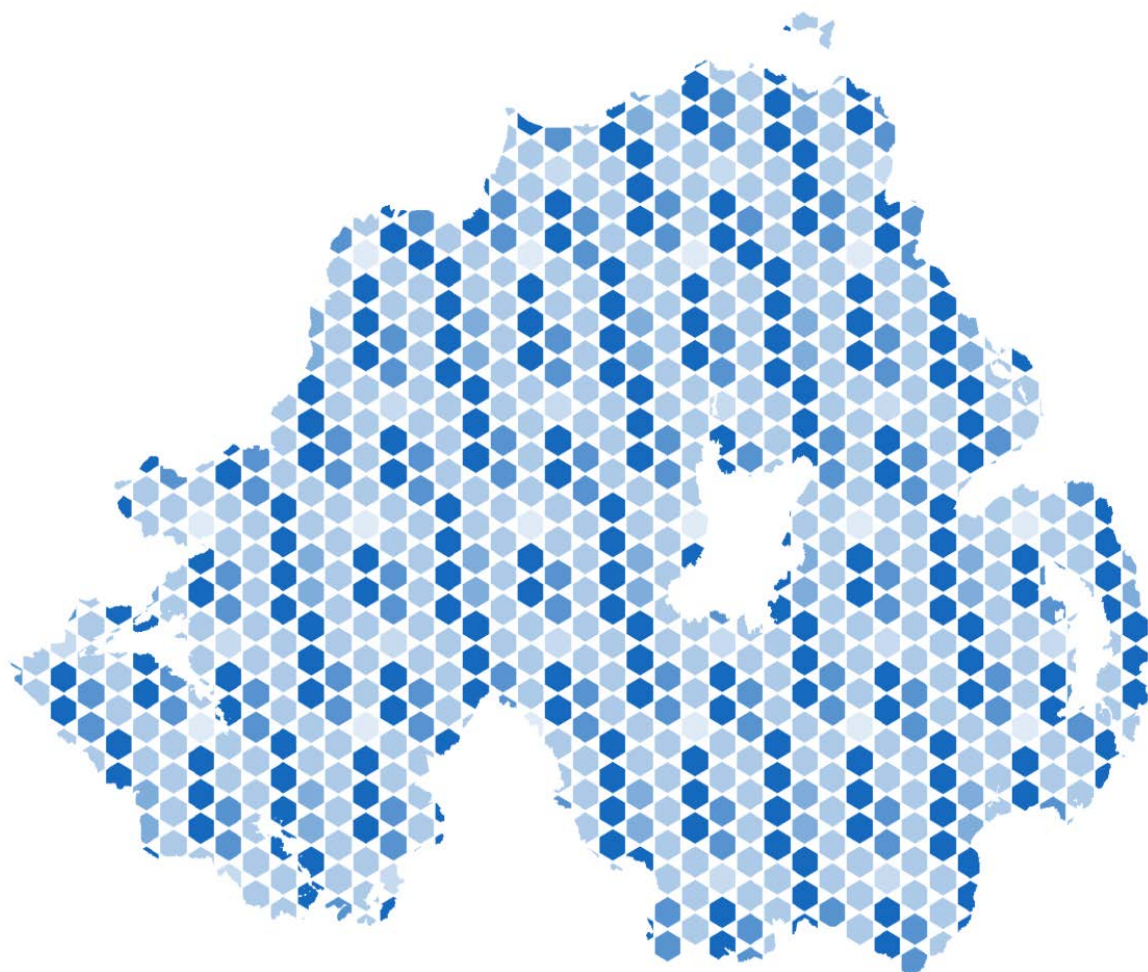


# Education and Training Inspectorate

## SPECIAL INSPECTION



Beechlawn School, Hillsborough, County Down

DE Ref No: 431-0008

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in March 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## **Introduction**

The last inspection of Beechlawn School in 2017 was impacted by action short of strike. Consequently, the ETI was unable to assure parents/carers and the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. In the interim, there have been changes to the leadership of the school in September 2017 and a year 15 class was established in 2018. A further SII was conducted on the 2 March 2020.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute, and also workload and other management issues. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that the senior leadership and designated teacher would be co-operating with the inspection in relation to their 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.

## **Focus of the inspection**

The inspection focused on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The areas of focus during the SII were to improve further:

- the provision at post-16; and
- the learning experiences for all pupils across the school.

Owing to the school's participation in industrial action the inspection was unable to focus on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school planning.

## **Key findings**

- Since the last inspection, an initiative to develop the pupils' confidence and entrepreneurial skills has been introduced. Pupils have developed a range of award-winning sensory and eco-friendly products which have been shared with a local care home to support the residents' sensory needs. The year 15 class focuses on skill development, wellbeing and independent travel and a course has been developed with the local further education college to prepare pupils for the transition. The pupils have researched and created a sensory garden within the school and with classroom assistant support, a small number of pupils have passed the driving theory test. The school's data indicates that the majority of pupils continue to make progress with their learning in accredited courses at post-16.

- Fifty percent of the pupils have a diagnosis of ASD and appropriately, the school has established two sensory rooms to support therapeutic intervention and curriculum delivery, incorporated movement breaks into the timetable and introduced sensory boxes in each classroom. A number of lunch clubs to develop the creative skills of the pupils have been introduced and include lego, film, book and computer clubs. In addition a social skills cluster group has been established to support friendships and the school has formed a Makaton choir. In discussions with the choir the pupils expressed that they enjoyed performing and recognised the importance of learning another form of communication.
- At key stage four a number of new accredited courses are being delivered to reflect the needs and interests of the pupils such as physical education, occupational studies bench joinery, creative crafts and motor vehicle studies. Through the shared education partnership, the school and two local primary schools have worked collaboratively to provide pupils with learning experiences in sport, coding, music and science. The pupil evaluations outline they enjoy making new friends, using robots and making video games.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the lines of inquiry; and
- the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

### **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 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 has appropriately identified the need to review further the policies for relationships and sexual education and positive behaviour management.

### **Conclusion**

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. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2020

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)