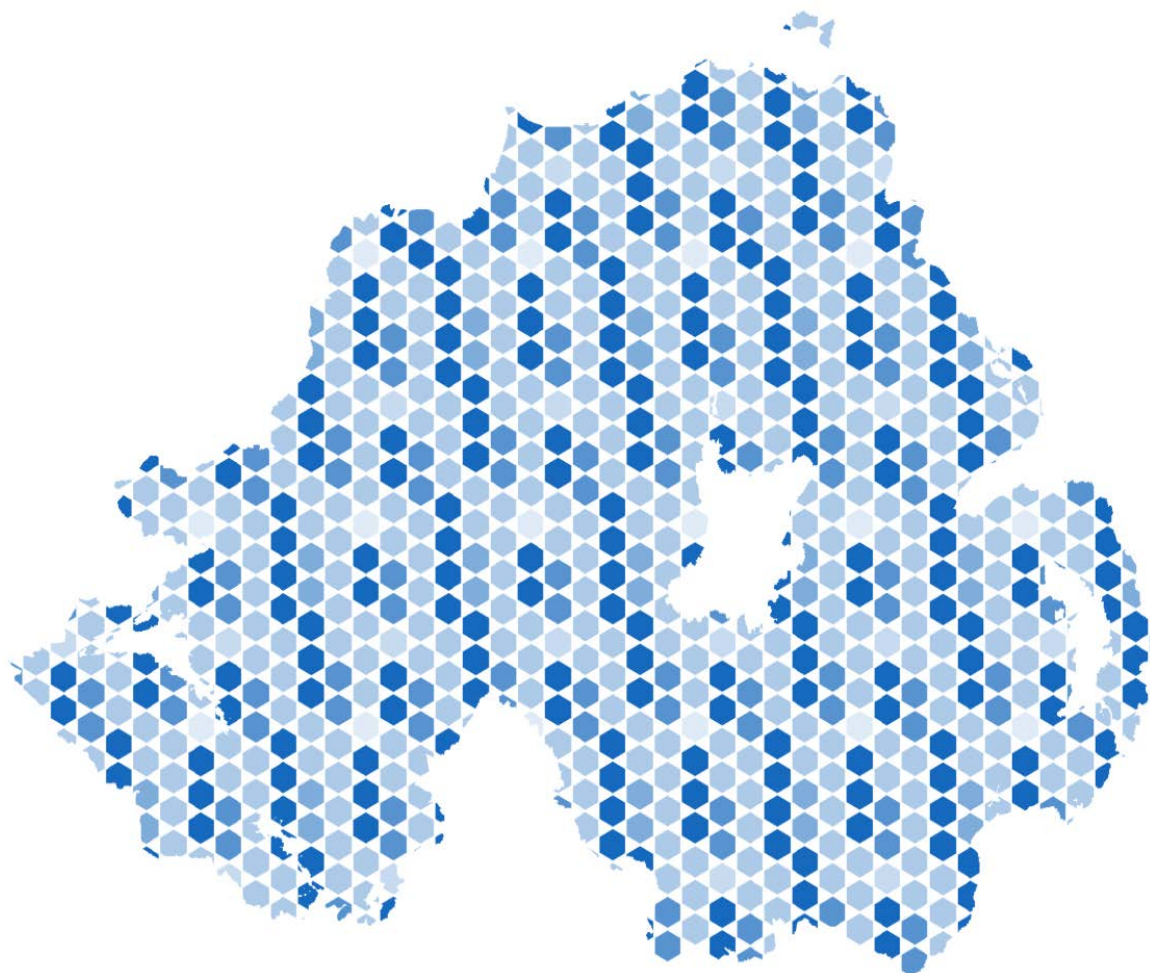


SPECIAL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ardnashee School and College,
Derry/Londonderry

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
March 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Contents

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	4

Appendices

- A. Statistical data
- B. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Ardnashee School and College was established in September 2014 with the amalgamation of Belmont House School and Foyle View School and is located on the Racecourse Road in Derry. The school provides education for 304 pupils aged three to 19-year, with a range of special needs who come from Derry and the surrounding area. There is a dual-day nursery unit and an outreach behaviour support service to 94 pupils from local primary schools. At the time of inspection the school had an acting principal in post. The school partners with seven schools in the Foyle Area Learning Community in a shared education project.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that the majority of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI have a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of parents and staff responded to the confidential questionnaires. Almost all of the responses to the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted their appreciation of the supportive, helpful, understanding and attentive staff; the high quality care they provide and the effective communication between home and school regarding their children's progress. The ETI has reported to the principal and representatives of the board of governors, the very few concerns and main findings emerging from the parents and staff questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for pupils; in particular, how the school is addressing individual needs;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils achieve well in a wide range of vocational and academic accredited courses by the time they leave school and they report that they enjoy the programmes that are planned around their interests and abilities. The school data indicates that almost all of the school leavers in 2016 have successfully maintained their post-19 placements.
- During discussions with inspectors, almost all of the pupils were confident, courteous and displayed a very positive disposition to school life. They are proud of their achievements and opportunities to participate in school trips and work experience. The pupils have opportunities to undertake roles and responsibilities as members of the school council and actively fund-raise to support a variety of local charities. They spoke enthusiastically about their participation and achievement in music and the wider creative arts.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- outcomes attained by the pupils;
- progression by the pupils in learning; and
- the pupils wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- A thorough whole school curriculum audit has been completed and priority areas for development have been identified, which include consistency in the planned learning experiences within the creative and expressive arts. Consequently, a range of collaborative projects are being piloted, such as the use of creative technologies to improve the pupils' communication and musical skills. Further development, however, is required to prioritise the core curriculum subjects of mathematics, communication and Information Communication Technology.
- There are established links with the allied health professionals and staff are working with speech and language therapists to review the model of in-class support to develop further the expertise and capacity of staff to provide for the pupils. It is important that identified actions are monitored and reviewed consistently in order to ascertain their effectiveness. The school has identified careers education information advice and guidance as an area for further development. The school has effective links with an external agency that provides a work experience programme designed around the individual needs abilities and aspirations of each pupil. The school's records show that pupil participation and progress in work experience is monitored effectively.
- Planning across the school has recently been reviewed and a new format is currently being trialled, with a small number of staff, to address inconsistencies across the key stages. There is some evidence of monitoring of the teachers' planning formats although this is at an early stage. New assessment systems have been introduced and there has been a focus on developing baseline assessments. The school is participating in a pilot project to review assessment systems for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school provided a few examples of the new pupil progress files and individual education plans that provide a suitable framework to track more effectively the pupils' progress.

- In discussions with the inspectors the pupils reported that they enjoy their classes and appreciate the range of teaching approaches, based on their needs and interests, which supports and motivates them in their learning. The pupils display genuine care and understanding in their interactions with one another and commented positively on the support they received from staff to help them to transition from mainstream school.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully the:

- quality of the curriculum;
- effectiveness of guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences; and
- effectiveness and impact of planning, engagement/teaching/training and assessment in promoting successful learning.

7. Leadership and management

- The newly formed strategic leadership have a clear vision for the future direction of the school and have appropriately involved all staff in developing the new school vision, mission statement and core values. The senior leadership team has been restructured and roles and responsibilities have been agreed, revised and clearly defined. They have identified and prioritised appropriately, key areas for development to provide for the present and future needs of the pupils.
- The draft school development plan focuses clearly on improving further the learning experiences for all of the pupils and has been developed in consultation with staff, parents, pupils and governors. There is an emphasis on improving pupil progress in learning and on the outcomes that they attain. The development of an effective system for tracking the pupils' progress to inform teachers' planning has been prioritised. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school development planning process are progressing well.
- The school has developed links with a range of external organisations and local schools, for example pupils are involved in a dance performance with a local primary school focusing on the theme of 'inclusion'.
- During the inspection the ETI met with representatives of the board of governors. The governors are informed about the work and life of the school and they play a pro-active role in developing the new structures and procedures required to set out the shared strategic vision for the new school. They demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and are developing their challenge function as necessary to support the leadership team in achieving the priorities for the development of the new school.

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements are in place for safeguarding learners which broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils report that they feel safe in school. They know what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety and well being. However, owing to action short of strike, the ETI are unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

The ETI are unable to evaluate fully the:

- effectiveness and impact of the middle leadership;
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement; and
- the effectiveness and impact of the strategic leadership team.

8. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Statistical data

Ardnashee School and College	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Enrolment school	279	275	304
% Attendance	91.0	89.1	89.6
% FSME ¹	76.0	75.0	74.0
Newcomers	0	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Inspection method and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework which guides inspection and self-evaluation within special schools is available on the ETI website [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Special Education | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors scrutinised a sample of documentation and held formal and informal discussions with pupils, and few staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of pupils; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Outcomes for learners, on the Quality of provision and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Inspection Outcome

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when indicating what will happen after the inspection:

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

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