

Post-primary (including EOTAS) Insights Report

September 2024 to June 2025



Education and
Training Inspectorate
Empowering Improvement

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Introduction and context

This report highlights key findings from 19 post-primary school inspections and five Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) centre inspections, undertaken from September 2024 to June 2025. Twenty-seven inspections were scheduled but eight did not take place due to the industrial action short of strike (ASOS) by the teaching unions. This report also references, where appropriate, the responses from: 6,417 pupils; 892 teachers, 351 classroom assistants and 247 support staff; and 2,451 parents/carers to ETI's post-primary pre-inspection questionnaires. Findings in the report also include ETI's evaluation and district work, including visits to 19 post-primary schools in June 2025 focusing on the schools' arrangements to meet the requirements of the [Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#).

Key findings

Schools have welcomed the Empowering Improvement Framework for inspection

Schools have welcomed and engaged with confidence in the Empowering Improvement Framework (EIF), introduced in September 2024, seeing inspection as complementary to their ongoing processes of self-evaluation and self-improvement, and a catalyst for further improvement.

With the removal of the requirement of the previous framework to complete paperwork specifically for inspection purposes, such as the self-evaluation, outcomes, safeguarding and governance proformas, leaders are presenting existing evidence of everyday working practices to demonstrate their development work and are involving the wider school community in the inspection. School leaders have expressed appreciation for the reduction in preparatory work for inspection, allowing them to focus rightfully on the needs of the pupils and the staff.

ETI will continue to act on feedback from inspection to continuously review the EIF, to reach a time when the term 'readiness for inspection' is not required as it will be synonymous with a school's singular focus on meeting the needs of the pupils.

The EIF, created through a process of co-design, places an enhanced focus on the school's context, ethos, vision and values. Most of the schools (84%) were successful in working towards the achievement of their vision. In these schools, their vision and values, underpinned by effective self-evaluation and well-informed expectations for all, are central to the life and work of the school, and are shared, understood and enacted by the wider school community. Improved quality learning experiences, more robust self-evaluation and greater precision in action planning will help the minority of schools to realise more fully their vision.

ETI has engaged positively with schools during this reporting period to share exemplars of effective practice more widely through the co-ordination of dissemination events, providing opportunities for school leaders and staff to be inspired, supported, and recognised and celebrated, while learning from each other. ETI will work collaboratively with the wide range of education support bodies to involve them more actively in this important work.

As a strong indicator of the health of our education system, in 13 of the 19 schools inspected, ETI identified areas for dissemination from which others may learn. In the new format inspection reports, areas for dissemination are made explicit. This is resulting in subsequent meaningful professional dialogue between schools. Examples include:

How to embed vision and values into daily practice and planning; and implementing a curriculum matched well to pupil need and aspiration	The dynamic curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences	The value placed on the pupils' participation rights; the pupils' views are used very effectively to inform school improvement
Addressing social, behavioural and emotional wellbeing needs, using a restorative practice approach	The significant work undertaken to ensure that the provision is equitable and accessible to all	How the school defines, celebrates and embeds success
How the school defines, celebrates and embeds success; and the dynamic curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences	The proactive, preventative strategies to promote the pupils' health and wellbeing, including digital safety	Creating the appropriate conditions to enable a highly effective community of learning

Pupils thrive when challenged to lead their learning

In the reporting period, planning, teaching and assessment for successful learning was mostly effective. When the learning was most successful, teachers had high expectations for their pupils' learning, demonstrated strong and contemporary subject expertise, and planned well-structured lessons to maximise the impact of the teaching time. Using research-informed approaches, the teachers applied their understanding of relational learning to welcome and engage the pupils and created an environment conducive to successful learning. They built on prior learning, integrated modelled and guided instruction, incorporated challenging independent work, provided optimum support and challenge for all, and used plenaries well to review the pupils' learning. In the more effective practice learning was supported through constructive marking for improvement in the pupils' books.

When learning was most impactful, the pupils engaged well in stimulating and challenging activities, fostering a sense of curiosity and using their critical thinking skills through real-life contexts and practical investigations. Retrieval practice was used to provide well-spaced recall opportunities for strengthening and embedding learning. The pupils were empowered to take ownership of their learning through opportunities to use their self-management skills, self and peer evaluation to improve their work and benefitted from the teachers' skilful questioning, feedback and support. In discussions with us, the pupils identified strategies that help them consolidate their learning, such as the use of thinking diagrams, voice recordings and visual cues. They were encouraged to learn with and from their peers, listen to and respect the views of others and develop understanding, empathy and skills for life beyond academic success.

When the learning was less successful, pupils were not engaged fully in their learning due to the teachers' over-direction, over-use of closed questioning and the slow pace of the lesson. Teachers' over-reliance on worksheets or booklets limited the pupils' thinking and their extended written responses. The pupils completed tasks to occupy them rather than being given opportunities to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. The pupils had insufficient opportunities to discuss, test hypotheses or justify their opinions and apply their learning to differing contexts. When the learning was less impactful, the departmental planning did not make the intended learning clear, take sufficient account of the pupils' prior learning, including from primary school, and lacked detail on adaptive teaching strategies to meet the range of pupils' needs.

Importantly, there are examples of departments prioritising more effective assessment for learning strategies through their development and curriculum planning processes. Key here is how well teachers check for understanding and use purposeful and time-efficient feedback to ensure the pupils can act on the feedback and use it as a catalyst for building their knowledge and deepening their understanding. There were instances where pupils were given insufficient feedback on how to improve their work, resulting in uncorrected inaccuracies and regression over time in their learning. Notably, over one-fifth (21%) of pupil questionnaire responses highlighted that they received helpful feedback from their teachers only some of the time (19%) or never (2%).

Health, wellbeing and keeping safe is given high priority

During this reporting period, all schools and EOTAS centres had arrangements for child and adult protection which aligned with the statutory guidance. In a small number of schools, the training of governors in child and adult protection matters needed to be updated.

Schools continue to give high priority to supporting the health, wellbeing and keeping safe of all pupils, through focusing on multi-layered support and collaborating meaningfully with external agencies. Almost all of the pupil questionnaire responses indicated that they feel safe in school, and almost all also indicated that there are adults in school they can talk to if they are worried or have a problem. While the majority of pupils highlighted that their wellbeing is important to their teachers and others in school, a significant minority did not know, and a few did not feel their wellbeing was important. For individual schools, exploring the reasons why pupils may feel that their wellbeing is not important to teachers will be crucial to informing improvement in going forward.

Appropriately, staff continue to review aspects of the preventative curriculum, including the provision for relationships and sexuality education (RSE), in consultation with all stakeholders. Successful practice is characterised by a coherent and progressive preventative curriculum through which schools are auditing and mapping their RSE and learning for life and work (LLW) provision across all the areas of learning to ensure pupils benefit from provision which is comprehensive and age and stage appropriate, and responsive to relevant and contemporary issues. This remains an area for development, with just under one-third (32%) of pupil questionnaire responses highlighting that they do not find their RSE provision helpful, and over two-thirds (69%) of parent/carer questionnaire responses considering RSE provision as helpful.

Education has a key role to play in contributing to the [Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy](#). Using the pupils' views on their learning, including the judicious use of external agencies to support curriculum delivery and build teacher confidence, will help inform the development of the preventative curriculum, to include a range of well-informed perspectives and the strategies that best enable all pupils to apply their learning to manage risk and inform their decisions beyond school.

Poor mental health and emotionally based school non-attendance are among an increasing complexity of reasons for low attendance rates for too many pupils in schools. The staff are using creative approaches to support pupils' emotional health and wellbeing, including through meaningful collaboration with families and others, to improve levels of attendance and engagement, with individual schools reporting impact. Crucially, high quality learning experiences across the curriculum and key stages are integral to pupils wanting to be at school. Schools and EOTAS centres continue to report difficulties in pupils getting access in a timely way to the EA's [Education Welfare Service](#) and greater multi-agency support is required to improve pupil attendance, which is proving stubbornly slow to improve at system level.

All schools visited in June 2025 had processes and procedures aligned with the Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) Act 2016, reflecting how staff are proactive, responsive and inclusive in addressing bullying-type behaviours. In almost all (95%) of the schools, the online safety policy supports the approaches outlined in the school's addressing bullying policy, which is critical given the dangers of online or cyberbullying. Even though schools restrict pupils' access to mobile phones during the school day, social media is reported as the highest risk for occurrences of bullying-type behaviours. Schools need all parents/carers to work with them in partnership and to be vigilant in their child's phone use beyond school. With a minority (12%) of pupil questionnaire responses indicating that their school does not deal well with bullying, schools' vigilance in this area remains key. It is of note that pupil responses varied across the key stages, with 17% of pupils in years 11 to 14 saying their school does not deal well with bullying compared with 8% of pupils in year 8 and year 9.

Pupils need the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and dispositions if they experience bullying-type behaviours, and the ability to reflect on their own values and behaviours to promote positive relationships in life and work. Effective pupil-led approaches included: having a well-developed positive behaviour policy to empower pupils to recognise bullying-type behaviours, and to know what actions to take if they observe it; and pupils learning, through their personal development programme, to use words kindly and apply their skills in restorative practice to address positively behavioural needs and breakdowns in relationships. Inspection evidence is showing the significant benefits of restorative conversations in schools. It is becoming increasingly prevalent across the schools visited, with staff and pupils reporting its positive impact on addressing social, behavioural and emotional wellbeing need, and restoring relationships when issues arise.

It remains important for school leaders and governors to scrutinise attendance, suspension and expulsion rates across key stages to address promptly upward trends. It is difficult for pupils to address successfully the root causes of their behaviours without timely access to appropriate, bespoke and sustained support from staff, youth services and external agencies, given the complexity of the challenges facing young people today.

In building equity, understanding how to identify and address barriers is key

How a school monitors and responds to overcoming pupils' challenges and barriers is a key strength in most (84%) of the schools inspected. Through close links with the feeder primary schools, families and external agencies, a wide range of assessment and pastoral information is shared to help staff identify pupils who may need additional support with their learning. Where the staff know the pupils well, they understand how to identify and address barriers to learning at an early stage. The staff's use of adaptive teaching strategies is helping pupils overcome challenges and barriers to make progress in their learning. Increasingly, schools are helping families in need, and this support is offered with great sensitivity and respect. There were examples of schools integrating well newcomer pupils into the school community. Tailored, flexible support meets their individual needs and is impacting positively on their progress across the curriculum and on their outcomes.

Schools continue to experience a significant increase in both the number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and in the complexity of need. There is variability in how staff use their targeted professional learning to adopt well-developed support strategies to take account of the pupils' growing maturity and stage of development and their changing educational and pastoral needs.

There remains variation in the effectiveness of individual education plans or personal learning plans in a minority of schools to meet pupils' specific needs across classes, with too many examples of targets that are not specifically customised to the pupil's needs, interests and prior learning, nor reviewed robustly.

Systemic reform of SEN and the associated services is underway, with SEN recognised as a key cross-departmental priority for the [Executive in the Programme for Government \(2024-27\) 'Doing what matters'](#). DE has also published the first [SEN Policy Statement](#) which outlines the statutory duties, roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders in improving SEN provision and support, and delivering a more equitable and inclusive experience for all children and young people.

The appointment of specialist teachers for English, mathematics and ICT in EOTAS centres inspected has had a positive impact on the pupils' learning and the outcomes they attain. The staff use qualitative and quantitative information, including the pupils' work and their views to monitor progress robustly from their starting points. They use well the support available from external agencies and plan a flexible, appropriate curriculum to better meet the pupils' needs abilities and aspirations. Better curriculum provision in EOTAS centres inspected includes therapeutic programmes to support the pupils' social, behavioural and emotional wellbeing needs and to help them overcome barriers to their learning. Going forward, EOTAS centres are working on improving attendance through better access to multi-agency support, evaluating further the effectiveness of all the support provided by the centres and extending access to aspects of the KS 4 curriculum for pupils in their referring schools.

A dynamic and flexible curriculum is informed by the pupils' abilities and aspirations

The positive impact of schools' ongoing work on developing a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum to meet the pupils' needs, interests, and aspirations was reported in most (89%) of the schools inspected. These schools analyse pastoral and performance data and use pupil feedback to adapt practice to help their pupils to make progress and achieve better across all key stages. In the more effective practice, extra-curricular and enrichment programmes are aligned strategically with the pupils' needs, interests and future career aspirations and contribute positively to pupils' wider skills, personal and social development. When inspectors spoke to post-16 pupils, they identified the importance of their timetabled enrichment programme for life beyond school, for example, sessions on student finance, debt management, interview practice, road safety, cooking on a budget and practical experience in laundry and cleaning skills.

