is being piloted. Across primary, post-primary and special education, a new model of inspection for schools which were recently evaluated as very good or outstanding, was developed and piloted; these are called sustaining improvement inspections. The focus of the sustaining improvement inspection is the school development plan and the extent to which the associated actions have led to demonstrable improvement in provision and standards.

288.   During the pilot, 29 schools were re-visited after three years to evaluate the extent of their sustained self-improvement. Through this process, ETI is confident that in nearly all cases, these schools continued to demonstrate their capacity for sustained self-improvement. There are plans to extend the roll-out of this pilot in the coming years and to consider schools evaluated as good at the time of the original inspection.

289.   The ETI aims to complete inspections within five days (with the exception of further education colleges and the larger work-based learning providers). To this end, a five-day model of inspection has been introduced to promote consistency across all phases and the vast majority of oral report-backs to the organisations take place within the five days. To ensure that inspections are resourced efficiently and proportionately to match the needs, size and complexities of the organisations inspected, ETI also undertakes a shorter inspection of smaller, lower risk primary schools (two days). Since September 2013, the inspection notification period for all organisations (with the exception of further education in the completion of the cycle of whole-college inspections during 2013-14) has been reduced to two weeks. This change was in direct response to feedback received from key educational stakeholders.

The value of inspection has been recognised externally, yet greater engagement with stakeholders is required.

290.   The importance of accountability and the need to demonstrate good public value is recognised by ETI. The ETI has been working internally to clarify and improve the quality of the corporate planning process and to communicate to educational stakeholders how the inspection process is quality assured. The ETI accepts fully the need for its work to be quality assured by others and there are several internal and external checks and balances in place. Internally, to ensure the reliability and validity of inspection evaluations, ETI has a moderation and quality assurance process. In addition, ETI has a code of good conduct for inspectors and AAs, professional development opportunities and guidance materials, which are regularly reviewed.

291.   As an external validation of the quality of its work ETI was awarded the Customer Service Excellence[72] standard. A key part of the Customer Service Excellence external validation process is how ETI deals with complaints, should they arise. The ETI makes every effort to ensure that any issues are resolved informally at a local level and all efforts are made to listen closely to, and address, any concerns that may arise during inspection.

292.   During this reporting period, ETI has revised its complaints procedure and this has been subject to the scrutiny of the Customer Service Excellence assessor and the Ombudsman. During this period, ETI received a very small number of complaints, which reflects the very good working relationships and the sound processes that exist between ETI and the organisations it inspects. Ten formal complaints were received from organisations following an inspection; this is around one percent of the total number of inspections and follow-up inspections. Two of these complaints progressed to stage two requiring an internal review, of which one was partially upheld.

293.   In addition, there is an independent annual collection of feedback from schools and other organisations that have been inspected, undertaken by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) which informs ETI's own self-evaluation and contributes to promoting improvement[73].

294.   During the most recent business year 2013-14, most of the responses to NISRA were positive, indicating that the reporting inspector explained the inspection process clearly; inspection teams were professional and courteous; findings were communicated clearly during final report backs; and the language used in reports was clear and concise. A minority of the responses expressed concerns regarding the administrative burden

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72 *Customer Service Excellence was developed to drive customer-focused change within organisations. It tests in great depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude.*
73 *ETI Annual Business Report, 2013-2014. The full report can be accessed at:*
    http://www.etini.gov.uk/annual-business-report-2013-2014.pdf

associated with inspection and issues such as insufficient or inconsistent feedback to teachers. The ETI remains committed to promoting improvement in the interest of all learners, and is actively working towards addressing areas in which the perception was that the quality of service fell below expectation.

There is a continued need for a professional, independent, broadly-based, balanced inspection of schools in order to support the school improvement process.

295.   In October 2013, the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly began an inquiry into aspects of the work of ETI. In particular, the inquiry focused on ETI's current approach in respect of school inspection leading to improvement. The Committee also looked at the key issues impacting on schools experiencing difficulties, any gaps in terms of ETI's review process and the support services provided by DE or the Education and Library Boards, and conducted an analysis of the inspection process in other jurisdictions.

296.   The Education Committee's Report on the Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process was published in June 2014[74]. The ETI welcomes this report, particularly where it can add value and help ETI to be even better at promoting improvement in the interest of learners. In particular, the report recognises the need for an inspection service. The report states that a 'professional, independent, broadly-based, balanced inspection of schools is and should continue to be an essential component of the school improvement process.'

297.   This statement supports the findings of the recent OECD[75] report, which compared the evaluation and assessment systems of 26 countries, including Northern Ireland, and reported positively on ETI's inspection process. The report stated that, 'ETI has a broad and legitimised inspection framework. The framework not only covers outputs and teaching and learning processes, but also the quality of provision for learning, pastoral care and leadership and management. These broad areas are supported by international research on the characteristics of effective schools.'

298.   The ETI is supportive of the Education Committee's desire for more collaborative working relationships between inspectors, schools, parents and other support agencies and stakeholders. In addition, ETI welcomes the Committee's endorsement of the excellent work carried out by the district inspectors in promoting improvement for pupils and

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74 *The full report can be accessed at:*
http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Committees/Education/Reports/Report-on-the-Inquiry-into-the-Education-and-Training-Inspectorate-and-School-Improvement-Process/

75 *Shewbridge, C. et al. (2014, p130), OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing.*
The full report can be accessed at: http://www.oecd.org/education/school/Reviews%20of%20Evaluation%20and%20Assessment%20in%20Education%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf

learners and the recognition that inspection leading to improvement is a significant factor in ETI's work. The Education Committee's report contained recommendations for ETI and DE to consider. The DE will make its considered response in November 2014.

The role of the district inspector is integral to the school improvement process.

299.   The ETI acknowledges the significant role it has in supporting and challenging organisations to improve through the inspection process and the role of the district inspector. The programme of district visits complements the centrally scheduled inspections and provides a valuable opportunity for the district inspector and school to engage professionally, outside the context of the formal inspection programme. This different context does not in any way lessen the need for inspectors to adhere to the principles governing inspection and at all times report as they find in order to promote improvement in the interests of learners. The role of the district inspector is crucial to the school improvement process, building upon high levels of local knowledge and securing higher levels of engagement by schools in the improvement process.

Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics
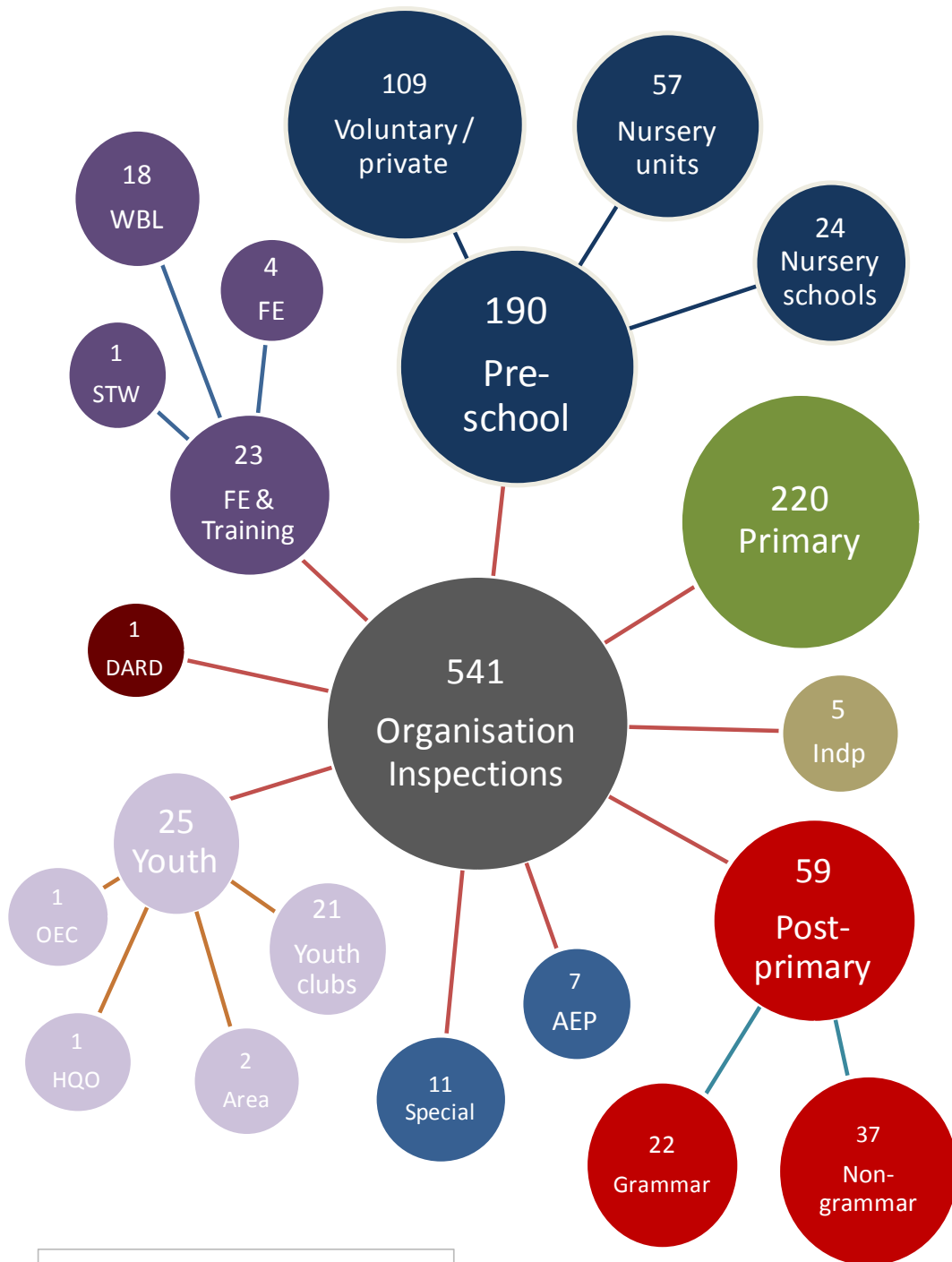
300.   The ETI's Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics (PIEM) initiative began in autumn 2013. It enables a small number of specialist inspectors to share their expertise with schools, mainly with high numbers of pupils entitled to FSM, in order to develop capacity in English and mathematics, promote improvement and contribute to raising the standards achieved by pupils.

301.   The initiative, whereby inspectors provide tailored support to 19 post-primary schools, was commissioned by DE to help raise standards for all and contribute towards meeting the PfG 2015 targets, that is, 66% of all school leavers and 49% of those leavers entitled to FSM will attain at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and mathematics.

302.   The aims of the programme are to advise, challenge appropriately and support, teachers, subject leaders and senior leaders in order to improve outcomes for pupils. Moreover, a key aim of the initiative is to build and develop the capacity of staff to sustain improvement. An outcome of the initiative is to identify and disseminate, through a composite report, a range of strategies which have been successful in promoting improvement and raising the standards achieved by the pupils.

303.   The PIEM project stretches into the next reporting period. So far, baseline visits have been completed and support visits have taken place.

Organisation inspections carried out
1 July 2012 to 30 June 2014

541 Organisation Inspections

190 Pre-school
- 109 Voluntary / private
- 57 Nursery units
- 24 Nursery schools

23 FE & Training
- 18 WBL
- 4 FE
- 1 STW

1 DARD

25 Youth
- 1 OEC
- 21 Youth clubs
- 1 HQO
- 2 Area

220 Primary

5 Indp

59 Post-primary
- 22 Grammar
- 37 Non-grammar

11 Special

7 AEP

Indp - Independent schools
AEP - Alternative Education Provision
HQO - Headquarter Organisation
OEC - Outdoor Education Centre
DARD - Department of Agriculture and
Rural Development Provision
FE - Further Education
STW - Steps to Work
WBL - Work-Based Learning

Notes:
The number of inspections excludes pilot
inspections, follow-up activity, surveys,
evaluations and district visits.
ETI contributed to two inspections for
Criminal Justice Inspection and the reports
were published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate
of Prisons.

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Providing Inspection Services for

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