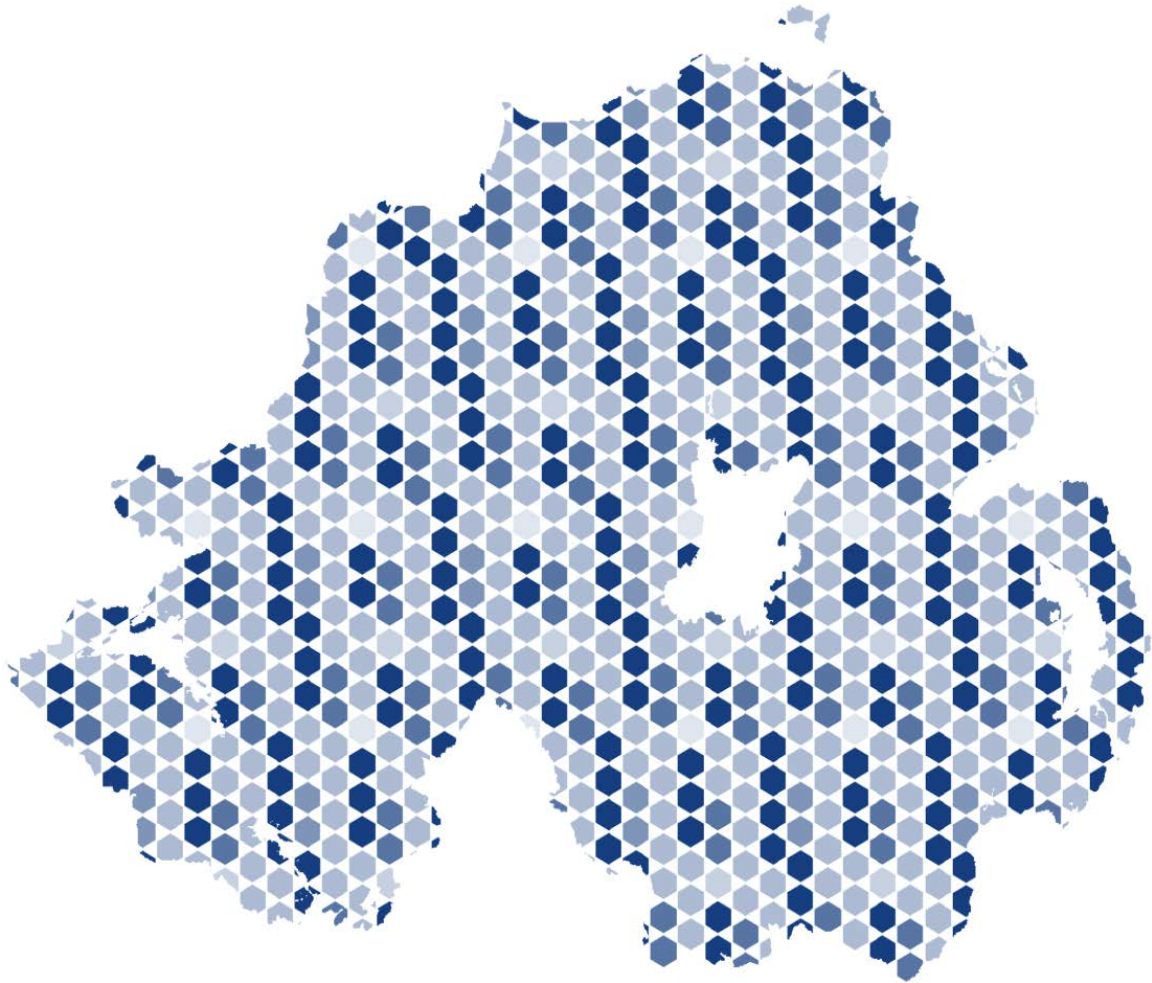


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Banbridge Academy, County Down

Controlled, co-educational selective 11 – 18 school

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
November 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Pupils' and parents' questionnaire responses	1
3. Focus of the inspection	2
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	3
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Safeguarding	5
9. Overall effectiveness	5

