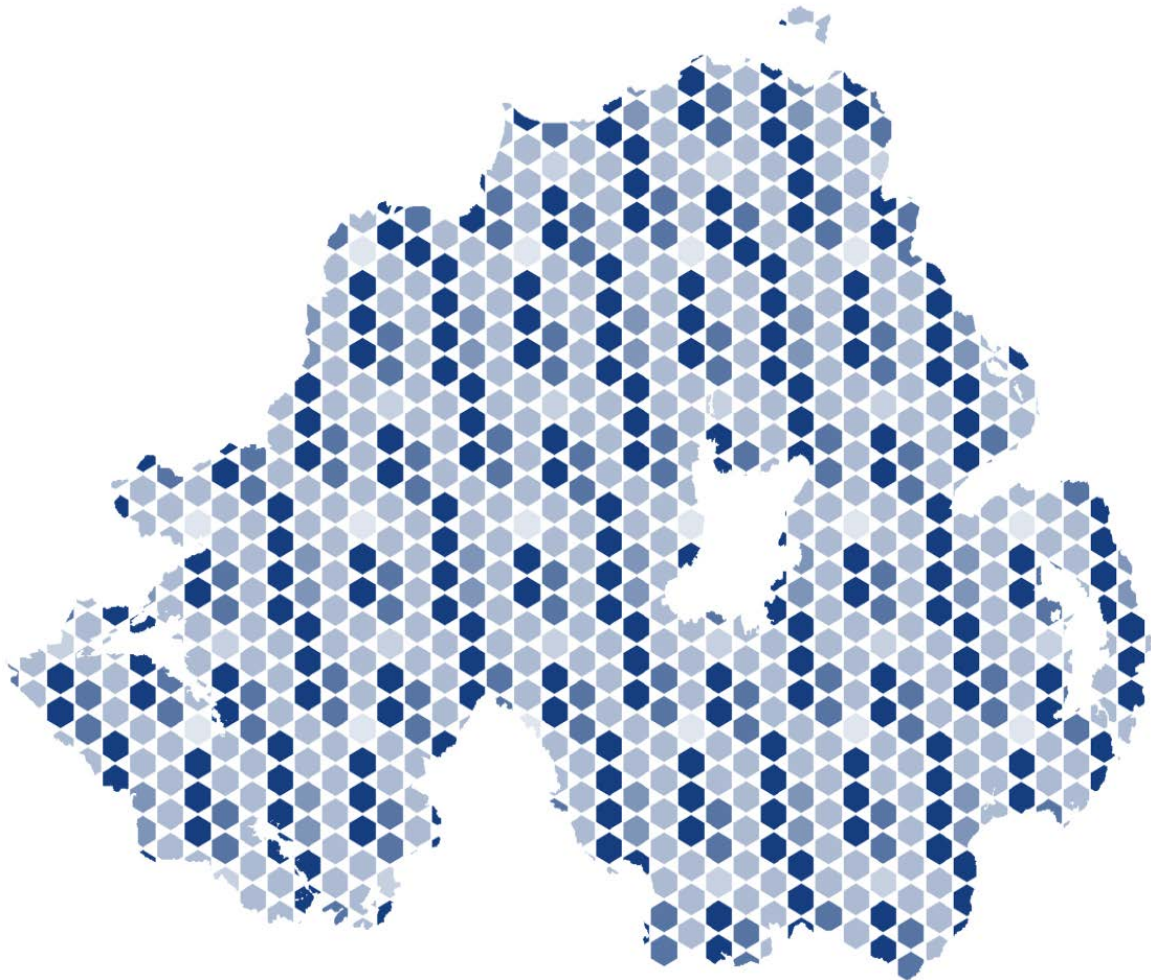


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Larne High School, County  
Antrim

Co-educational, controlled, non-selective school

Report of a Follow-up Inspection  
(Involving Action Short of Strike) in  
September 2017



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## **A THIRD FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LARNE HIGH SCHOOL AND LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRE, COUNTY ANTRIM, BT40 1NT (321-0038)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a second follow-up inspection of Larne High School and Learning Support Centre in October 2015<sup>1</sup> and the organisation was required to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all learners.

The main areas for improvement were the need to:

- raise further the standards achieved by the pupils, in particular the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics;
- address the standards attained by those pupils entitled to free schools meals; and
- review and improve the curriculum followed by the pupils, to ensure they have access to a broad and balanced range of subjects with appropriate opportunities for progression.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in September 2016 and a third follow-up inspection in September 2017. The school reports that the education authority staff provided good support during the follow-up inspection process.

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 none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI have 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.

In the interval since the second follow-up inspection, the following actions and changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- a new principal, vice-principal and six teachers have taken up post;
- the senior leadership team has been restructured, including the appointment of several co-ordinators at middle leadership level;
- there has been a review of the key stage (KS) 4 and post-16 curriculum offer;
- enrolment to the school has increased to 572 pupils, while the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has also increased to just over 44%; and
- the re-constituted board of governors has established a sub-committee for standards and pupil outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/follow-inspection-larne-high-school-and-learning-support-centre>

## Key Findings

The senior leadership team is working on a new school development plan; the draft plan focuses appropriately on improving the quality of learning and teaching, including more rigorous use of the assessment and self-evaluation processes, and in developing further the capacity of the middle and senior leaders through better action planning.

The review of the curriculum at KS 4 and post-16 has led to a broader curriculum offer. The introduction of some new subjects provides a more strategic and coherent progression pathways for the pupils. Work is continuing, appropriately, to further broaden the offer.

The work of the senior leaders and staff is sharply focused on improving outcomes, with some success; overall, the outcomes attained by the pupils, however, remains an important area for improvement.

Since the second follow-up inspection, the percentage of pupils attaining three GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A\* to C grades has improved to 54%, an increase of 7%, which is now broadly in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools.

The percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C has declined to 82%, although this is still above the NI average for similar schools.

The percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has not improved and remains well below the NI average for similar schools. Too few of the pupils, around 16%, who are entitled to free school meals attain at this level.

At the time of the original inspection, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflected the guidance issued by the Department of Education. These arrangements need to be revisited to ensure that all of the updated policies relating to child protection/safeguarding, and the complaints procedure, are shared with parents. Almost all of the pupils reported that they feel safe and secure in school, although a few of the younger pupils raised concerns over the level of supervision in the playground, which should be reviewed and addressed by the school.

It continues to be important that the employing authority, governors and staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school's sixth form provision in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact of the improvement actions taken and the extent to which the following areas for improvement have been addressed by the school, namely to:

- raise further the standards achieved by the pupils, in particular the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics;
- address the standards attained by those pupils entitled to free schools meals; and
- review and improve the curriculum followed by the pupils, to ensure they have access to a broad and balanced range of subjects with appropriate opportunities for progression.

Consequently, there remains a need for Larne High School and Learning Support Centre to continue to address these important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

## **Conclusion**

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

The school may require external support to address the areas for improvement outlined in the key findings above<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Education Authority that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

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