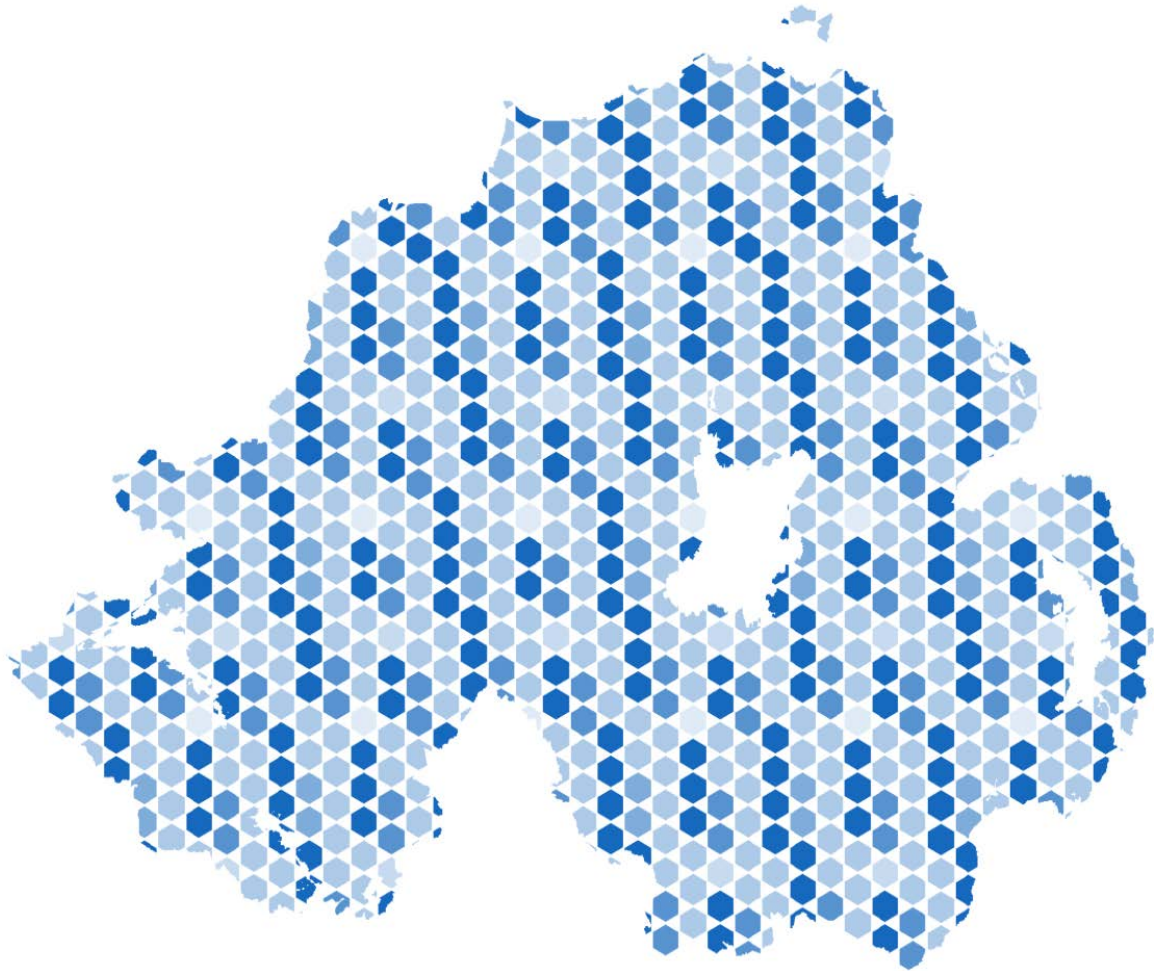


# SPECIAL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Sandelford Special School

Report of an Inspection in  
January 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



# Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
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
<b>Appendices</b>	
A. Accommodation/Health and safety	
B. Statistical data	
C. Inspection methodology and evidence base	
D. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate	

## 1. Context

Sandelford School provides education for pupils aged from three to nineteen years of age. The school was purpose built in 2003 to meet the severe and complex educational needs of 116 pupils; however the enrolment has increased substantially to 209, resulting in considerable pressure on the available learning and leisure space, and facilities. The school has extensive education links with a wide range of schools including Carhill Integrated School, Castle Tower School, and Coleraine College for the pursuit of creative activities, and Hadrian's School, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Tyne and Weir, for therapeutic pupil development strategies.

## 2. Views of parents

A very small number of parents, and most of the staff members, responded to the confidential questionnaires. All of the staff responses were very positive, indicating high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the life and work of the school, in particular, the professional development opportunities and positive atmosphere throughout the school. The parents acknowledged the enjoyment of their children in attending the school, and the helpful and regular information they receive about the planned learning activities for their child. The ETI has reported to the principal and a representative of the board of governors the findings of the confidential questionnaires including the small number of issues raised concerning the provision in the school.

## 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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Outstanding
<b>Quality of provision</b>	Outstanding
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Outstanding

## **5. Outcomes for learners**

By the end of their time in school, the pupils, who follow vocational and academic courses, achieve a broad range of qualifications and have additional opportunities to study courses in the Northern Regional College. Currently, these pupils are studying literacy and numeracy Essential Skills at entry level 1, 2, and 3, and ASDAN<sup>[1]</sup> units in preparing for adulthood programmes and level 1 OCN<sup>[2]</sup> courses in food hygiene, food preparation and cooking, and applying practical skills in the arts. The senior pupils are involved in the New Horizons travel training programme, where appropriate, preparing them well for the transition into the next stage of their learning for life after school. The senior pupils are developing very well their independence and access a range of well-suited work experience internally and on external placements. The pupils with more complex learning and physical difficulties are prepared progressively for transition to new settings by experiencing an appropriate range of learning and leisure environments, and planned visits with staff to their forthcoming placements when they leave school.

Most of the pupils are making very good progress in their learning which is evidenced through the weekly target record sheets in all classes and in the core skills maps. There is an appropriate emphasis on functional skills to enable them to make sufficient progress in line with their needs and ability, and, as they progress through the school, they are able to apply their learning in real life contexts, preparing them well for life after school. The pupils are happy and secure and are learning to manage their emotions as they work through the well-planned individual programmes designed to meet their needs.

The pupils are polite, courteous and work well with one another, developing positive dispositions and good communication skills. The pupils respond well to the suitable range of learning activities and sensory supports provided, and as a result are motivated to learn and engage thoroughly in their lessons. The senior pupils demonstrate very good social skills and are confident in engaging with one another, adults and visitors in a variety of social settings. The pupils are developing a range of skills for life, with senior pupils provided with the opportunities to assume leadership roles and responsibilities, such as membership of the school council and young enterprise. The pupils enjoy a range of age appropriate physical activities, such as visits to the local leisure centre and for some, playing rugby at the local club and going to the gym.

## **6. Quality of provision**

The pupils benefit from a broad, balanced and highly relevant skills-based curriculum which focuses appropriately on functional numeracy and literacy and prioritises communication as a key curricular area. A significant feature of the provision is the strong emphasis placed on addressing barriers to learning through, for example, specialist sensory and behaviour programmes delivered by highly skilled teachers and assistants. Throughout the school, the pupils develop a good understanding of key concepts in line with their individual ability. The pupils' mathematical language and literacy skills, creative and physical skills develop well through play and daily routines.

There are very effective arrangements for careers education, information, advice and guidance with a range of local employers who provide suitable work-experience placements for the senior pupils. The school engages well with relevant outside agencies to plan effectively for the transition of pupils to placements in further education, training agencies or employment in line with their interests and capabilities.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Award Scheme Development and accreditation Network

<sup>[2]</sup> Open College Network Northern Ireland

Almost all of the teaching observed was good or better, with the majority being very good or outstanding. The teachers and classroom assistants demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the pupil's holistic needs, and collaborate very effectively to progress their highly individualised and stimulating learning programmes. A particular strength is the regular inclusion of practical learning experiences throughout all curricular areas. Effective base-line assessments inform well the pupils' individual education plans, which outline clear and relevant objectives. The school has developed a rigorous system for mapping pupil's core skills and for monitoring progress, and is developing a highly effective system for tracking individual learning pathways. The assessment arrangements are planned well to ensure progression throughout the school. The core skills mapping and individual education plans provide a clear record of progress and a firm basis to develop support programmes.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's approach to the care and welfare of the pupils impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. There is a clear focus on the individual needs of the pupils and ongoing celebration of their achievements as they work 'together towards independence', the school motto.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The strategic leadership in the school is outstanding, there is a clear and sustained purpose to improving the learning experiences of all the pupils, and the outcomes they attain. This focus is based on a shared understanding by the leadership team, staff and governors of effective, innovative learning experiences, based on current research. There is significant investment in time for management duties and in continuing professional development, including implementing middle management roles effectively. An ethos of inclusive team collaboration has been established by the school leadership and is firmly embedded throughout the school.

The skilled middle management team and curriculum leaders set high standards and expectations; they support and disseminate high quality practice from within the school and beyond, effectively building the capacity of all staff. The team leaders have in place an excellent system for action planning, observing, monitoring and evaluating learning, ensuring the complex needs of pupils are well met with effective systems to evaluate the success of interventions and programmes.

A culture of robust self-evaluation has been securely established throughout the school where the teachers, supported effectively by classroom assistants, observe learning and evaluate pupil outcomes, underpinned by professional knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of the pupils. A wide range of information from qualitative and pupil assessment data informs the development planning of whole school priorities, and planning for learning and teaching.

Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well informed and actively engaged in the life and work of the school at all levels, including financial management, and the monitoring of the use of school accommodation.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The young people report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Sandelford School has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

**Accommodation**

The school has adapted a number of rooms to provide additional classroom space for the increased numbers of pupils with complex behaviour and sensory needs. These rooms have not been designed as classrooms and do not provide appropriate learning environments to meet the pupils' needs. There is an urgent need to address this deficit in the school provision.

**Health and safety**

The hoist system over the hydrotherapy pool does not meet the needs of the pupils and requires attention, in addition the mobile hoists are old and in poor working order.

The telephone system to the classrooms is in poor repair and does not meet the needs of the school. A number of pupils with complex physical difficulties may need critical emergency attention at any time, and to meet this need, the telephone system urgently requires attention.

There is insufficient external lighting around the school.

## APPENDIX B

### Statistical data

Sandelford School	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Enrolment school	178	188	196	208
% Attendance	91.2	92	92.3	91.6
% FSME	39.88	39.89	45.4	47.5
Newcomers	5	5	8	9

**Source:** data as held by the school.



### 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 \(ISEF\)](#).

Inspectors observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation and the children's written work and held formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; 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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