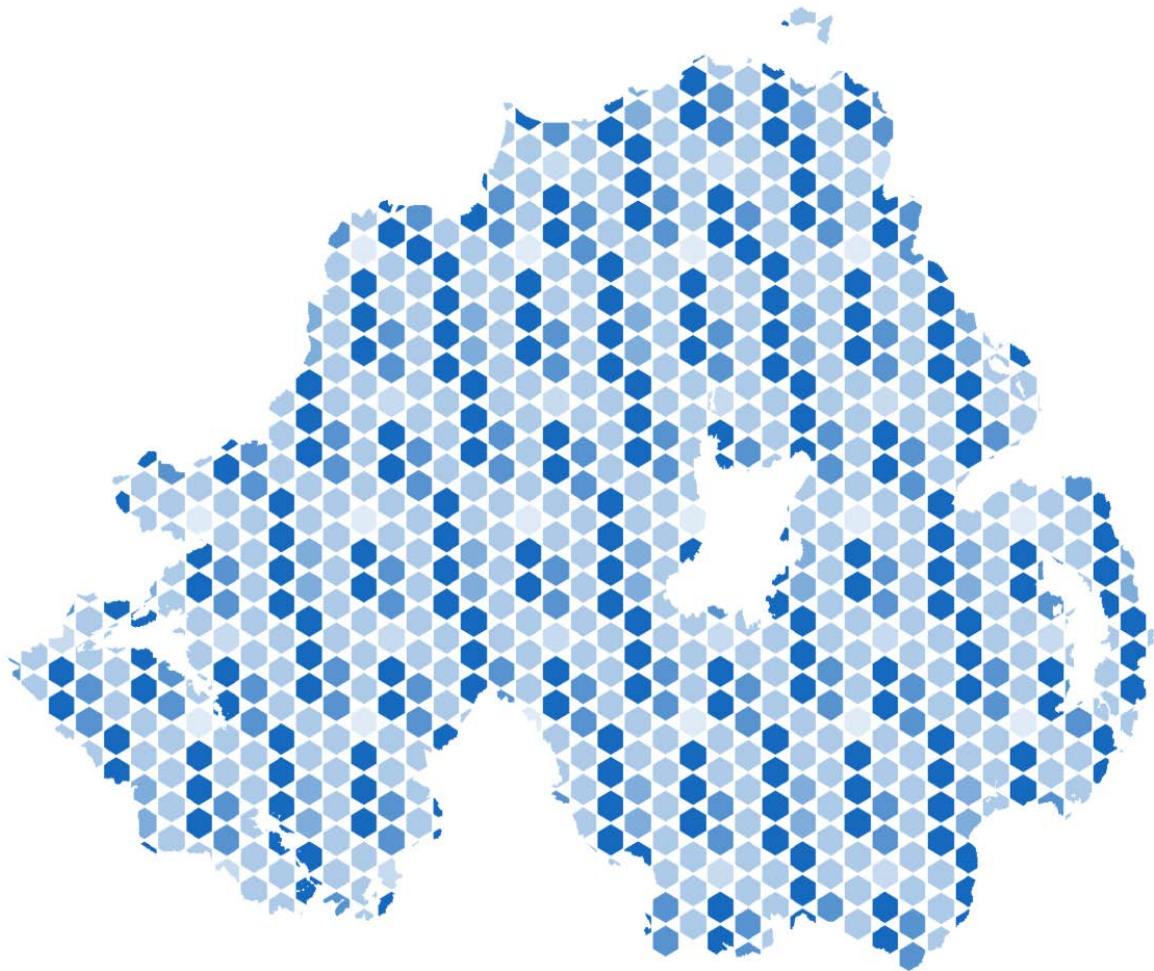


# Education and Training Inspectorate

## SPECIAL INSPECTION



### Sandelford Special School, Coleraine, County Londonderry

Special, controlled, co-educational DE Ref No: 331-6512

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
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## **Introduction**

The previous inspection in March 2017 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Sandelford Special School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. In the interim, there has been two extensions to the building to accommodate the increasing enrolment, and a further extension is planned to continue to meet more effectively the needs of the pupils and staff. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 6 February 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. The industrial action 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 inspection. The senior leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice among teachers 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**

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; and
- lines of inquiry were not selected by the school from the development plan priorities.

## **Key findings**

- The group of pupils from both primary and post-primary departments, reported that they enjoy the wide range of learning and extra-curricular opportunities they have including Information Communication Technology (ICT), Physical Education (PE) and maths; they particularly enjoy the many opportunities they have to develop their life-skills through in-school and external work-experience programmes. The pupils who are due to leave school feel very well-prepared for this, and those who are due to attend the local Further Education College are looking forward to the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The pupils have very good opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities through the school and eco-councils and they are proud of how their fundraising activities contribute to worthy charities.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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 pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The pupils report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of who to speak to and what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. In particular, the pupils are well informed about their personal safety and keeping safe online. 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.

## **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.

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