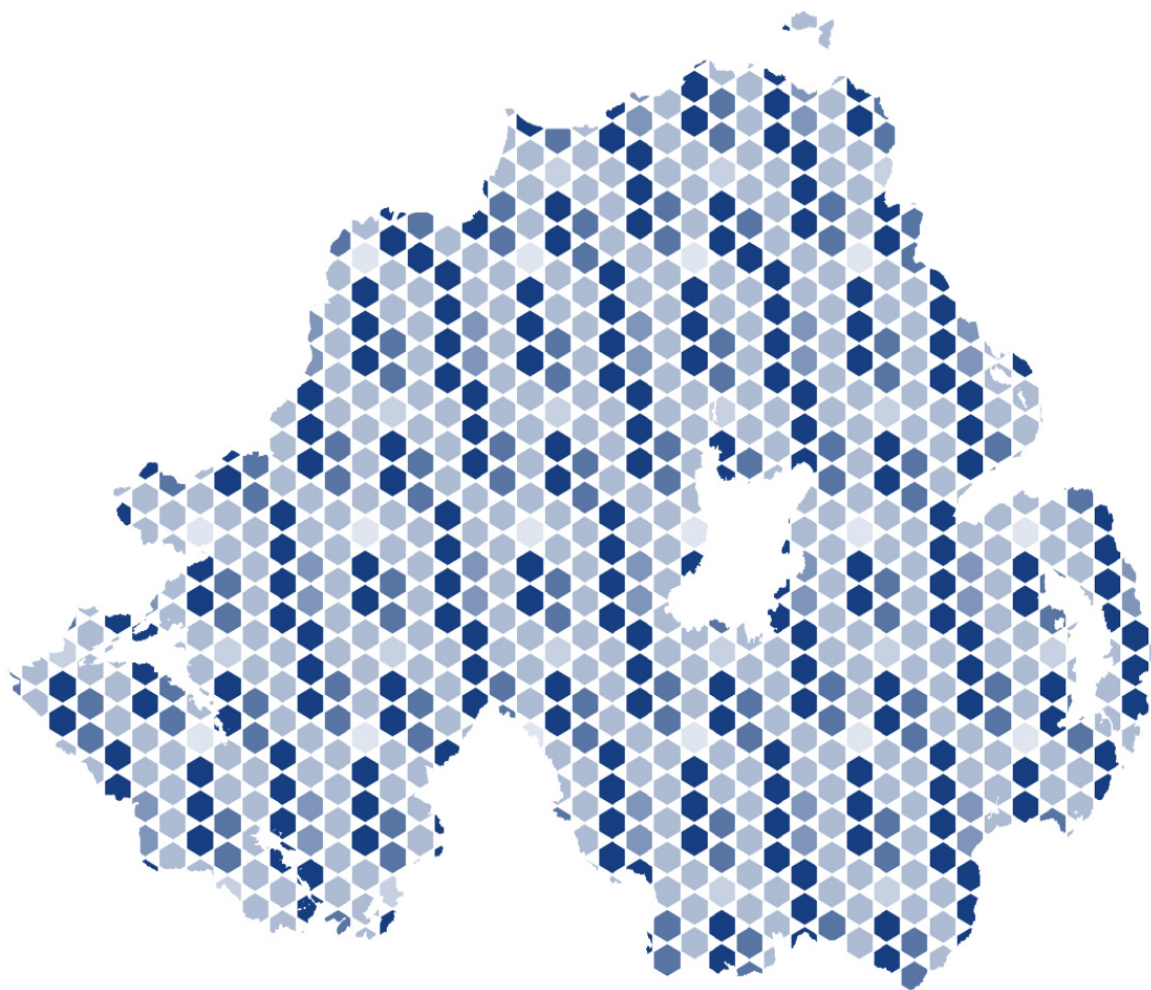


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's College,
Dungannon

Report of an Inspection
in May 2011

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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%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Patrick's College is a maintained co-educational non-selective 11-18 school situated in Dungannon, Co Tyrone. The school draws its pupils from the town and the surrounding rural areas. Over the last five years the enrolment has increased steadily and currently is 627. There are 169 newcomer pupils from ten countries which, at 27%, is the highest proportion in any post-primary school in Northern Ireland. The school has identified approximately 15% of the pupils as requiring additional support with their learning, and 27% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. At the time of the inspection years 12, 13 and 14 were absent from the school on study leave.

