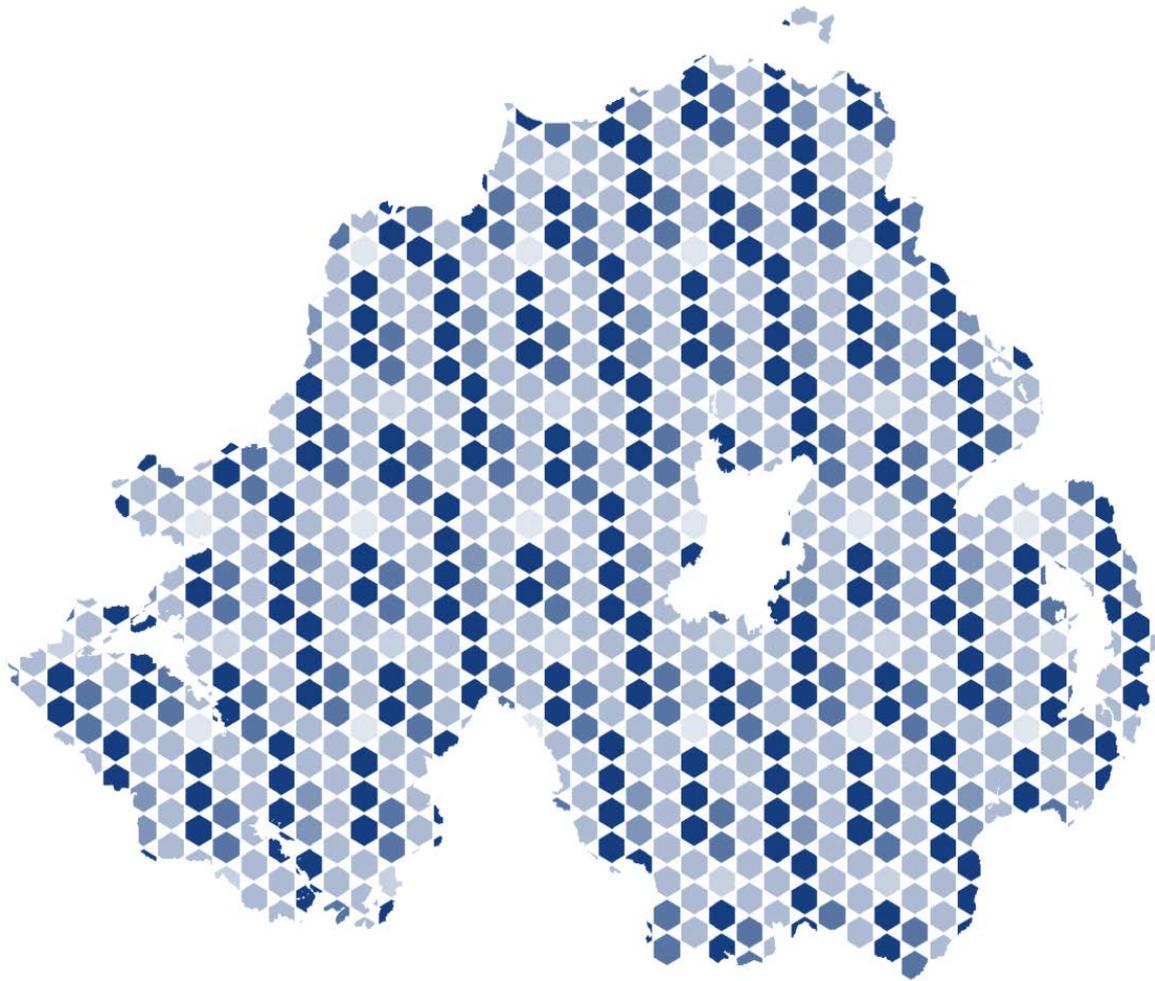


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Blessed Trinity College,
Belfast

Maintained, non-selective, co-educational, 11-18 secondary

Report of a Baseline Monitoring
Inspection (Involving Action Short
of Strike) in December 2018



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Baseline Monitoring Inspection of Blessed Trinity College, Belfast (123-0321)

Introduction

Blessed Trinity College opened in September 2017 as a result of a joint development proposal to cease provision at Little Flower Girls' School and St Patrick's College, Bearnageeha with the purpose of creating a new co-educational secondary school. The school currently operates on two sites on opposite sides of the Somerton Road, Belfast.

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 the senior leadership team (SLT) would be co-operating with the inspection. 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 purpose of the BMIn was to evaluate the school's action to effect improvement and its impact on learning and teaching and outcomes for pupils. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

During the inspection, lines of inquiry were selected from the priorities identified in the school development plan and the school was asked to demonstrate how the actions taken have led to improvement for the pupils. The lines of inquiry focused on the school's actions to:

- establish a clear vision, culture and ethos for Blessed Trinity College; and
- use effectively data to improve learning, teaching and outcomes for pupils.

Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking and impact of the identified actions associated with the lines of inquiry.

Views of parents and staff

15% of parents (152) and 62% of staff (91) responded to the online questionnaire. Almost all of the parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their child is making good progress and highlighted that they receive helpful and regular information about the progress being made. The parents indicated that the school has informed them of how to report a complaint, safeguarding issue or other concern.

Most of the responses from the staff were positive. Respondents agreed that the staff with specific responsibilities carry out their duties effectively and contribute to the development of the newly established school. In addition, they agreed that they have had the opportunity to contribute to the establishment of the school's ethos, vision and values.

Any issues arising from the questionnaire returns were discussed with the principal and the chair of the board of the governors.

Key findings

- The school's vision to be 'a caring, child-centred and inclusive college enabling all students to achieve success' is reflected in the well-integrated care and support structures across all key stages. The pupils, senior leaders and chair of governors who met with inspectors articulated clearly and positively the vision for the school. In particular, in discussions with inspectors, the pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about the 'care team' system; reporting that the teachers and support staff support their well-being and learning.
- The senior leadership team demonstrate skill and commitment as they continue the process of embedding an increasingly strong culture of improvement in pursuit of the agreed vision for the new school.
- Documentation shows first-hand evidence is used to support, challenge and celebrate the pupils' progress in their learning. This important work continues to inform, for example, curriculum pathway reviews to improve further pupil engagement, attendance and achievement.
- In discussions with inspectors, the years 8, 9 and 10 pupils said that they are happy in school and enjoy their learning most when they are challenged to do their best; they reported that this is a common feature of their lessons. The years 11 and 12 pupils spoke positively about the close working bonds they have built with their teachers. They said that they are trusted and recognised for good behaviour and achievement both in and outside of school. The pupils at post-16 provision recognised the very helpful staff who are caring and considerate of their needs, the range of subjects they can choose from and their enjoyment and appreciation of the value of the school's support clinics.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe in school. They know what to do and who to talk to if they are concerned about their safety or well-being. 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.

CONCLUSION

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by most of the teachers the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, and the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and safety

1. The school campus is on two sites of the former schools located across a main road. As a consequence a significant number of pupils (possible 300-500 pupils) ranging from 11 to 18 year olds have to cross this road throughout the school day in all weathers to attend classes on each site. A risk assessment should be carried out now that the school is fully operational, as a matter of urgency, by the Department of Infrastructure in consultation with the school management, the Education Authority (Health and Safety) and the Department of Education and associated actions taken to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.
2. The school needs to review the security and access arrangements to the buildings on both sites.
3. The school needs to carry out a risk assessment of the surface of the playground on the Somerton Road site and a risk assessment of the size of the playground space available on the Antrim Road site.

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