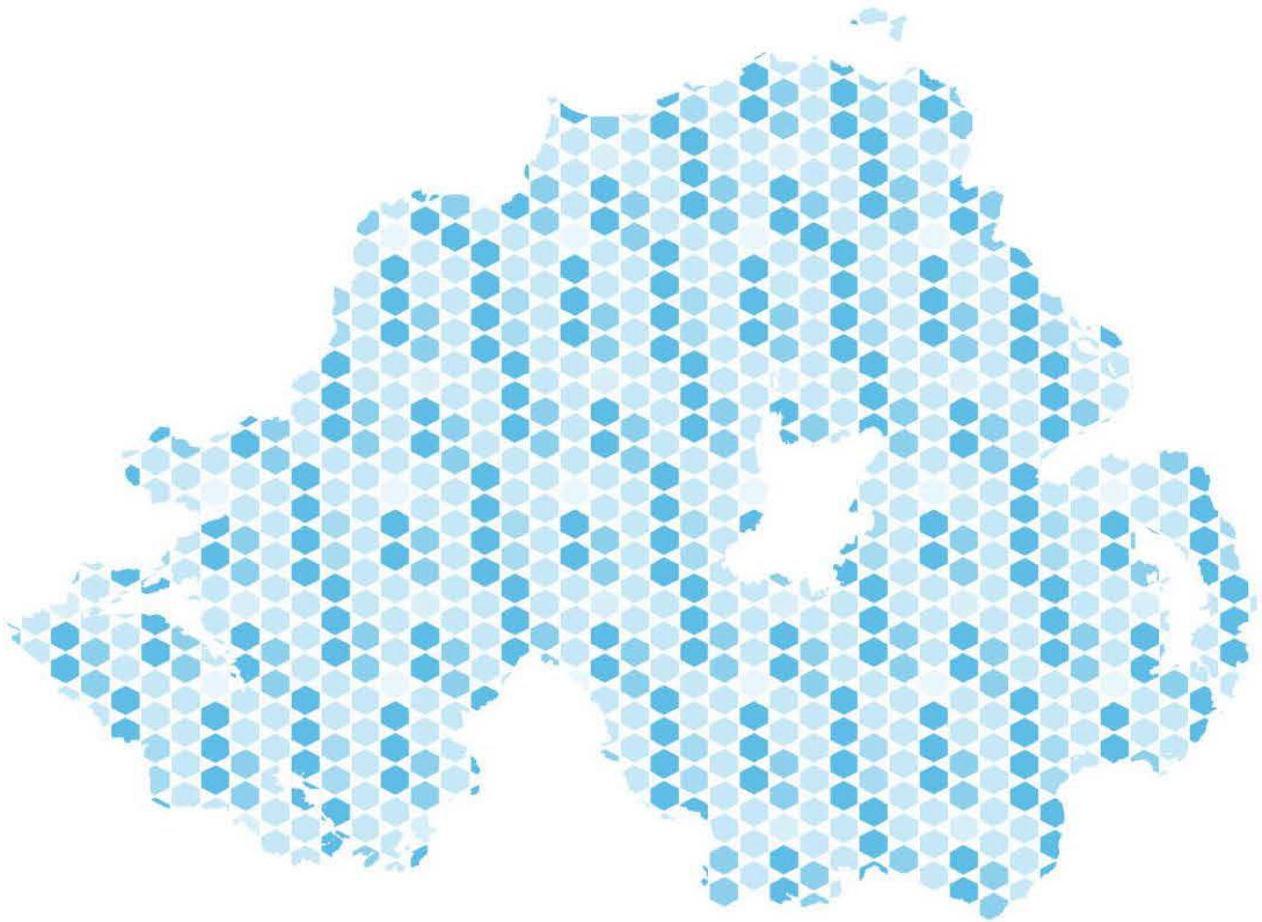


PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bellarena Primary School,
Limavady, County Londonderry

Controlled co-educational

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
(Involving Action Short of Strike) in
October 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF BELLARENA PRIMARY SCHOOL, LIMAVADY, BT49 0JB (201-2087)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Bellarena Primary School in [September 2016](#), which concluded that the school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement were to:

- develop an understanding of, and establish a process of school development planning which includes more formal and effective lines of communication and consultation at all levels and meets the necessary statutory requirements;
- establish accountable, rigorous and effective monitoring and evaluation strategies to lead and guide the staff in planning to meet the needs of all of the children and whole-school improvement;
- develop effective, formal administrative and organisational procedures to guide the work of the school; and
- clarify leadership roles and responsibilities at all levels and strengthen the governance of the school.

As a consequence, the Department of Education entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process under the [Every School a Good School](#) policy on 24 October 2016.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit (IFUV) in September 2017. At the time of the IFUV, the process of monitoring and evaluating had not begun and the outworking of the planning for improvement and capacity building was not yet apparent within the leadership of the school and governors. The school needed to increase the pace of change in order to address the areas for improvement.

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 the teachers, including the principal, would be co-operating with child protection and safeguarding procedures. 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.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the school has received external support provided by the Education Authority in relation to: leadership and management, governance, literacy and numeracy.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- the enrolment has declined by over one-quarter;
- the board of governors has been restructured; and
- a development proposal has been submitted requesting that the school closes.

Key findings

- In discussions with the inspectors, the children spoke positively about their experiences in school, in particular, the opportunities they have to develop their appreciation of and range of skills in Art, and the support they receive from their teachers and friends.
- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The children in years 6 and 7 reported that they felt safe in school and knew what to do if they had any concerns about their well-being. 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 policies and training to reflect fully the current guidance from the Department of Education and the specific context of the school, including recent changes to the safeguarding team;
 - ensure a greater level of rigour in the consultation and review process of all safeguarding policies; and
 - employ a more rigorous process to risk assessments for school outings.

In light of the imminent staff changes and transition in roles of key safeguarding personnel, it is imperative that the new deputy designated teacher and governors receive the required child protection and safeguarding training to ensure continuity in the arrangements for safeguarding children.

- The governors have not overseen effectively enough aspects of the necessary improvement work pertaining to key areas of leadership and management.

- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff. The delay on a final decision regarding the current development proposal to close the school is causing uncertainty and is impacting adversely on the school community.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate the following areas for improvement:

- develop an understanding of, and establish a process of school development planning which includes more formal and effective lines of communication and consultation at all levels and meets the necessary statutory requirements;
- establish accountable, rigorous and effective monitoring and evaluation strategies to lead and guide the staff in planning to meet the needs of all of the children and whole-school improvement;
- develop effective, formal administrative and organisational procedures to guide the work of the school; and
- clarify leadership roles and responsibilities at all levels and strengthen the governance of the school.

Consequently, there remains a need for Bellarena Primary School to address urgently the significant areas for improvement (the Department of Education will seek assurances from the Education Authority (and/or employing authority) that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report).

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the children. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

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