1.2 FOCUS OF THE INSPECTION¹

The inspection focused on:

- achievements and standards;
- learning and teaching, particularly, but not exclusively, in key stage (KS) 3;
- curriculum provision across a wide range of subjects with a particular focus in English, mathematics and science; and
- leadership and management at all levels across the school.

The inspection also focused on the provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection; the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life; progress towards the Entitlement Framework and the provision for careers education, information advice and guidance; and the provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum. The views of the pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and Board of Governors (governors) were taken into account in the inspection.

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good.

2.1 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

2.1.1 The main strengths of the school include:

- the inclusive and supportive ethos which values and guides the pupils in their academic, social and personal development;
- the good standards achieved by the pupils, many of whom require additional support to overcome significant learning, emotional and linguistic barriers to learning;
- the good or better teaching in most of the lessons observed, one-third of which was very good or better;

¹ The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in post-primary schools are available in the Inspectorate's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>

- the effective links with a number of local schools, educational and training organisations and businesses in order to broaden further the curricular provision to reflect the needs of a diverse range of learners;
- the well-embedded process of self-evaluation underpinning the culture of continuous school improvement; and
- the very good leadership of the Principal and Vice-principal, who are very well supported by the governors in the strategic leadership of the school.

A summary of the main findings for the specialist subject areas under focus can be found in Appendix 1.

3. THE VIEWS OF PUPILS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND GOVERNORS OF THE SCHOOL

3.1 The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the governors and groups of pupils from years 8, 10 and 11².

3.2 The responses from the parental questionnaires express very high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. In particular, the parents indicated that their children are happy at school and are well cared for and supported. The additional written comments were very positive and a few included suggestions for further improvements in the provision which were reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors.

3.3 The responses from the teacher and support staff questionnaires indicate that there is effective communication at all levels across the school. Almost all of the staff enjoy working in the school and feel valued by the Principal and management. The few comments from staff were highly supportive of all aspects of school life.

3.4 The governors spoke highly of the whole-school community, their active involvement in the school development planning process and their commitment to the continued development of the provision to meet the diverse needs of the learners in the school and in the wider community.

3.5 In discussions, the pupils talked openly and positively about the school, their work and the good support which they receive from the staff. They value the many opportunities for personal development provided for them, both within the lessons and in extra-curricular activities. They commented on how they enjoy paired and group work which allows them to listen to and discuss ideas with each other, and, consequently, to learn from one another. They feel that the school listens to, and responds to, their opinions. They also indicated that they feel safe in the school and are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns regarding their work, safety or well-being.

3.6 The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the minor areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires.

² The number of questionnaires issued and returned, and the numbers containing written comments are shown in Appendix 2.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

Overall, the standards achieved by the pupils, including those who require additional support to overcome significant learning, emotional and linguistic barriers to achievement, are good.

During the inspection, the behaviour and participation in the lessons of most of the pupils was very good; they worked well with their teachers and their peers in whole-class and group activities and were keen to talk about their learning. The newcomer pupils are very well integrated in all aspects of school life and make a valuable and valued contribution to the school.

Baseline assessments show that the majority of pupils who require additional support with their learning enter the school with standards below those of their peers. Most of these pupils make good progress in their learning in all curricular areas. This is in part due to the effective initial assessment undertaken and a school culture of supporting the pupils in their mainstream classes. The pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve.

The outcomes at General Certificate of Education (GCSE) have varied from year to year and are generally below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. The school has worked hard to ensure that the large number of newcomer pupils, including those who join in years 10, 11 and 12 are given the opportunity to enter for examinations in at least five subjects at GCSE and in 2010, just under 20% of the pupils who were entered for GCSEs had very limited spoken and written English. The school has tracked the progress of individual pupils; raised overall standards to above average in several years, and can demonstrate that almost all pupils achieve standards in line with their ability.

For four of the past five years, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, has improved from 15% in 2006 to above average (36%) in 2009. While in 2010 it dropped again to below the NI average for similar schools (23%), the school has set a target for 2011 of 39%.

The standards achieved at grades A*-C in one-half of the GCSE subjects are either within or above five percentage points of the corresponding three year NI averages; attainment in one-third of subjects is more than ten percentage points below. Overall, in 2010, approximately 35% of the pupils in year 12 achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C which is well below the average for similar schools in NI.