Appendices

- A. Health and safety/accommodation
- B. Examination performance and other statistical data
- C. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- D. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Banbridge Academy is a co-educational, controlled grammar school situated in Banbridge, County Down. The school is non-denominational and draws pupils from a wide catchment area which encompasses the town and the surrounding rural areas; it is oversubscribed at entry to year 8. The school is committed to fulfilling its mission statement “the pursuit of excellence in a caring and supportive environment” with a central aim “for everyone to be happy at school, known personally and cared for individually”. A notable feature of the school’s provision is its strong tradition in sport and the arts. The school is an active member of the Banbridge Area Learning Community, in relation to staff development.

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 only members of 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.

Banbridge Academy	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Year 8 Intake	187	186	185	190
Enrolment	1320	1312	1301	1323
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.9% (95.5%)	96.6% (95.5%)	96.1% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage ¹	5.8%	6.3%	6.6%	5.2%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	2.7% (36)	3.4% (45)	3.5% (45)	3.8% (50)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	5	7	7	9
No. of newcomers	0	0	0	0

Source: data as verified by the school.
N/A not available

2. Pupils’, parents’ and staff questionnaire responses

Fifty-eight percent (771) of the pupils across the key stages completed an online questionnaire. Overall, the responses were positive about their experience in the school, with the pupils appreciating, for example, the ample opportunities for them to participate in extra-curricular activities, the guidance on how to be safe online and, when needed, the academic and pastoral support available to them. One-half of the pupils responding provided written comments, sharing their views of school life and their learning experiences. Any concerns were discussed with the principal and the representatives of the governors.

¹ The term ‘FSME Percentage’ refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

A small number of parents (25) responded to the online questionnaire. Nearly all of the responses were very positive and highly supportive of the staff and the school. In particular, the parents highlighted: the dedicated, approachable staff; the strong academic standards; and the support and care afforded to their children. A minority of staff (24) responded to the online questionnaire; these responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. The small number of issues raised in the parental and staff questionnaires were discussed with the representatives from the board of governors and the principal.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary inspection is to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on art and design in this inspection.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the provision and the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and art and design; and
- the quality and impact of the provision for care, welfare and support of the pupils.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they have been reported in the body of the report.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

5. Outcomes for learners

- Across the key stages, the pupils who met with members of the inspection team were articulate, confident and have high expectations for themselves. The pupils are well motivated and contribute meaningfully to the life of the school and to the wider community. The pupils have achieved success in a variety of sports at provincial, national and international level.

- The pupils' attainment in public examinations is a significant strength of the work of the school.
- In the past three years the percentage of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE qualifications at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is in line with or well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools².
- The outcomes attained by the pupils in nearly all (96%) of the individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A* to B are in line with or above the corresponding NI subject averages over the last three years. Over one-half of the subjects are more than five percentage points above these subject averages, and just over one-quarter of the subjects are more than ten percentage points above.
- Nearly all of pupils with free school meals entitlement attain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE level including English and mathematics; this proportion is consistently above the NI average.
- Over the last three years, most of the pupils who require additional support in aspects of their learning attain seven or more A* to C grades at GCSE level including English and mathematics.
- Over the last three years, at post-16, there has been an upward trend in the proportion of pupils attaining grades A* to C in at least three A levels or equivalents; during this period the proportions have been in line with or well above the corresponding NI average. Over the same period, almost all of the individual subjects performed in line with or above their corresponding subject averages.
- Over the last three years, a significant number of pupils have been consistently among the top performing candidates in NI at GCSE and at GCE A level across a range of subjects.
- Of those pupils who return to the school for post-16 study, the retention of pupils between years 13 and 14 is above the NI average. Most of the pupils progress to higher education courses.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and art and design;
- the progression in the pupils' learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The school has focused on establishing a culture that facilitates the identification and sharing of good practice with a view to enhancing further and continuing to improve the consistency in the pupils' learning experiences. The development of effective pedagogy continues to be a central focus for the school. A learning and teaching policy, informed by wide-ranging consultation with regular review by a learning and teaching committee, promotes a consistent understanding of high quality teaching to promote successful learning.

