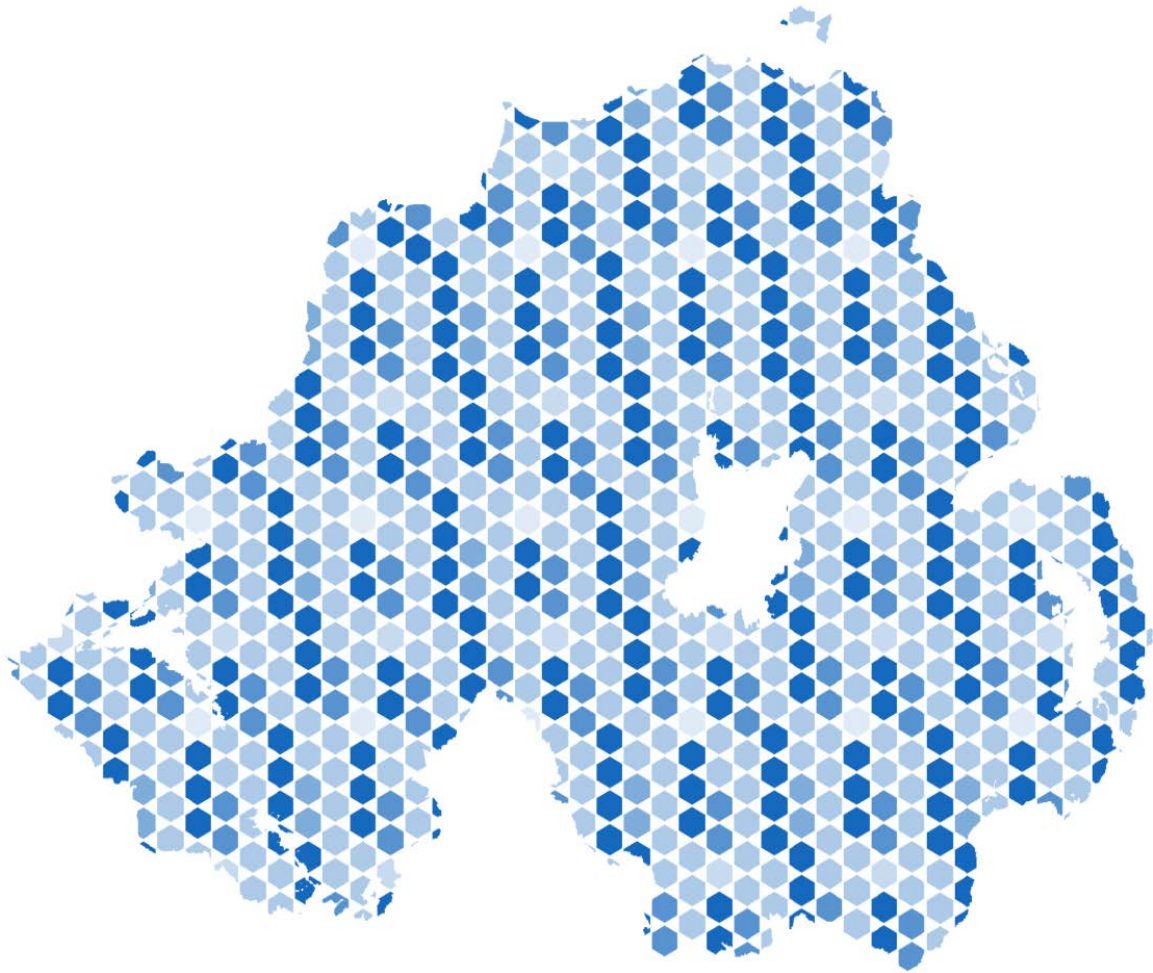


SPECIAL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Tor Bank School, Dundonald,
Belfast

Report of a Sustaining
Improvement Inspection
in September 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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CUSTOMER
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Tor Bank School, Dundonald, Belfast (431-6517)

Introduction

Tor Bank School took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII) in June 2015. In the interim, a new acting principal and acting vice-principal have been appointed to the leadership team. In the last year the school has received a number of awards in pastoral care, technology, inclusion and communication. A further SII was conducted on the 17 and 18 September 2018.

Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The areas of focus during the SII were to:

- develop consistency across the school in the use of assessment for learning (AFL); and
- improve further the learning experiences for pupils in the preventative curriculum.

Key findings

- Inconsistent opportunities for pupils to review and evaluate their work was identified in a staff audit and consequently has been prioritised as an area for improvement within the school development plan. The senior leadership team (SLT) visited special and mainstream schools to review approaches to AFL and has used this information well to implement an appropriate AFL strategy which meets the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties. A set of AFL resources has been devised for use in every classroom to ensure standardisation of visual aids and consistency of language and approach across departments. A three phase staged approach to AFL enables pupil progression, from self to peer assessment through to target setting when appropriate. It is timely that staff are devising a recording template to monitor pupil progression and to identify the next stage of learning commensurate with ability. The SLT have identified appropriately the need to develop further AFL within the planning.
- A cohesive approach has been established to develop the preventative curriculum which is aligned well to regular staff training and development. The school has focused on developing the curriculum to provide greater awareness of emotions, bodies, relationships and personal safety, and visual aids and social stories are used skilfully to support the learning objectives. Significantly, action research was used effectively to review and evaluate a pilot scheme before implementation across the school. Additional time has been allocated within the timetable for an experienced teacher to reinforce learning around personal development and safety and this is supported by a well-conceived scheme of work. Careful and flexible consideration is given to pupil groupings, resources and the duration of the programme to meet the individual needs of all the pupils. Evaluations from these sessions are shared with the pupils' class teachers so learning can be transferred, supported and developed in the classroom setting. Class teachers monitor regularly the progress of pupils in the preventative curriculum and evaluations highlight improvement in the pupils' understanding, communication skills and their growing confidence in body awareness. The school has well-established links with a number of external agencies and a special school cluster has been established to share resources and planning.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding continue to reflect¹ the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

Conclusion

Tor Bank School continues to demonstrate 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.

¹ From January 2017, arrangements previously evaluated as comprehensive are reported as **reflect** the guidance.

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