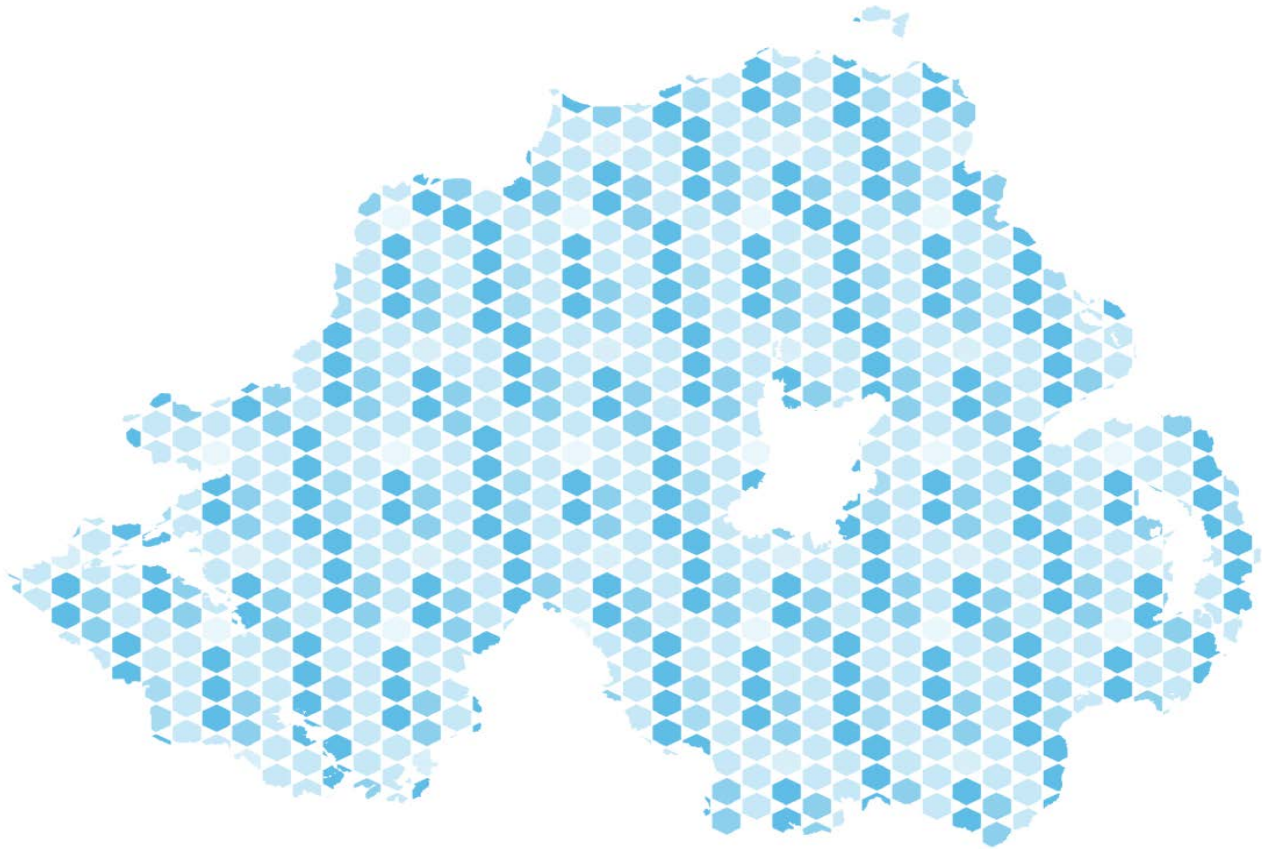


Education and Training Inspectorate

PRIMARY INSPECTION



Regent House Grammar School Preparatory Department, Newtownards, County Down

Controlled preparatory, co-educational DE Ref No (461-0063)

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



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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

The Preparatory Department of Regent House Grammar School is located in a dedicated area of the main building of the senior school, in Newtownards; the children have access to two self-contained outdoor play areas. It is a controlled, co-educational preparatory school with children attending from the local town and wider North Down and Ards area. The school has identified over thirty percent of children requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new head of preparatory department.

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 inspectors. The leadership co-operated with the inspection team in relation to 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.

Regent House Preparatory Department	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Enrolment	105	86	80	70
% School Attendance	94.8	95.4	94.4	N/A
% NI Primary school average	95.5	95.5	94.9	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	3.8	2.3	3.8	5.71
No. of children on SEN register	34	26	20	22
% of children on SEN register	32.4	30.2	25.0	31.4
No. of children with statements of educational needs	*	*	*	*
No. of newcomer children	0	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-nine percent of parents and around half of the staff responded to the online, confidential questionnaires. The responses from almost all of the parents and staff indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents praised, in particular, the commitment of staff to developing the children's wider skills and dispositions and the extra-curricular activities available to their children. The responses to the staff questionnaires highlighted the caring and supportive learning environment provided for the children.

The responses to the year 7 online children's questionnaire indicated that they enjoyed the range of activities available to them and the high level of pastoral support they were provided with in the school.

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

The ETI has communicated to the principal and representatives of the board of governors the main findings from the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- outcomes for children with a particular focus on literacy;
- quality of provision with a particular focus on literacy including across the curriculum; 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

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The inspectors met with a group of year 7 children who read fluently, confidently and with high levels of interest. They were able to problem-solve a range of more complex vocabulary in an articulate manner and showed a very good understanding of how authors use words and phrases to convey meaning.

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

- In discussions with groups of year 6 and year 7 children, they spoke very positively about their school experiences including the range of outings and residential trips, and their opportunities to develop leadership skills through, for example, the School Council and the children's mentor system.

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 school development plan is comprehensive and underpinned by wide-ranging consultation with all stakeholders. The action plans reflect the school's current priorities and the school monitors and evaluates regularly the progress in meeting the targets within the action plans.
- The recent introduction of link governors for key areas of learning has strengthened the governors' role in the school improvement process and makes effective use of their individual skills and experiences.

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. In discussions with a group of year 6 children, they report that they feel safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. They know how to stay safe online in school and at home, and are aware of how to access school counselling services, if required. 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.

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) from the governors;
- meetings with groups of children; and
- the opportunity for the children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete an online, confidential 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 leadership;
- meetings with representatives from the governors and groups of children;
- school development plan and associated action plans;
- review of safeguarding documentation and relevant policies; and
- the opportunity for the children, parents, teaching and support staff to complete an online, confidential questionnaire.

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 impact 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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