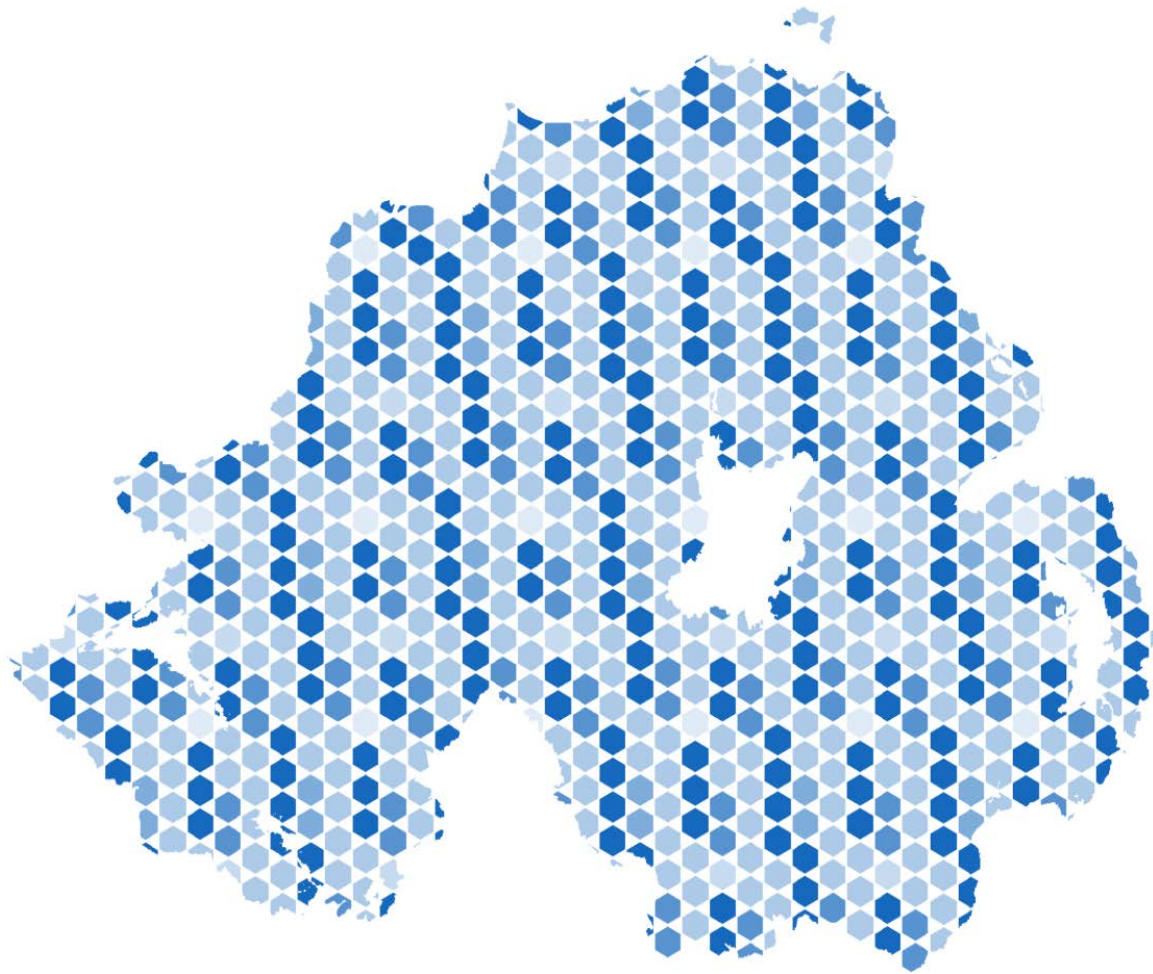


SPECIAL SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Sperrinview Special School,
Dungannon, County Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
January 2016



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

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

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school.

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

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and outcomes	2
6. Provision for learning	3
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Overall effectiveness	5

1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of special schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-special-education.htm>

Inspectors observed learning and teaching, scrutinised documentation and the pupil's written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils (individually and in groups), teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Fifteen percent of parents (sixteen) completed the confidential questionnaire, and their responses were wholly positive. In the additional comments the parents highlighted their appreciation of the support and care shown by the staff and the progress that their children are making while at the school. Just over half of the teachers (nine) and fourteen percent of the support staff (nine) completed the questionnaire and their responses were also very positive, indicating high regard for the leadership of the school and the collegial working relationships among the staff.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and outcomes; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

3. Context

Sperrinview Special School is a purpose built controlled school located less than one mile from the centre of Dungannon. The school cares for pupils, aged from pre-school to 19 years, with severe and profound learning difficulties, complex medical needs and challenging behaviours. The pupils are drawn from a wide catchment area within South and East Tyrone. The school has grown in numbers consistently each year and now has a number of mobile classrooms on a site which limits the availability of outdoor space for the pupils to play. The school has achieved an Eco-schools green flag. The school has well-established links with a wide range of schools and the local further education college which provide opportunities for pupils and staff to learn together promoting mutual tolerance and understanding.