The school has identified, appropriately, the need to further improve the overall standards achieved by the pupils at GCSE and has been implementing a range of strategies, together with systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation in order to achieve the improvements reported above.

At General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) Level, results in public examinations have been improving over recent years. In 2010 the proportion of pupils achieving two or more A Levels at grades A*-E was just one percentage point below the NI average for non-selective schools; the proportion of pupils achieving three or more A Levels at grades A*-C was ten percentage points below the NI average.

More detail of the results achieved in public examinations can be found in Appendices 3 and 4.

4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING

Overall, the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment in the provision is good.

4.2.1 LEARNING AND TEACHING

The quality of the teaching in almost four-fifths of the lessons observed was good or better and in one-third was very good or better.

The teachers are hard working and professional, they know the pupils well and create an inclusive learning environment. They build well on the pupils' previous learning, ideas and experiences and enable them to make connections across their learning. The teachers have high expectations and match the work appropriately to the pupils' abilities and interests, taking account of those pupils who require additional support to overcome significant barriers to learning.

In the best practice observed, the pupils had a clear understanding of the success criteria which enabled them to evaluate the quality of their work both during and at the end of the lesson. The withdrawal support for newcomer pupils is linked effectively to their learning across subjects.

In the less effective practice, the lessons lacked challenge and narrow questioning resulted in limited pupil responses and participation in the learning.

The pupils who require additional support with their learning are identified early and the school has developed a rigorous system to assess and track their progress. The link between the core and subject targets in the individual education plans, however, lacks cohesion and, as a consequence the targets are often repetitive.

4.2.2 CURRICULUM PROVISION

The pupils at KS3 are provided with a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. At KS4 and at post-16 the school is making very good progress towards meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework. Through the Dungannon and Cookstown Area Learning Community and Dungannon Learning Partnership, the school has developed effective links with a number of local schools, educational and training organisations and businesses in order to broaden further the curricular provision to reflect more fully the career aspirations and the needs of a diverse range of learners.

The pupils are made aware of the wide range of vocational and academic pathways available to them through a well-organised careers education programme. There is a coherent and progressive approach to the delivery of employability throughout KS3 and the pupils engage with an appropriate range of opportunities which enables them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to choose and implement an appropriate career plan.

4.2.3 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is very good.

The positive and welcoming ethos reflects well the school's aims to 'educate the whole person' and to value the pupils 'for their own unique talents and abilities'. The strong sense of community and inclusion which exists throughout the school is promoted effectively through the excellent relationships between the teachers and the pupils, and among the pupils. The pupils are welcoming and friendly, and display a loyalty to their school.

Under the informed leadership of an experienced member of the senior leadership team (SLT), the highly dedicated and hard-working pastoral team work collegially to deliver a taught programme which supports the pupils well in their social and academic development. The planning for personal development classes is good and the teachers have prepared a range of suitable resources to engage the pupils' interest and to stimulate discussion. While the work in the form periods supports the pupils in self-management, it is not linked explicitly enough to the personal development classes to enable the pupils to set, more rigorous, personal targets.

The importance of the pupil voice is well embedded in the life and work of the school and there is a thriving school council to represent the views of the pupils. The school acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of all of the pupils in a variety of ways, including school displays and regular presentation events. The contribution of the pupils from other cultures is highly valued; the enrichment and diversity which these pupils bring to the life and work of the school is recognised and welcomed by the teachers and the other pupils.

4.2.4 SAFEGUARDING

The school has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of strategic leadership and management is very good.

5.1 The Principal has been in post for five years, is highly committed to the pupils, the staff and the community, and, together with the Vice-principal, provides very good strategic leadership. She is well supported by the well-informed and highly committed governors and by the staff; there is a strong sense of identity and collegiality within the school which promotes successfully the school's vision and aims which are focused to ensure that the provision made is accessible to all of the pupils regardless of their identity and background.

5.2 The Principal and Vice-principal are building the capacity within a recently restructured SLT in order to provide a more distributed style of leadership for the school. The middle leadership team has benefited from a well-planned programme of professional development. The middle leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and carry out their duties to a high standard.

5.3 The heads of department monitor and evaluate well their areas of responsibility with a clear focus on the provision and outcomes for the learners, which is part of a well-embedded process of self-evaluation underpinning the culture of continuous school improvement. The pupils, parents, staff and governors are consulted effectively on the school's priorities for development. The inspection has identified inaccuracies in the comparative data being used by the school and this needs to be adjusted accordingly in the school development plan (SDP). The SDP meets the requirements set out in the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 and is currently being reviewed in line with the new 2010 regulations.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

English

The quality of the provision for English is very good.

The strengths include:

- the positive working relationships in all of the classes observed;
- the quality of the teaching observed most of which was good or better;
- the effective and interesting units of work compiled by the teachers;
- the improving results, over the past three years at GCSE A*-C;
- the department's self-evaluation which identifies appropriate areas for improvement; and
- the very good leadership of the head of department.

The area for improvement is the need to:

- place a greater emphasis, from year 8, on developing the pupils' oral skills.

Mathematics

The quality of the provision for mathematics is good.

The strengths include:

- the good working relationships between the pupils and the teachers;
- the good levels of individual support provided for the pupils in the lessons observed;
- the good or very good teaching in most of the lessons observed;
- the hard work and commitment of the teachers; and
- the enthusiasm and leadership of the head of department; and

The area for improvement is the need to:

- improve further the standards achieved in mathematics by raising expectations through, for example, planning more carefully for progression in the pupils' learning and using more effective questioning strategies.

Science

The quality of the provision for science is good.

The strengths include:

- the excellent relationships at every level;
- the hard-working and committed teachers and science support staff;
- the overall quality of the teaching which was good or better in four-fifths of the lessons observed;
- the quality of the leadership of the head of department; in particular the procedures introduced for monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching; and
- the standards achieved by the pupils entered for GCSE single award science.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- increase the low number of pupils following a science course at GCSE level, in particular the negligible numbers entered for a double award science course which provides suitable opportunities for progression to higher level qualifications in the subject; and
- improve the standards achieved by the pupils entered for the double award science course.

QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	120	21	18	6
Teachers	37	35	95	5
Support Staff	22	22	100	2

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Patrick's College
 ii. School Reference Number: 523-0293
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Catholic Maintained
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 23/05/11
 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 8 Intake	89	76	104	104	109
Total enrolment	530	521	566	593	627

1.3 Attendance

Year 2009/10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2009/10	NI Average 2008/09
% Attendance	92.7	89.6	89.5	85.9	86	90.8	91.2	89	91

1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:	39.7	iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):	0.729
ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):	15.738		

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	53	50	66	48	55	25	20	317
Enrolment: Girls	56	55	48	40	56	30	35	310
Enrolment: Total	109	105	114	88	111	55	45	627
PTR	18.909	14.974	16.257	14.453	14.442	14.792	18.401	

1.5 Staying On Rate (2008/09) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	49.5	NI Av Year 13	44.3
Year 14	28.9	NI Av Year 14	30.6

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2008/09	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	65		39	
Another School	3%	12.8	0%	2.2
Employment	58%	5.7	5%	11.6
Full-time Further Education	28%	46.6	28%	27.6
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	36%	45.5
Full-time Training	0%	27.5	21%	5.2
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	8%	3.8	3%	4.5
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	3%	3.5	8%	3.3

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Patrick's College, Dungannon SCHOOL YEAR: 2010/2011

GCSE	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE and Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	80	79	93
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	30.3	42.27	35.35
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	26.26	37.11	23.23
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	63.64	72.16	67.68
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	28.57	19.23	19.12
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	73.21	63.46	70.59

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing the GCSE and (GCE A Level) subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2009, in comparison with the respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

Table 1

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCSE A*-C	Information Technology Motor Vehicle Studies Single Award Science Spanish	Art and Design English Polish Religious Studies	Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Mathematics Portuguese	History Music Sociology Sport (PE) Studies	Business Studies Design and Technology Double Award Science 1st Subject Drama French Geography Irish Learning for Life and Work (PSE)
GCE A Level A-E			Drama History Home Economics Music Polish Sociology		Religious Studies

Table showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1.

Table 2

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCSE A*-C		Polish Portuguese	Art and Design Drama Information Technology Music	Home Economics Child Development Double Award Science 1st Subject Irish Sociology	Business Studies Design and Technology English French Geography History Home Economics Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Religious Studies Single Award Science Spanish Sport (PE) Studies
GCE A Level A-E	Drama History Home Economics Music Polish Religious Studies Sociology Sport (PE) Studies				

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