Pupils' holistic development is celebrated widely

Schools have embraced the opportunity to define, celebrate and embed success as part of the EIF, which considers the pupils' outcomes and holistic development from their individual starting points, including overcoming challenges life can bring and specific barriers to learning.

With the support of the Education Authority (EA) [C2k](#), schools are well placed to analyse their pupils' outcomes in public examinations, including across year groups, subjects, classes, gender, and taking account of SEN, free school meals' entitlement and other indicators. Central to this work is how well pupil progress is evaluated across classes, key stages, subjects and transition points to help schools to identify priority areas for development. This precise data analysis by school leaders has improved the impact of early identification strategies to help pupils succeed better in line with their targets. Appropriately, schools recognise the importance of addressing any gender gap in outcomes through bespoke support programmes, coaching and mentoring.

With just under one-quarter (23%) of pupil questionnaire responses indicating that they do not know if they are making progress in their learning or that they are not making progress (3%), schools should consider how they can support better pupils to take greater ownership of their learning as part of the target-setting process.

Given the uniqueness of schools, there are a wide range of examples of how they celebrate their pupils' holistic development. For example, celebrating qualities such as determination and perseverance, participation, and teamwork in drama productions, sporting endeavours, work or subject-related events, competitions or programmes. There are also exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills and a sense of social justice through volunteering programmes, fundraising for local and global charities and campaigning for sustainable development. Individual and collective successes are recognised extensively through daily encounters, assemblies, annual events and sharing on social media, reinforcing school identity and pride. Significantly, schools are monitoring pupils' participation levels to identify those who may benefit from additional opportunities for wider success.

Pupils want to participate in a just, inclusive and shared learning environment

Where there is a strong culture of valuing pupils' rights in schools, the participation of all pupils is underpinned by meaningful consultation and collaboration. The pupils' views are used well to inform aspects of learning and teaching and broader school decision-making. In [one example](#), pupils engaged in an empowering project to learn about the value of making space for every voice, including those marginalised and to challenge misogyny and sexism in society. Whilst just over one-half (53%) of pupil questionnaire responses, indicate that their ideas are listened to and responded to when the school is making policies and decisions, the pupil responses range from 35% to 75%, indicating pupil participation at all levels needs developed further.

In over one-third (39%) of the 19 schools inspected, involvement in a shared education partnership, including those with cross-border links, helped to promote a greater level of pupil participation through collapsed timetables, engaging in workshops and experiential learning beyond the schools. Importantly, in the planning of these programmes, the pupils' views inform topics and learning strategies, including more pupil-led facilitation of discussions which help to promote more open mindsets of differing perspectives. Schools with international links also develop the pupils' understanding and appreciation of global perspectives. The pupils value when their school's ethos is genuinely inclusive through the effective integration of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. This includes language support to enable newcomer pupils to access the curriculum, make progress in their learning and build friendships with their peers.

In the majority (63%) of the 19 schools inspected, pupils were missing out on well-planned shared learning experiences through a formal shared education partnership. It is opportune that the EA is supporting schools to reconfigure partnerships to ensure local schools link with each other helping to reduce transport costs. Just over one-half (54%) of pupil questionnaire responses indicated that shared education is having a positive impact on their relationships with pupils from other communities; 18% did not agree and 30% did not know. Notably, there was variation across year groups. While schools may have shared classes through their Entitlement Framework provision, it cannot be assumed that effective shared education is taking place. For example, we observed pupils sitting separately in distinct school groups and pupils from the non-host school(s) not being encouraged to participate equally in lessons. In addition, some pupils reported that they do not feel part of the class and can experience isolation or exclusion from well-established friendship groups in the host school.

Everyone is a winner in a strong community of learning through vibrant staff professional learning

Growing a community of learning was successful in most (84%) of the schools inspected. Almost all (92%) teacher questionnaire responses indicated that they have benefited from staff professional learning (SPL); as did 96% of classroom assistants and 82% of support staff. In successful practice, creative and innovative SPL, based on reflective practice, peer-reviewed research, first-hand evaluation of pupils' learning and cross departmental working, is aligned closely with the priorities in the school development plan and impacts positively on the pupils' learning

experiences and outcomes. There are examples of schools, relaunching peer observations to support reflective practice, through initiatives such as Teacher Colleague Networks, and engaging in well-considered ongoing internal and external SPL through staff providing workshops at conferences, teacher education colleges and with other schools, conducting local, national and international study visits, and availing of further education study.

