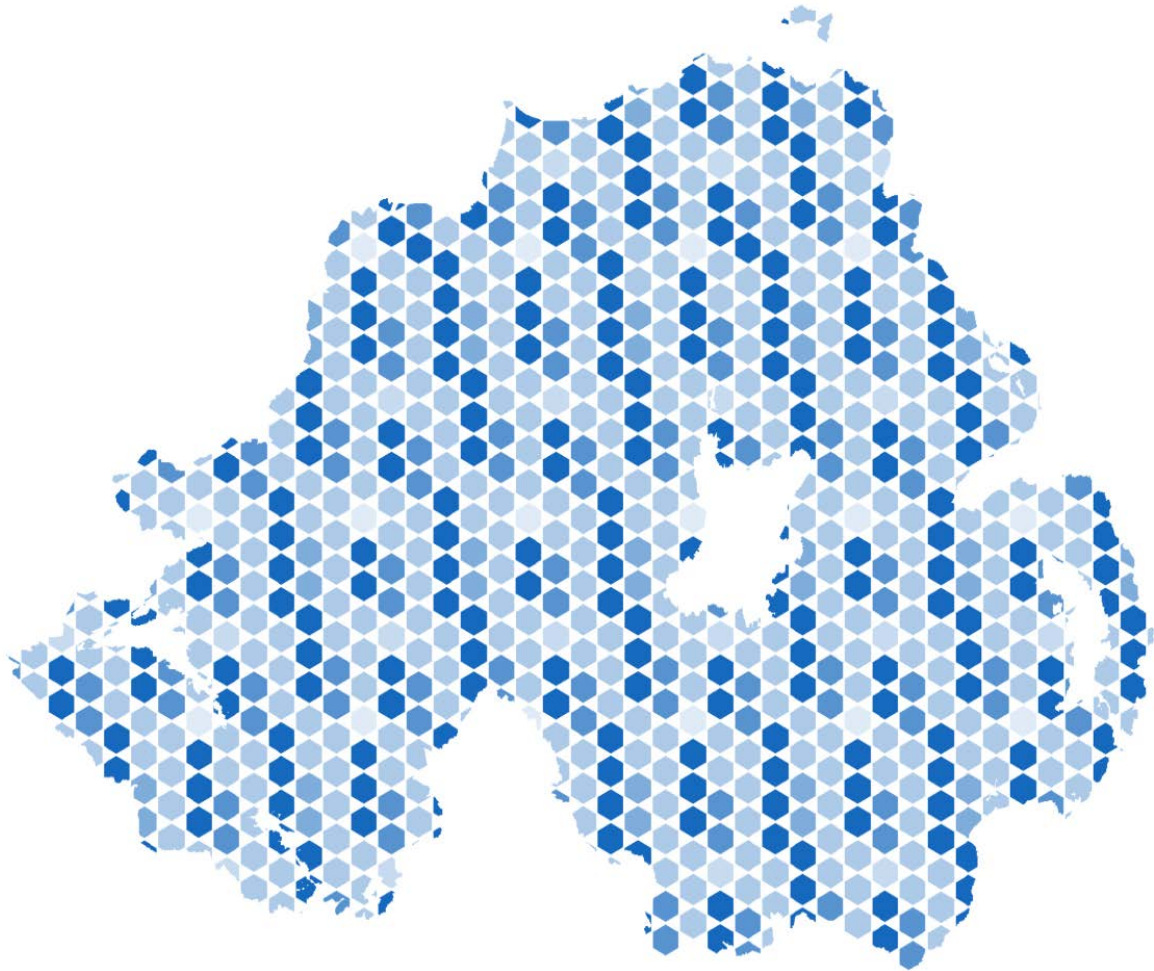


SPECIAL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Cedar Lodge School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
January 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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1. Context

Cedar Lodge School is located in north Belfast, County Antrim. The school provides education for pupils aged four to 16 years who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and who are unable to adjust to mainstream settings. While the majority of pupils come from the Belfast area, there is an increasing number attending the school from the north eastern area. There are 243 pupils enrolled at the school, representing a growth of 40 percent in the past five years. Since the previous inspection a new principal has been appointed. The school is a regional training centre for Information, Communication and Technology (ICT).

