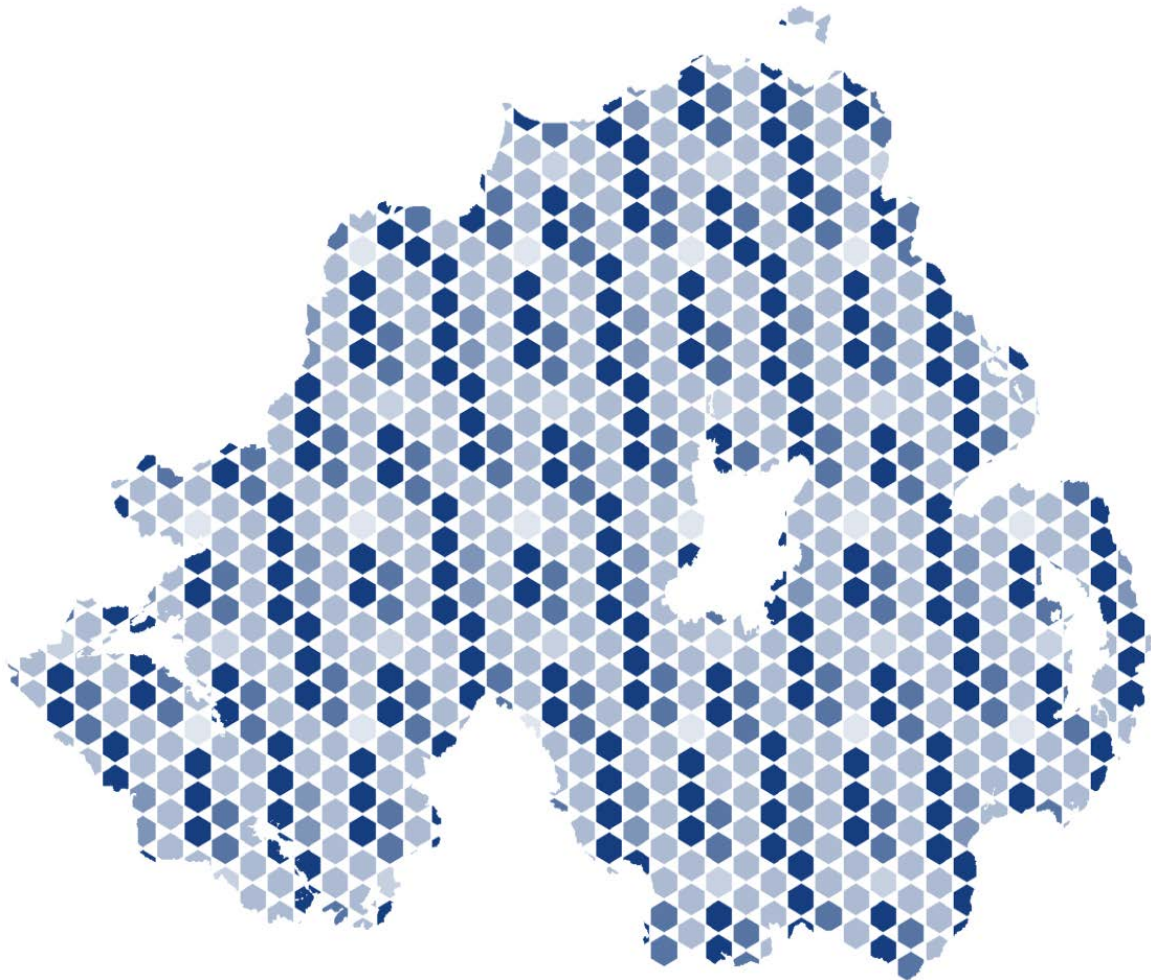


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Michael's College, Enniskillen,
County Fermanagh

All boys, 11-18 voluntary grammar school

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
(Involving Action Short of Strike)
in May 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, ENNISKILLEN, BT746DE (242-0043)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of St Michael's College in December 2016¹ which concluded that the school needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement identified in the inspection were the need to:

- improve the standards attained by the pupils at GCE A level;
- improve the quality of the learning and teaching to meet more effectively the needs of all of the pupils, and to ensure better consistency in the quality of their learning experiences; and
- build further leadership capacity, at all levels, to monitor the quality of the learning and the standards achieved.

During the inspection, the quality of the provision in English was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

The school's post-inspection action plans identified key actions to bring about the necessary improvements and were adjusted appropriately in light of feedback given by the ETI. The school development plan was adjusted as a result of the inspection findings. The progress being made in the areas for improvement was discussed with the school in an interim follow-up inspection visit (IFuV) carried out by the ETI in September 2017. The IFuV was impacted by action short of strike. The school reports that it received a good level of support from the Education Authority. A follow-up inspection was carried out in May 2018.

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 nearly all of the teachers would not 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 follow-up 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 inspection in December 2016, the actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- the appointment of a new vice-principal with responsibility for learning and teaching and curriculum development (who took up post in May 2017);
- a restructuring of the senior leadership team (SLT) and the appointment of a new senior teacher;
- a review of roles and responsibilities of the middle leadership team across the school for which recruitment is ongoing;
- the implementation of an agreed learning and teaching policy;

¹ <https://www.eti.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/post-primary-inspection-st-michaels-college-enniskillen-county-fermanagh>

- a whole-school professional development programme with a particular focus on effective learning and teaching; and
- a decrease in enrolment to the school from 721 pupils to 667, however the school continues to be oversubscribed at year 8.

Views of parents and staff

Very few parents (10) and staff (6) responded to the re-issued online questionnaire. In the very small number of parental responses, nearly all expressed satisfaction with their child's care and welfare at school and with the range of subjects provided at key stages 3 and 4. A few concerns raised in their written responses included the need for better communication and consultation between the parents and the school. The small number of responses from the staff were mostly positive and all highlighted that they had availed of staff development opportunities linked to school priorities and in relation to safeguarding. The issues raised by parents and staff in the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and representatives of the governors.

Key findings

- Overall, attainment by the pupils in public examinations at post-16 has improved. The proportion of pupils attaining at grades A* to C in three or more A levels or equivalent increased to 78.7% last year and is in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools in the same free schools meal band.
- Since the inspection, attainment by the pupils at GCSE level or equivalent has also improved. Last year the proportion of year 12 pupils attaining at grades A* to C in at least seven GCSE subjects or equivalent increased to 93.7% which is in line with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals band. When English and mathematics are included the proportion is 91.6% which is also in line with the corresponding average.
- Last year all of the year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals attained at grades A* to C in five or more GCSE subjects or equivalent, including English and mathematics. The attainment of these pupils at grades A* to C in seven or more GCSE subjects or equivalent, including English and mathematics was well above the corresponding NI average.
- Overall, standards attained by the pupils in English remain good. There has been an improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining grades A* to B in GCSE English Literature, which has increased to 71.3% and is now in line with the respective average for similar schools.
- Last year the proportion of year 12 pupils attaining at grades A* to B in at least seven GCSE subjects or equivalent increased by more than 10 percentage points to 73%.
- The school is now making more effective use of data to track closely the pupils' progress and to inform earlier interventions for those pupils at risk of underachieving. Pupil tracking is also used to inform and review planning across all subjects areas.

- Since the inspection, an agreed understanding of what constitutes effective classroom practices has been established. However, the school reports that progress in this improvement work has been impeded by the current action short of strike.
- The newly-formed and restructured SLT have clear roles and responsibilities in relation to whole-school improvement. Furthermore, the appropriate and comprehensive review of roles and responsibilities at all levels is focused on promoting the fusion of the academic and pastoral provision to best support the pupils' academic and personal development. Continued monitoring and evaluation of this review of roles and responsibilities is appropriately centred on the impact on pupil outcomes and learning experiences.
- In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils highlighted the positive relationships they have with their teachers and the support that teachers give them to help with their learning. They expressed their enjoyment of learning, in particular during practical and group work. All of the pupils with whom inspectors met report that they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any concerns about their own or others' health or well-being.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact of improvement actions taken and the extent to which the areas for improvement, identified at the inspection in December 2016, have been addressed, namely the need to:

- improve the standards attained by the pupils at GCE A Level;
- improve the quality of the learning and teaching to meet more effectively the needs of all of the pupils, and to ensure better consistency in the quality of their learning experiences; and
- build further leadership capacity, at all levels, to monitor the quality of the learning and the standards achieved.

Consequently, there remains a need for St Michael's College to continue to address the areas for improvement.

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 school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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