Schools need strong collaborative networks

Schools were keen to include others from their collaborative network as part of their inspection evidence, highlighting the mutual benefits of learning with and from others. Importantly, these extensive community networks are integral to the unique ethos of schools and foster the pupils' confidence, spiritual and moral development. Moreover, effective collaboration builds organisational resilience and empowers schools to meet the growing complexity of pupil need within a community. Meaningful educational, sporting, cultural, community, work related, and multi-agency links enhance significantly the pupils' learning experiences, including the development and application of wider skills. Local and international projects including charitable work increase the pupils' sense of social justice, passion for sustainable development and active local and global citizenship education through broadening the pupils' horizons. Strategic links with external agencies, including local youth services, health and social services, outdoor learning providers and intergenerational projects, enrich the pupils' learning experiences, support the development of their communication and leadership skills and assist them in overcoming the barriers they face. The impact of pupils engaging in purposeful learning led by a youth tutor, in a small number of schools, resulted in better school attendance, improved behaviour and the development of the pupils' resilience and reduced need for contact with parents/carers regarding concerns.

With 92% of parent/carer questionnaire responses indicating that their child is happy at school, the value of schools' strong collaborative networks is evident. Effective two-way communication between schools and parents/carers is crucial in helping all pupils thrive and achieve. Innovative digital solutions, regular phone calls, family support programmes and parent/carer information sessions have contributed well to home-school liaison. There are also examples of staff providing support to parents/carers in helping their child to overcome barriers to learning such as signposting families to local agencies which offer bespoke support for issues they and their child may be facing beyond the school.

Schools value significantly the work of their parent associations that contribute meaningfully to the school community in numerous ways, including through raising additional school funds. Targeted work in developing further parent/carer communication is needed. Just over one-quarter (28%) of parents/carers indicated that staff do not ask for their views and take them into account, indicating missed opportunities by the school for family involvement in their child's learning.

Key challenges

Inspection evidence highlighted areas for action, namely to: improve the consistency and quality of the planning, teaching and assessment for successful learning, including adaptive teaching strategies to ensure all pupils progress; develop further the pupils' thinking skills, personal capabilities and wider attitudes and dispositions; improve the quality of curriculum for all, including the development of the pupils' digital skills; and implement more rigorous monitoring and evaluating processes across the school.

Reinvigorating planning for learning would benefit all

The quality and extent of planning for learning regressed across schools during the prolonged period of ASOS and the COVID pandemic. Middle leaders need support and high-quality professional learning opportunities to enable them to monitor and evaluate rigorously planning for learning. School leaders including governors need to have a secure oversight of the quality and consistency of planning for learning across all areas of the curriculum.

In successful practice, planning for learning (for example, departmental schemes of work) is informed through robust analysis of the pupils' work and outcomes. Working collegially across a department, staff share their research-informed and evidence-based professional learning in effective subject-specific pedagogical approaches. Importantly, staff take due account of the pupils' views to review those aspects of the curriculum that require further development to meet better the pupils' needs, interests and aspirations. Consequently, using shared departmental planning, staff can build on strong foundations to embed innovative learning opportunities to excite and motivate the pupils in their learning and improve the outcomes they attain.

Almost one-third (32%) of the pupils responded to the questionnaire statement "My lessons are interesting and challenging" with either 'some of the time' (30%) or 'never' (2%). There are too many examples of out-dated departmental planning across KS 3 and KS 4 which do not meet the statements of minimum requirement of the NI curriculum, with insufficient cognisance being taken of the pupils' prior learning at KS 2 and are supported by inappropriate resources. At KS 4 too many teachers are relying on examination specifications for their planning; these are not tailored sufficiently to pupils' needs and must form the basis of a scheme of work rather than being seen as an appropriate replacement.

School policies must keep pupils at the centre of decision-making

It is concerning that instances remain of pupils being prohibited from progressing from year 13 to year 14 following receipt of Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level outcomes, when, for example, the pupil has attained a grade 'D' or below in one subject. Given the difficulties in finding alternative educational pathways at pace facing pupils who are not permitted to return to school following receipt of pass grades at AS level, this practice must cease. It is neither appropriate nor pupil-centred.

