

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Towerview Primary School and Nursery Unit, Bangor, County Down

Controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 401-6111

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
September 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Towerview Primary School includes a two-class nursery unit and a learning support centre. The enrolment has increased steadily over the past four years. Most of the children attending the school come from the local area; the children in the learning support centre come from further afield. An acting principal has been in post since December 2017.

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 none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspection. The senior leadership co-operated with the inspection team in relation to their leadership and safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has 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.

Towerview Primary School and Nursery Unit	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Enrolment	430	437	449	454
% School attendance	96.7	96	96.5	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	94.9	N/A	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	13.3	13.3	12.9	13.9
No. of children on SEN register	100	80	100	93
% of children on SEN register	23.3	18.8	22.3	21
No. of children with statements of educational need	25	19	29	27
No. of newcomer children	*	0	0	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Children's, parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Twenty-one percent of the parents and 57% of the staff responded to the confidential, online questionnaires. The responses to the questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The parents praised the leadership and staff for their work and commitment to the children; they highlighted the sense of community and their children's enjoyment of school life. The responses to the staff questionnaire endorsed the effective leadership and teamwork, and the supportive learning environment. The responses to the year 7 online children's questionnaire indicated their enjoyment of learning, their appreciation of the staff's care and support and their participation in a wide range of after-school activities.

The ETI has communicated to the principal and representatives of the governors the main findings, and any individual issues arising, from the questionnaires.

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

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on numeracy and literacy including across the curriculum, and in the nursery unit and learning support centre; and
- 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
Nursery Unit	No performance level available
Learning Support Centre	No performance level available

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- All of the children who met with the inspectors were friendly, courteous and engaged maturely in discussions about various aspects of school life. A group of year 7 children read confidently and fluently, and explained a number of strategies they use to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. They reflected on how, as 'Reading Buddies', they not only support the younger children with their learning, but also develop their own wider skills. Another group of year 7 children shared examples of how they apply their learning in numeracy and mathematics in real-life contexts. They were flexible in their mathematical thinking and could use and explain a range of strategies to solve problems.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the learning outcomes for the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning;
- progression in the children's learning; and
- the children's wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- A group of year 6 spoke positively about their learning across the curriculum and the support they receive from their teachers. They value the wide variety of extra-curricular activities provided and expressed their appreciation of the outdoor facilities.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

7. Leadership and management

- The new school development plan is reflective and comprehensive. The school development planning process is informed by the analysis of data and consultation.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

8. Safeguarding

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

The school needs to:

- update the safeguarding training for governors; and
- include more detail in the risk assessments.

9. Overall effectiveness

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

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website: [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Effective Practice and Self-Evaluation Questions for Primary | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

Inspectors observe learning and teaching, scrutinise documentation and the children's written work and hold formal and informal discussions with children, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for inspection include:

- a meeting with (a) representative(s) of the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential, online questionnaire.

Where, owing to the action short of strike, this evidence base was not available, it has been referenced in the body of the inspection report.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- meetings with the acting principal, the designated teacher and representatives of the governors; and
- discussions with groups of children from year 6 and year 7.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management²:

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

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.
Does not impacts positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.

² And the overall provision in a unit, as applicable.

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 in 12 to 18 months.
The school 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 school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

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