

PRIMARY INSPECTION

Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore
Community Nursery Unit, Newbuildings,
County Londonderry

Controlled, co-educational, DE Ref No. 201-2261

Report of a Follow-Up Inspection (Involving Action
Short of Strike) in March 2023



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Third follow-up to the inspection of Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore Community Nursery Unit, Newbuildings, County Londonderry (201-2261)

Introduction

The original inspection of Newbuildings Primary School and Ballyore Community Nursery Unit was carried out in [March 2014](#) when the school's education provision was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

A follow-up inspection took place in [March 2016](#) and the important areas for improvement had not been progressed sufficiently. A second follow-up inspection in [June 2017](#) was impacted by industrial action short of strike and ETI was unable to evaluate the extent to which the important areas for improvement identified at the time of the original inspection had been addressed, namely to:

- review the roles and responsibilities of staff, at all levels, to create and support a more collegial and robust approach to school improvement and to build the capacity of all staff to effect the required improvement in a timely manner;
- develop further the governance of the school, in particular its capacity to monitor the administrative arrangements for the safeguarding of children, the outworking of the school's revised policies and, importantly, the standards achieved by the children;
- meet more effectively the learning needs of the significant minority of children identified as underachieving, including the children identified as having special educational needs, in order to raise the standards they attain; and
- address urgently the instability in the governance, strategic and middle leadership and staffing levels in the interests of the children's educational progress and school improvement.

Consequently, Newbuildings Primary School remained in the follow-up process.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a Monitoring Visit in June 2021. Based on the evidence available at the time of the Monitoring Visit, the areas for improvement from the original inspection were adjusted as follows:

- to continue to work cohesively and effectively at leadership level to ensure consistency across the curriculum and pastoral areas;
- to monitor and evaluate the impact of the progress being made on the outcomes for the children including those through first-hand evidence in the classroom and the analysis of the school's data; and
- to continue to receive support from the education authority (EA) for leadership, including governors, within the school to ensure that leaders work collegially to address the areas of focus identified by the school.

A third follow-up inspection, carried out in March 2023, was also impacted by action short of strike (at the time of the follow-up inspection, members of the five main teaching unions in Northern Ireland were mandated by their unions to participate in legitimate industrial action short of strike, which includes not engaging with ETI inspections). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that due to industrial action short of strike, none of the staff would be co-operating with the inspection. A representative from the Board of Governors engaged with inspectors in relation to the partial evaluation of the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

As a result of the industrial action, the school was unable to provide a complete inspection evidence base, including observations of teaching and learning, to demonstrate the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement which were adjusted at the time of the Monitoring Visit in June 2021. The ETI has a [statutory duty](#) to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education being provided for children and young people. The follow-up inspection proceeded on a partial basis and the key findings are based on evidence made available at the time of the inspection visit.

Key actions and changes

In the interim period since the follow-up inspection in March 2016, the school has received external support provided by the Education Authority (EA) in relation to: school leadership, including governance; and literacy and numeracy curriculum support in relation to the identified areas for improvement.

Views of pupils, parents/carers and staff

As a result of the industrial action short of strike, the online questionnaires were not distributed to the pupils, parents/carers and staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of the pupils, parents/carers and staff. The ETI will re-issue the questionnaires at the time of the next inspection visit to complete this follow-up inspection.

Key findings in relation to safeguarding

In meetings with inspectors, a representative from the Board of Governors in the school engaged in discussions about the procedures and arrangements for safeguarding children. The school did not provide relevant safeguarding documentation or policies. The school did not provide sufficient evidence for ETI to evaluate the school's arrangements for safeguarding children.

Conclusion

The school's third follow-up inspection is incomplete due to industrial action short of strike. The areas for improvement, which were adjusted at the time of the Monitoring Visit in May 2021, remain as the need to:

- continue to work cohesively and effectively at leadership level to ensure consistency across the curriculum and pastoral areas;

- monitor and evaluate the impact of the progress being made on the outcomes for the children including those through first-hand evidence in the classroom and the analysis of the school's data; and
- continued support from the EA for leadership, including governors, within the school to ensure that leaders work collegially to address the areas of focus identified by the school.

There is a need for the EA to address urgently the temporary nature of the leadership of the school.

The ETI has been unable to evaluate fully the school's progress in effecting the required improvements in the quality of its provision for a period of seven years since the first follow-up inspection. As the school did not provide sufficient evidence to evaluate the arrangements for safeguarding children, the Department of Education will write to the Education Authority and the Board of Governors to seek assurance in relation to the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children.

The District Inspector will continue to monitor the school's progress, and the follow-up inspection will be completed at the request of the school up to and including June 2023. Subsequently, the inspection will be completed without further notice.

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