A number of schools have increased significantly the number of year 12 pupils they deem ineligible for inclusion in the Summary of Annual Examination Results (SAER) returns to DE. In line with the DE guidance, schools should review regularly their processes for the application of the pupil ineligibility criteria (or for those who do not meet the criteria for inclusion in public examination data at GCSE and GCE A Level) as it is important the curriculum provision for these pupils is matched well to their abilities, needs, interests and career aspirations.

A minority (21%) of schools continue to face staffing challenges, such as insufficient subject specialists or staff absence, which affect curriculum delivery in certain subjects. While recognising the difficulties facing schools in filling certain posts, particularly in STEM subjects and in English, inspection findings highlighted that a small number of schools are using an unqualified teacher to teach one subject within the KS 4 curriculum which is not in line with [DE's Circular 2023/07](#). Schools and their governors also need to ensure the curriculum has sufficient hours of attendance of pupils, including at post-16, in line with DE's circular 2013/09 (superseded by [Circular 2026/10 – School Operational Days and Hours | Department of Education](#)) and remain focused on the sustainability of any post-16 provision.

Pupils need better careers and LLW provision to prepare them for life and work

Through partnerships with local employers, schools have developed creative and flexible approaches to providing pupils with valuable and much needed work-related learning. Such experiences within a well-structured programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), extend the pupils' understanding of the world of work to inform better their choices at transition points as reflected in the [Joint DfE/DE Careers Action Plan](#), June 2025. While the majority (78%) of the questionnaire responses from the year 10 to year 14 pupils indicated that they get useful careers advice/employability lessons, a significant minority felt they did not (22%). These pupils would benefit from greater access to work-related learning experiences at the end of KS 4, and high quality CEIAG provision which includes advice about progression to further and higher education, including apprenticeship opportunities.

Inspection evidence shows that the teaching of LLW remains an area that requires continued focus. The key recommendations from the evaluation of [The Preventative Curriculum in Schools and EOTAS Centres](#) still remain. Pupils need equitable access to high-quality learning experiences in LLW across all schools. In successful practice, pupils learn how to deal with the realities of life, its opportunities, challenges and setbacks. They need, value and appreciate active and experiential learning enhanced by high-quality resources which address pertinent real-life issues.

When the learning is most impactful, pupils have opportunities to respond to carefully selected resources; listen to the views of others, understand differing perspectives, and recognise their limited perspective. The pupils value applying their personal, social and emotional and employability skills to: give presentations; feedback to peers on ways to improve; role play interview scenarios; create curriculum vitae that reflect their skills and aptitudes; engaging in democratic processes; and to participate actively in ways to improve their community.

The staff need to provide more opportunities for the pupils to apply critical thinking, challenge stereotypes, address discrimination, sectarianism and racism through fact-checking information and understanding the legal, personal, and emotional consequences of actions to make informed decisions.

The quality of the pupils' digital learning is too variable

There were examples of some schools reviewing appropriately their KS 3 curriculum to develop a range of digital skills such as robotics, coding, programming, creative arts and digital safety; equipping pupils as digital leaders to support others; and SPL in, and evaluation of, effective use of Artificial Intelligence. In one example, the provision of a digital device for every pupil on entry to the school was having a very positive impact on the pupils' engagement in lessons and their ability to manage their own learning. In going forward, schools would benefit from taking more cognisance of the pupils' digital learning as developed across their primary school education to ensure effective progression for all pupils across the digital curriculum.

Inspection findings also show that there is a need for more schools to plan for the consistent integration of digital learning, including digital skills and digital literacy, into all areas of the curriculum. This reflects the findings in the ETI evaluation of [digital skills in the curriculum](#) (April 2024) which stressed the importance of strategic planning to ensure digital skills are developed at every level. While the majority (70%) of pupil questionnaire responses highlighted that they often use ICT which helps them learn, a significant minority (17%) did not know and 13% did not feel ICT was used to help them learn.

Conclusion

Schools have embraced the spirit of the new inspection process and feedback from schools demonstrates clearly that the new model is supporting and empowering improvement well. In our most successful practice, schools are striving to live out their vision, and pupils are thriving in stimulating learning environments where their voices are heard and their needs are met. Inspection aims to provide a vehicle by which this practice can be celebrated, shared and embedded. Together, we are empowering improvement, to reach a time when all staff have access to high quality professional learning, and all pupils have access to the highest quality of provision, and when education is valued and recognised by everyone in Northern Ireland as the transformative force it is.

Appendix 1: 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%

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