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 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.

2. Views of parents and staff

Eleven percent of parents (25) and twenty-three percent of staff (19) responded to the confidential questionnaires. Almost all of the parental replies indicated that their children enjoyed learning at school and that the staff supported their care, dignity and well-being. There were additional written comments which affirmed the work and dedication of the staff. Most of the staff responses were positive and indicated that the children contribute to decision-making in the school. There were additional comments from parents and staff in relation to communication, behaviour and the leadership. The ETI has reported to the representatives of the board of governors, the main findings emerging from the questionnaires.

3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for pupils; in particular, how the school is addressing individual needs;
- the quality of provision in the school; and
- the 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

5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils with whom the inspectors met, are articulate in expressing their views and explained how much they enjoyed school and the opportunities to make friends, go on school trips and participate in the clubs and teams available such as football, swimming, badminton and athletics. They are aware of the pathways available and the qualifications they require in order to transition to employment or further study.
- During discussions with inspectors the pupils were confident and courteous; they demonstrate care and concern to each other and staff. They spoke eagerly of the subjects they enjoyed in school and how they were supported in their learning. The pupils enjoy the opportunities to undertake meaningful roles and responsibilities, for example as prefects, digital leaders, members of the student council and eco council.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- outcomes attained by the pupils;
- progression by the pupils in learning; and
- the pupils wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- There is a strong focus on the use of digital technology within the school through digital learning journals, digital screens and the school app.
- The school has introduced a Skyline Wellbeing Centre to offer therapeutic and transition support.
- Across the school there are a range of events and visits organised to inform pupils about career pathways such as the business insight day and employer visits. The pupils in the leavers' class have developed personal career plans and are clear about career options available for them and where they will transition to in the future. All of the pupils participate in appropriate work placements and have the opportunity to engage in mock interviews.
- There have been recent changes to transport arrangements made by the Education Authority (EA) and as a consequence 14 pupils are regularly late for school. This is having a negative impact on pupils learning and emotional well-being.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully the:

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

7. Leadership and management

- Since the previous inspection, the school has established a senior leadership team of the principal, vice-principal, four key stage leaders, and a special educational needs co-ordinator and well-being leader.
- The senior leadership team has used an appropriate self-evaluation framework and process to identify areas for further development in outcomes for learners and the quality of the school provision. The school development plan has been constructed through consultation with a range of appropriate groups, including the board of governors, an analysis of pupil data, and an audit of the school provision.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, there can be confidence in aspects of the governance evaluated. The governors invite key co-ordinators to meetings to discuss the pupils' progress and outcomes. They are involved fully in the life and work of the school.

8. Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education (DE). In a meeting with inspectors, the pupils reported that they are happy in school and they feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or 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 ETI are unable to evaluate fully the:

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

9. Overall effectiveness

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 pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and safety/accommodation

1. The large gates from the playground areas are currently secured with padlocks. It is important the method of securing the gates is addressed as a matter of urgency to ensure that all staff can open the gates easily in the event of an emergency evacuation of pupils.
2. The space available within the school grounds for the nine buses and eighteen taxis to park is unsatisfactory. The EA need to carry out a risk assessment and put in place remedial measures to ensure the safety of pupils in the school grounds when accessing or disembarking from vehicles.

Statistical data

Cedar Lodge School	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Enrolment school	212	207	222	243
% Attendance	90.2	89.5	87	85
% FSME ¹	65	69	55	66
Newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

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

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's [Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework](#) is available on the ETI website.

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 representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of pupils; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a 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.

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Outcomes for learners, on the Quality of provision and on Leadership and management:

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

Inspection Outcome

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when indicating what will happen after the inspection:

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation sustains improvement
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement which include the need to... There will be a formal follow-up inspection in...
The organisation 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 organisation's progress in addressing the need to... There will be a formal follow-up inspection in...

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