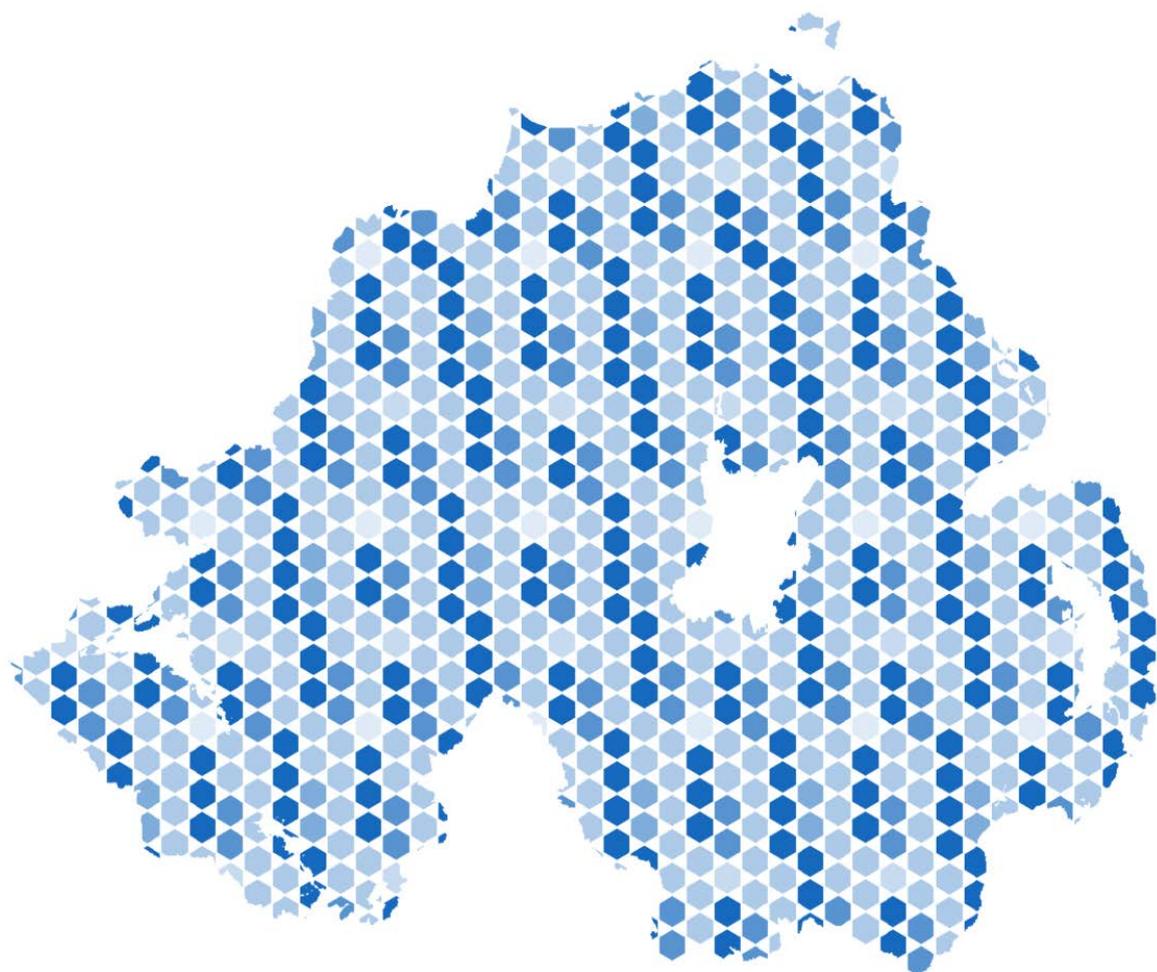


# SPECIAL SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Rosstulla School, Newtownabbey,  
County Antrim

Report of a Sustaining Improvement  
Inspection (Involving Action Short  
of Strike in January 2018)



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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Rosstulla School, Newtownabbey, County Antrim (331-0018)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in January 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Rosstulla School as very good<sup>1</sup>. In the interim a new Principal has recently been appointed and four teachers have joined the senior leadership team. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on the 18 January 2018.

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 almost all of the teachers would not 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.

### **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:

- further develop the provision to support pupils with challenging behaviours; and
- improve the assessment systems to monitor more effectively pupil progression and outcomes.

### **Key findings**

- Consultation has taken place with pupils, parents and staff on pupil behaviour and intervention strategies, and the responses have informed the pastoral action plans. Staff have been trained in the use of the school information management system to record and monitor more effectively pupil behaviour and to improve the quality of behaviour reviews. The pupils are supported in developing their skills to self-regulate their behaviour and manage their emotions through the introduction of well-conceived support strategies such as, the development of nurture provision in the primary and secondary departments, social skills group work, designated 'chill-out' zones and a focus on meeting the sensory needs of the pupils. The timetables in the primary department have been reviewed so the pupils benefit from practical lessons each afternoon to maintain their engagement and enjoyment. The number of behaviour support assistants has increased and staff development in behaviour management has been correctly prioritised. The leadership are reviewing the positive behaviour management policy and have identified appropriately the need to develop further the rules and reward systems in the school, particularly for the pupils at Key Stage (KS) 4.

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<sup>1</sup> From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as outstanding or very good has been reported as a school demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement

- The use of baseline literacy and numeracy assessments has been developed across the school following a review of the assessment systems by the data tracking team. A range of diagnostic assessments have been trialled before implementation and importantly staff are using new assessment systems to baseline the social and emotional development of the pupils. Consequently the information is used to inform the targets and strategies in individual education plans. Staff are using data tracking sheets to monitor pupil progress, the appropriateness of the curriculum at KS4 and to identify underachievement. However, the use of specific strategies to support pupils who are underachieving is at an early stage of development. The progression files have been updated and there is growing consultation at transition between the primary and secondary departments. It is important that the school's leadership continue to merge curricular and pastoral data to provide a clear understanding of the complex and multiple barriers to the pupils' progress and learning.

The ETI were unable to evaluate fully the areas of focus.

### **Safeguarding**

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education.

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:

- develop an Intimate Care Policy; and
- continue their review of the pastoral policies.

### **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 provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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