

Inspection of Special Schools

Information for Parents/Carers

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



WHY IS MY CHILD'S SCHOOL BEING INSPECTED?

All special schools are inspected and visited regularly by Inspectors from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

The inspection in your child's school will tell you and others about how well:

- the children are progressing in their learning;
- the school is helping them to learn and develop;
- the school is attending to the children's care and welfare, and safety.

Inspections tell **all** those who need to know, such as the parents/carers, the Department of Education (DE) and the Government, how good the special schools in Northern Ireland are and what needs to be changed to improve matters.

WHO INSPECTS?

An inspection team has inspectors from ETI who have experience and qualifications in education. In most inspections an Associate Assessor helps the team to take into account the views of the parents/carers whose children attend the school. The team is led by a Reporting Inspector (RI) who is in charge of the inspection and the report of the findings.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN INSPECTION?

During the inspection, the inspectors:

- observe the children at work;
- talk to the children about what they are learning;
- listen to the children's account of their experiences;
- look carefully at samples of the children's work;
- observe the teaching, and talk to the teachers; and
- discuss aspects of the school's work with teachers, co-ordinators and the Principal.

They assess:

- the quality of the relationships throughout the school;
- the way in which the school looks after the children's needs, including the school's arrangements for care and welfare, and safeguarding;
- how well the children are learning, and are being taught;
- the standards being attained by the school as a whole;
- how well the school is run and led; and
- how well the school relates to the parents/carers and the wider community.

Members of the team will also talk informally to groups of children outside the classroom and without a member of staff being present. During these discussions the inspector will talk to the children about:

- the things they enjoy at school;
- how the school promotes positive behaviour ;
- how they are supervised outside the classroom; and
- how their concerns and worries are dealt with.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE INSPECTION PROCESS?

You can give your views on how well the school is doing by:

- completing an online questionnaire, speaking to the Chairperson or the parents' representatives on the Board of Governors;
- contacting the RI through a telephone call or email to the Inspection Services Team (see telephone number and address below);
- asking for a paper version of the questionnaire from Inspection Services Team, if you have difficulty accessing the online version; and
- by writing to the Principal of the school or to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

It is important to remember that ETI does not pursue/investigate individual complaints on the part of parents. Your child's school will have a procedure for handling complaints/enquiries and it is important that any concerns are brought, in the first instance, to the attention of the Principal. Following that, additional lines of communication open to you are the Board of Governors of your child's school and the Employing Authority.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN INSPECTION?

When the report on the school is published, a copy of the report will be available on the Education and Training Inspectorate website at www.etini.gov.uk or at the school.

If the report on the school finds that there are important areas for improvement a follow-up inspection will take place in the following school year.

If you wish to comment on any aspect of the inspection or the report, or to receive any further information about the inspection process you should write to the Chief Inspector, at the address below.

**The Chief Inspector
The Reporting Inspector and
Inspection Services Team may be contacted at:**

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Rathgael House
Rathgill
43 Balloo Road
BANGOR, Co Down
BT19 7PR

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