² In the same free school (FSM) meal band

- The curriculum is broad with appropriate flexibility across each of the key stages; it is reviewed regularly and the robust analysis of a range of data informs well curriculum review. Consequently, the subject offer within the school is tailored appropriately to meet the pupils' abilities, interests and aspirations. The uptake of science, technology, engineering and mathematics related subjects is high, with exceptional outcomes in this area.
- The pupils spoke appreciatively of the opportunities provided for them to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which enhance their learning experiences and help develop their skills and dispositions in leadership, communication, creativity, positivity and motivation. The uptake of the extra-curricular and enrichment offer is high.
- The school places an appropriate focus on empowering the pupils to make informed choices through a whole-school, coherent approach to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils across all of the key stages demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of the pathways open to them at the key transition points and spoke highly of the support provided by their teachers and their access to the careers advisory service.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the impact of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the careers education, information, advice and guidance;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy and art and design across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- The recent restructuring of the SLT included clearer defined roles and responsibilities for team members; this enables them to lead and take responsibility for different aspects of the school improvement process. The SLT have developed a shared understanding of and a collective responsibility for school improvement.
- The school development plan (SDP) is informed by extensive consultation with pupils, parents, staff and governors to identify and agree the strengths, challenges and priorities for the school. The school has promoted in-depth subject department self-evaluations that have a clear focus on the learners. The key priorities identified in the SDP focus appropriately on improving further the quality and consistency of the pupils' learning experiences, and maintaining the very high

outcomes they attain. A high priority is given to the ongoing professional development of staff which is clearly aligned to the school improvement agenda. In taking the school improvement work forward, the school recognises and the inspection findings endorse that: the associated action plans need to be streamlined; and, the extensive range of performance and pastoral data available in the school, needs to be used better to set more specific and measurable targets.

- The governors have an excellent blend of complementary skills and carry out their roles conscientiously. They are well-informed about the life and the work of the school enabling them to provide appropriate levels of support and challenge. The governors understand very well the strengths, challenges and opportunities relating to their school. Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness and impact of the senior leadership of the school;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The school should continue to implement the appropriately-planned review of policies and procedures to reflect current guidance and best practice. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. The pupils would benefit from a whole-school reward system linked to a positive behaviour policy to recognise and celebrate their achievements; and, from more opportunities to harness the pupil voice.

Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

9. Overall effectiveness

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.

Health and Safety/Accommodation

- The school needs to review the arrangements in place at key stage 3 in relation to class size in Home Economics and Design and Technology; the risk assessments in relation to class size are not fit for purpose and there is a lack of input from the teachers delivering these subjects.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS³ and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Banbridge Academy achieving seven or more GCSE examinations and equivalent at grades A* to C and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals band⁴.

The table also includes the percentage of year 12 pupils in Banbridge Academy achieving seven or more GCSE examinations and equivalent, including English and mathematics at grades A* to B. In this instance, there is no NI average available.

GCSE and GCSE Equivalent Subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 7 subjects</i>	100	100	100
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects</i>	97.3	93.6	96.9
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band⁵</i>	96.0	95.4	N/A
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Maths</i>	97.3	93.62	96.8
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band</i>	96.4	94.3	N/A
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades B or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	97.2	93.6	96.8
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects</i>	97.8	96.81	97.93
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* - C or equivalent including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	100	86.76	100

³ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁴ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁵ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

GCE A level and equivalent examination results at grades A* to C from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Banbridge Academy achieving three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C, compared with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals band.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 subjects	78.0	85.3	88.1
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band⁶</i>	77.7	79.2	N/A

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level (over the past three years) Grades A* to B

(The three year average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	182	188	193

