

An update on the work of ETI: February 2024 – June 2024

February 2024

Programme of Work

Schools / organisations	Development of Inspection, including pilot inspections across a range of phases including early years, work-based learning and youth.
Schools / organisations	Follow-up inspections for a proportion of organisations in ETI's follow-up inspection process.
Primary and Special Schools	A review of Art and Design at Key Stage 2.
Schools and EOTAS centres	An Evaluation of the Statementing Process.
Post-primary Schools/Special Schools/Further Education	Review of the Entitlement Framework Policy.
Post-primary Schools	Review of DE's Qualification Approval Process.
Independent Schools	Registration and re-registration visits.
Further Education	Quality Improvement Planning.
Youth	Planning for the Review of the Priorities for Youth Policy Framework.
Broader work	ETI engagement with Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA).
Professional Learning for Impact	Pilot - Empowering Improvement II Programme for senior leaders.
Professional Learning for Impact	Dissemination of the evaluations of: Digital Skills in the Curriculum; Future Ready Digital Learning; and an exploratory evaluation of mutual understanding in primary schools.

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Schools/Organisations: Development of Inspection, including pilot inspections

Feedback from the [consultation around the development of inspection](#) has been analysed and considered in depth and has informed the new inspection process, including function and purpose of inspection, and the development of the new models. Pilot inspections, informed by the prototype inspections which took place in 2022/23, continue to take place this term, across the early years, work-based learning and youth phases.

Schools/Organisations: Follow-up inspections for a proportion of organisations in ETI's follow-up inspection process

Follow-up inspections of schools/organisations will continue to take place during this term. To assure schools/organisations and their respective community, parents, the Department of Education (DE), other commissioning departments and other stakeholders that improvement is being achieved in the best interests of the learners, a proportion of the organisations currently within the follow-up process will be prioritised for a follow-up inspection by ETI.

Schools and EOTAS centres: An Evaluation of the Statementing Process

This work focuses on assessing whether the current statementing process meets the needs of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) in schools, with particular reference to the practicalities of the statementing process and the implementation of the statement.

Visits to early years settings, and primary and post-primary schools took place during Term 1. Visits to a small number of special schools and work-based learning providers will take place in February and March. This is an opportunity for relevant staff with responsibility for SEN, parents/carers, and children and young people to provide feedback on the current process, highlighting the strengths and also the challenges for all involved in progressing the statementing process to support those children with specific needs. There is no requirement to produce additional information or documentation specifically for the purposes of this visit.

Primary and Special schools: Review of Art and Design at Key Stage 2

The ETI has invited teachers of Art and Design to children in Key Stage 2 to come forward to discuss and share aspects of their practice. This unique review focuses on the importance of children's meaningful engagement with Art and Design. Anyone interested in attending an online information session to find out more can register their interest at: [ETI Review of Art and Design at Key Stage 2](#).



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Post-primary schools/Special schools Further Education: A Review of the Entitlement Framework Policy

DE has commissioned ETI to provide policy advice in this area. The main objective of the review of the Entitlement Framework (EF) is to ascertain to what extent the aims and objectives of the EF, as set out in the 2010 document 'Delivering the Entitlement Framework by 2013' have been achieved, are still relevant and are working as intended. The ETI will be engaging with schools to harness the views of school leaders, practitioners and learners to inform this work.

Post-primary schools: A Review of DE's Qualification Approval Process

DE has commissioned ETI to provide policy advice in this area. It is a statutory requirement that qualifications taught in schools in Northern Ireland must be approved by the Department of Education before teaching commences. Each school has the responsibility to check the NIEFQAN file to ensure that the qualifications it plans to deliver are approved. ETI will be visiting a sample of post-primary schools to discuss their experiences and to review the efficacy of the current qualification approval process.

Independent Schools: Registration and Re-registration Visits

The ETI is continuing its programme of re-registration visits to a small number of independent schools during 2023-24. In this term, ETI inspectors will be engaging with the leaders of a sample of these schools to review the new arrangements to assess how we can improve our services going forward.

Further Education: Scrutiny of Quality Improvement Planning

The Department for the Economy (DfE) has commissioned ETI to evaluate the effectiveness of the quality improvement planning in the Colleges of Further Education in Northern Ireland, focusing on a mid-cycle update submission.

The Quality Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Reporting Return 2023/24 is a mid-cycle update submission as part of the DfE's pilot arrangements for Quality Improvement Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting for the 2022-24 period. It builds on the Biennial Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan submitted by the Colleges to DfE in December 2022 and is an integral part of the Biennial Quality Improvement Planning Submission required by the DfE in 2024. ETI previously completed an evaluation of the Colleges' Biennial Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan on behalf of DfE.



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Youth work: Planning for a Review of the Priorities for Youth Policy Framework

The ETI has been commissioned to support DE's Review of the Priorities for Youth Policy Framework; planning for the evaluation will be undertaken this term.

Broader work: Engagement with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)

The ETI will be engaging in professional learning and development sessions with the RQIA to enhance collaborative working on joint inspection and evaluation work, utilising the skills, experience and expertise of both organisations to best meet the needs of all learners.

Professional Learning for Impact: Planning for 'Empowering Improvement II' Programme

The ETI have received expressions of interest for a potential second 'Empowering Improvement – Stepping Forward Together' project. The project will be aimed at senior leaders and will be based on the five core questions around whole-organisation self-evaluation. The five questions will be central to all inspections going forward and include an enhanced focus on: the ethos and culture of the school/organisation; its context; its vision and values; and how it creates a community of learning. The project will run initially as a small pilot during Term 2 of this academic year, before potentially being rolled out in Term 3 to approximately 400 senior leaders who have expressed an interest.

Professional Learning for Impact: Evaluation disseminations

Digital Skills in the curriculum:

In 2022/23, DE commissioned ETI to evaluate the nature and quality of the digital skills curriculum and provision in primary and post-primary schools. In Term 3, inspectors engaged with school leaders and learners across a range of schools to explore how well the digital skills provision enables children and young people become a digital maker, worker or citizen in a rapidly evolving technological world. Inspectors also engaged with initial teacher education providers and digital industry representatives regarding digital skills provision for career progression needs in these sectors.



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In this current term, the inspectors involved in this evaluation work will disseminate the findings to stakeholders and practitioners to inform policy development and stimulate insightful professional debate, to empower improvement in schools' digital skills provision.

Future Ready Digital Learning:

In 2022, through DE funding of circa £20M, the Education Authority (EA) in partnership with Microsoft Ireland and Capita Education, provided new laptops to teachers in over 1,100 schools and Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) settings. The laptops are integral to EA's Education Information Solutions (EDIS) programme which aims to deliver digital services to: facilitate improved learning experiences and outcomes; reduce inequalities for all children and young people; and strengthen educational partnerships.

In 2022/23, ETI undertook an exploratory piece of work to evaluate the progress and emerging impact of the new teacher laptops on the education provision for children and young people.

In this term, the inspectors involved will disseminate the findings of this exploratory work to stakeholders and practitioners to empower further professional learning and development in this key aspect of provision within schools.

Mutual Understanding in Primary schools:

From March to May 2023, ETI visited twelve primary schools to explore how they are using the Mutual Understanding strand of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) Area of Learning to prepare children for living in, and contributing to, a diverse society. Inspectors engaged in discussions with 18 leaders (principals, vice-principals and PDMU co-ordinators) and 88 children.

The report celebrates the commitment and work of primary schools in creating a culture of respect for, and acceptance of, diversity. The children with whom the inspectors met valued diversity and demonstrated empathy towards, and an acceptance of, others. The evidence from this exploratory evaluation indicates that, overall, the children in these schools are being prepared well for living in, and contributing to, a diverse society.