Sperrinview Special School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment school	100	102	105	106
% Attendance	89	88.7	90.1	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	38	33.3	30.5	35.8
Newcomers	5	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and outcomes	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and outcomes

- All of the pupils are making progress and achieve regularly the appropriately challenging targets that are set for them by their teachers. The pupil's progress across all areas of the curriculum is tracked and monitored rigorously by class teachers, subject co-ordinators and the school leadership. The pupils with challenging behaviour respond positively to the consistently applied positive behaviour policy and, when required, to the well-considered behaviour plans.
- The pupils' work is displayed prominently around the school and achievements are celebrated in class and during assembly. Pupils are well behaved and develop positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. They learn how to work with others and most of the pupils were polite and courteous, with the older pupils demonstrating very good social skills.
- Throughout the school, the pupils' mathematical understanding and literacy skills are developing effectively in line with their individual ability. By the end of their time in school, the pupils are able to demonstrate that they make excellent progress in mathematics and literacy and benefit from the many opportunities to develop their skills in real and relevant contexts, preparing them well for life.
- In the leavers' classes there are highly relevant programmes based on an appropriate balance of accreditation, acquisition of life skills and personal development. All of the pupils achieve a range of accreditation appropriate to their ability in entry level and levels one and two.

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

6. Provision for learning

- All of the teaching observed was good or better with the majority of the lessons very good or outstanding. The teachers, classroom assistants and therapists work collaboratively using a range of strategies and resources to progress learning in a stimulating manner. The pupils are supported in their learning by the effective staff teamwork and respond to the appropriately high expectations of the staff.
- There is a coherent and cohesive whole school approach to the arrangements for planning, teaching and assessment throughout the school. The teacher's planning is based on base-line assessments, on-going evaluation and thorough reflection on the pupil's previous learning experiences and achievements. The individual education plans are targeted skilfully on the individual needs of pupils; parents are involved well throughout the process and there are detailed and achievable targets. The senior pupils identify personal targets and take pride in achieving these.
- In the highly effective mathematics provision the pupils apply their learning in numeracy in real and meaningful contexts and as a result they understand how to use mathematics in their everyday lives. The school has a broad range of mathematical resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), which is used effectively to support, stimulate and consolidate the pupils' learning. There are regular whole staff discussions of effective practice in numeracy, and appropriate professional development opportunities for staff. The processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement in the provision for mathematics are embedded well, highly effective and lead to improvement. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop further the lines of progression for numeracy throughout the school. The school holds well-attended workshops to help the parents to support their children in mathematics.
- The whole-school programme for literacy is comprehensive and guides well the teachers' planning. Across the school, pupils benefit from well-planned opportunities to develop their communication skills through engaging and enjoyable activities. The teachers make effective use of a wide range of appropriate resources, including ICT, to support the development of literacy. The school has produced a broad range of imaginative resources to meet the needs of pupils with sensory requirements. The literacy team are developing well a school-based phonics programme to meet more effectively the pupils' needs. The integration of reading, writing and talking and listening across all areas of the curriculum is very effective, and there is a well-planned focus on functional literacy skills for pupils transitioning to post-school provision.
- The pupils further their communication, social and life skills through the comprehensive careers education provided by the school and a training agency that provide training for independent travel. The school has established, and developed, close working relationships with businesses and schools in the local community, and have a wide range of suitable work placement opportunities for the pupils in the leavers' classes. The staff work closely with the parents and pupils in choosing sustainable work placements in the community, and within the school where appropriate.

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. A highly inclusive, caring and respectful ethos permeates all aspects of school life. There are excellent working relationships between the pupils and staff. The strengths of the provision include the nurturing and supportive environment for pupils with additional needs, such as challenging behaviour and profound and multiple learning difficulties, and the school's commitment to meeting their complex needs. The staff are highly committed to the welfare of all pupils and to promoting high standards in behaviour and work; the very effective contribution of the support staff enhances greatly the development of each pupil. The school maintains very effective and purposeful communication with parents and relevant agencies. The pupils spoke enthusiastically about their school, and about the subjects they enjoy and the progress they make towards independence through, for example, operating a cafe within the local further education college, and their contribution to recycling.
- The school encourages well physical activity through regular outdoor play, the physical education programme and activities such as horse riding, golf, swimming and gardening. The pupils are supported to adopt healthy eating patterns through the provision of healthy meals at school. The staff reinforce consistently the need for healthy choices through the home economics and personal development and mutual understanding programmes.

7. Leadership and management

- The school leadership team have developed a clear strategic vision that has been shared, discussed and agreed with staff, governors, parents and external support agencies. The staff, working together effectively, have made a significant contribution in support of the school's strategic direction resulting in a collegiate and collaborative commitment to developing the school further.
- There are clear roles and responsibilities for curriculum co-ordinators within the established management structure ensuring that all areas of the curriculum are audited, monitored and evaluated regularly. The co-ordinators lead teams with comprehensive representation of the key stages from throughout the school. The school has a well-established culture of self-evaluation and sharing of effective practice through regular staff discussions informed by the insightful observations of pupil learning by the curriculum co-ordinators and the principal.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The board of governors are very well informed about the life and work of the school and work together through sub-committees reviewing a different area of the curriculum, health and safety and general issues affecting the school. They provide excellent support for the principal, staff and parents and are effective in their challenge function.

- The well-constructed school development plan² and the high quality associated action plans focus on improving further the quality of the pupils' learning experiences with appropriate strategies to involve fully the staff in their implementation. Progress is reviewed regularly and the impact of the plans on the quality of the learning and teaching are evaluated to inform future planning.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspection team the pupils stated that they feel safe and well cared for in school and are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Sperrinview Special 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.

² The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2016

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk