



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Veronica Bintley
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Department of Education
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30 January 2015

Our Ref: PMcC/KM/1934

Dear Veronica

Committee's inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process

At its meeting on Wednesday 28 January 2015, the Committee considered correspondence from the Department (dated 15 January 2015) regarding the Committee's inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the School Improvement Process.

The Committee agreed that, owing to the Department's apparent failure to address concerns in respect of the need for enhanced support for the school improvement process, it could not endorse proposed Departmental changes which would extend the Formal Intervention Process to "Satisfactory" or other categories of schools - as set out by the Department at the briefing of 5 February 2014.

Committee for Education

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The Committee noted ETI's use of Associate Assessors and its publication of guides for schools in respect of literacy and numeracy etc. and agreed to write to the Department of Education again highlighting the importance of ETI sharing good practice with schools. The Committee agreed to seek information on other, more recent good practice guides produced by ETI for schools.

The Committee also noted the OECD reference to Northern Ireland as an evidence rich system with a breadth of quantitative measures of student outcomes and qualitative measures via school inspections and the surprising absence of longitudinal data. The Committee agreed to again write to the Department seeking an explanation of the apparently contradictory statements by the Department and OECD in respect of longitudinal studies and seeking also details of the longitudinal studies previously undertaken by ETI.

The Committee expressed some discontent in respect of the unhelpful answers received from the Department in respect of its inquiry. The Committee therefore agreed to undertake further work on this subject until a satisfactory resolution is achieved. The Committee further agreed that, pending more satisfactory responses from the Department it would, at a later date, give consideration to bringing forward another Committee motion for debate relating to the report of its inquiry into ETI and the School Improvement Process.

In the meantime and in reply to the latest response from the Department, the Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking:

- sight of the new inspection overview document;
- details of the complaints procedure review;
- details of the consultation on the new inspection descriptors;

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- an update on the dashboard measures for schools; and
- an update on measures the Department or the Education Authority is to adopt in order to better consult with parents.

If you require clarification on any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

A response by 13 February 2015 would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Signed Peter McCallion

Peter McCallion
Clerk
Committee for Education

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