GCSE Subject	Number of Entries	School A* to B %	NI A* to B %
Art & Design	109	88.1	78.2
Biology	248	96.8	82.2
Business Studies	158	73.4	69.2
Chemistry	247	96.4	85.3
Computer Studies	88	71.0	70.6
Design & Technology	141	80.9	74.9
Economics	46	80.4	83.2
English Language	563	91.8	80.3
English Literature	561	86.6	80.0
French	274	71.5	65.2
Further Mathematics	180	98.3	86.0
Geography	176	80.7	73.5
German	167	58.1	62.0
History	244	78.3	77.4
Home Economics	97	88.7	84.1
ICT/Digital Technology	21	85.7	82.4
Mathematics	563	91.8	73.2
Moving Image Arts	25	96.0	N/A
Music	41	92.7	88.0
Physics	247	94.3	84.4
Religious Studies	135	96.3	79.2
Science Double Award	315	75.4	72.3
Spanish	196	79.1	72.7
Sports/PE *	45	66.7	73.9

*2 years only

⁶ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level (over the past three years) Grades A* - C

(The three year average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	168	183	160

GCE A Level Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries	School A* to C %	NI A* to C %
Art & Design	42	100	94.7
Art & Design - Photography	12	100	N/A
Biology	156	91.0	82.7
Business Studies	115	93.9	91.0
Chemistry	131	90.1	88.5
Computer Science/SSD	11	100	81.2
Design and Technology	68	95.6	N/A
Drama	25	100	88.6
Economics	21	90.5	86.5
English Literature	114	94.7	84.6
French	28	92.9	90.8
Further Maths	13	100	96.2
Geography	75	89.3	87.4
German	5	100	N/A
Health & Social Care	35	77.1	86.8
History	96	96.9	84.4
Home Economics	16	93.8	89.9
Information Technology	69	81.2	77.1
IT Development	16	87.5	N/A
Mathematics	182	95.6	88.6
Music	18	77.8	87.7
Physics	83	79.5	81.9
Politics	61	93.4	88.4
Psychology	82	80.5	70.0
Religious Studies	32	96.9	88.8
Spanish	26	100	92.6
Sports/PE	19	89.5	77.8

N/A: Not available

Staying on rate⁷ 2017/18

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at school compared with the NI average for all schools and for the most recent year for which data is available

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	85.3	87.2
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	88.0	94.6

⁷ The percentage of pupils who stay on at school compared with the Northern Ireland average for all schools, this rate is calculated in terms of pupils who progress their level of study, whether at their original or a new school. Pupils that move schools between years are counted as 'staying on' at their original school as they are progressing their study within the school system.

LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS⁸ 2016/17

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from this school who leave school to enter employment, further education, higher education, and training or are seeking employment compared with the average for grammar schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

2016/2017	NI No. (%)	School No. (%)	NI Yr12 (%)	School Yr12 (%)	NI Yr13 (%)	School Yr13 (%)	NI Yr14 (%)	School Yr14 (%)	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	9727	217		27		7		183			
Employment	445 (4.6%)	*	4.8%	-	10.7%	*	4.1%	*			
Institute of Further Education	1967 (20.2%)	39 (18.0%)	81.5%	24 (88.9%)	76.3%	5 (71.4%)	7.2%	10 (5.5%)		32	7
Institute of Higher Education ⁹	6870 (70.6%)	163 (75.1%)	*	-	*	-	86.0%	163 (89.1%)			163
Training ¹⁰	237 (2.4%)	9 (4.1%)	9.9%	*	5.6%	-	1.1%	7 (3.8%)			
Unemployment	104 (1.1%)	-	1.2%	-	2.6%	-	1.0%	-			
Others	104 (1.1%)	*	#	*	#	*	0.7%	-			

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2016/17 - GRAMMAR SCHOOLS¹¹

- *fewer than 5
- # figures suppressed

⁸ Destination is defined by Institution. Institutions may provide courses at both Further and Higher Education levels.

⁹ Includes universities and teacher training colleges.

¹⁰ Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for the Economy. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

¹¹ Excludes special and independent schools.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication, which is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary>.

The arrangements for this inspection included: a meeting with representatives from the governors; formal discussions with some pupils (in groups), and some staff with specific responsibilities; review of documentation and data; and the opportunity for all pupils, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

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%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management¹²:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

<p>The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.</p>
<p>The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.</p>
<p>The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.</p>
<p>The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.</p>

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2019

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk