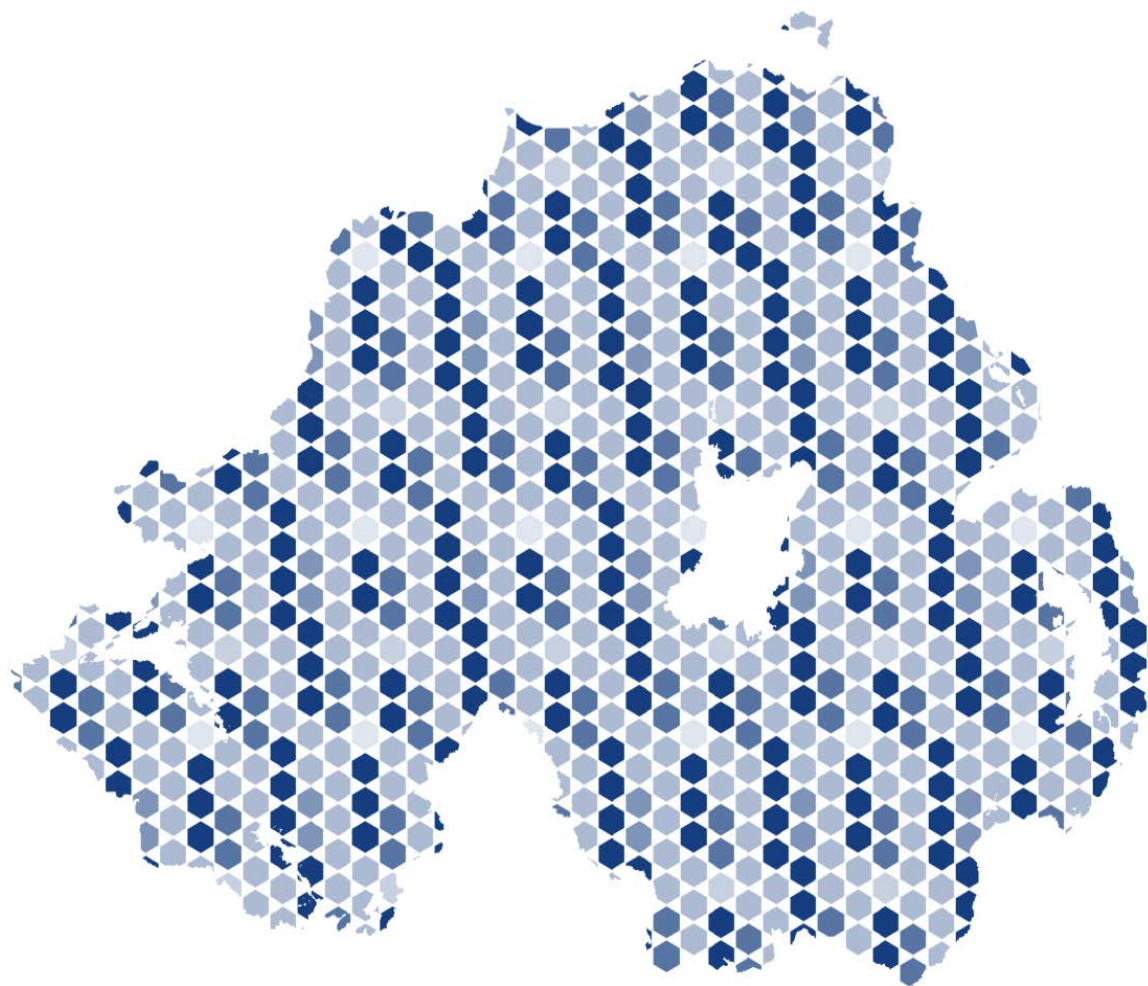


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

## Belfast Model School for Girls

All-girls' controlled 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection (Involving  
Action Short of Strike) in  
January 2017



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



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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

Belfast Model School for Girls draws its pupils from a wide catchment area across West and North Belfast. Over the past four years, enrolment to the school has increased steadily and it is now oversubscribed at entry to year 8; the enrolment in sixth form has also increased. There have been significant changes to the structure of the senior leadership team (SLT) in the last eighteen months with a new principal, vice-principal and five assistant principals taking up post. The school participates in a number of shared education programmes with schools in the local area.

Just under two-fifths of the pupils require additional support with aspects of their learning. Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has risen to 60%. The school prides itself on strong links with a range of statutory agencies and with its community; it has been designated a full-service extended school since 2006. The school's motto is 'Achievement for All' and equality of opportunity is a key feature of the work of the school.

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 almost all of the teachers would not 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.

| Belfast Model School for Girls  | 2013-14          | 2014-15          | 2015-16          | 2016-17      |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Year 8 Intake   | 121              | 131              | 166              | 165          |
| Enrolment   | 916              | 885              | 910              | 954          |
| % Attendance<br>(NI Average)  | 89.2%<br>(92.0%) | 90.1%<br>(92.0%) | 91.3%<br>(93.5%) | N/A<br>(N/A) |
| FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>  | 40               | 51               | 57               | 60           |
| % and (Number) of pupils on SEN register                                    | 36%<br>(334)     | 36%<br>(321)     | 37%<br>(339)     | 39%<br>(373) |
| No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school | 20               | 24               | 25               | 32           |
| No. of newcomers  | *                | 11               | 13               | 13           |

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5 pupils

N/A not available

### 2. Views of parents and staff

Two percent of parents (17) and 11% of staff (12) responded to the online questionnaires. The responses to the parental questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The written comments affirmed, in particular, the positive and supportive learning environment provided for the pupils and the excellent range of extra-curricular facilities available. The responses to the staff questionnaires were also positive, highlighting the school's friendly, supportive and hard-working ethos. The very few issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and governors.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

### 3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests 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.

As a result of the industrial action by the teachers, 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 the provision in English and mathematics; and
- the quality of the provision for the care, welfare and support of the pupils.

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

### 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            |

## KEY FINDINGS

### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils are courteous, well-mannered and display a positive disposition to school life. At all key stages, the student leaders are confident, articulate and motivated role models for their peers. The senior pupils have a range of opportunities to take on leadership and mentoring roles, which they do maturely and confidently; they attain important accreditation for these roles.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has increased from 25% to 36%, which is now in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools. It is of note that the similar percentage for pupils entitled to free schools meals has almost tripled, from 12% in 2014 to 32% in 2016.

- Most of the subjects at GCSE grades A\* to C are below the corresponding three-year average for similar schools; a significant minority of the subjects are more than 20 percentage points below their respective subject average. At GCE A level, while one-quarter of the subjects are in line with or above the subject average, three-quarters of them are below the subject average. However, the outcomes attained by the pupils in one-half of the GCSE subjects and three-quarters of the GCE A level subjects at grades A\* to C improved last year. There is variation in the outcomes attained by the pupils in the vocational subjects.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A\* to C has fluctuated but is now in line with the average for non-selective schools.
- The proportion of pupils progressing to higher education courses is well above the NI average. Over the past two years, a majority of the year 12 pupils progressed to post-16 provision in the school and most of them stayed on from year 13 to year 14.
- Through a range of effective strategies the school has begun to address underperformance and improve the outcomes attained by the pupils.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- standards attained by the pupils in English and mathematics;
- progression by the pupils in their learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The school has developed systems to collate more rigorously, analyse and use effectively a range of pastoral and performance data to set targets, track and monitor progress and to celebrate achievement.
- The pupils who require additional support with their learning benefit from early identification and intervention. There is highly effective liaison with parents and effective partnership arrangements with a range of external agencies to help the staff, the pupils and their families in addressing the barriers to learning and progression. A small number of pupils are placed appropriately in alternative education off-site; the school has very effective and regular communication with the Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) providers that facilitates smooth transition for these pupils back into the school when appropriate.
- A safe and inviting nurture centre has been established and developed to meet the needs of the pupils unable to engage fully in their mainstream classes. It provides a calm and highly supportive environment for those pupils at risk of marginalisation.

- The pupils have excellent opportunities to engage in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. This rich and diverse programme develops the pupils' interests, raises their aspirations and contributes significantly to their overall education experience.
- A key strength of the care, welfare and support provision is the highly effective use made of pupil consultation, feedback from which supports the planning for improvement.
- The curriculum planning and review process is a high strategic priority for the senior leaders. A significant and effective review, at all levels, of the curriculum provision, including how it impacts on the outcomes attained by the pupils, is ongoing. Consequently, good progress is being made in the establishment of a broader, flexible and more fit-for-purpose curriculum. The school collaborates well within the area learning community to broaden the curriculum offer but also to meet the needs and career aspirations of individual pupils.
- Through an effective analysis of a range of data, the curriculum at key stage (KS) 3 has been reviewed and amended to ensure it better meets the needs of the diverse ability range, including a nurture stream at transition. At post-16, most of the pupils have access to a good choice of subjects and progression pathways. The provision for those pupils at post-16 to repeat English and/or mathematics at GCSE level or equivalent is inconsistent and needs to be strengthened with more focused tracking of their progress. The information flows to parents on the key aspects of curriculum pathways and changes has been improved to good effect. The school is working to broaden the range of vocational options in some of the curriculum pathways at KS 4, which is appropriate.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the impact of the curriculum review on the pupils' learning;
- 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 learning;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The school development plan, which is informed to good effect by meaningful consultation and sound self-evaluation, details a range of appropriate priorities for school improvement. The associated whole-school action plans guide well the development work; there are effective processes for monitoring and evaluating the improvement plans. The continuing professional development of staff is afforded a high priority in the school and is linked closely to the whole-school priorities for improvement.

- The SLT has been re-structured appropriately with team members taking on clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountability. The highly effective leadership by the SLT is characterised by a collegial ethos and a clear, shared strategic vision for school improvement. An evolving culture of self-evaluation is leading to well-targeted and effective actions; the initial evidence shows improvement with a positive impact in areas such as pupil outcomes, curriculum review, attendance and positive behaviour.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are committed to the life and the work of the school and they are highly supportive of the positive impact of the new principal. They make good use of self-evaluation tools to inform their own work and development. The governors need to develop further their capacity to provide appropriate accountability and challenge to the variability in outcomes attained by the pupils.
- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements are in place for safeguarding learners which broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The pupils reported that they feel safe and secure 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.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

## **CONCLUSION**

### **8. 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.

## Examination performance and other statistical data

### GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS<sup>2</sup> and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Belfast Model School for Girls achieving five or more GCSE's (A\* to C and A\* to E) and equivalent subjects, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band<sup>3</sup>.

| <b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - * following permitted exclusions</b>  | <b>2014</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| *Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects  | 63.33       | 83.94       | 94.07       |
| *Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects  | 55.33       | 35.04       | 45.76       |
| The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category <sup>4</sup>   | 65.5        | 72.9        | N/A         |
| *Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics                                    | 24.67       | 32.85       | 35.59       |
| The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category  | 34.9        | 32.9        | N/A         |
| *Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects  | 76.00       | 74.45       | 88.14       |
| Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics) | 11.86       | 23.81       | 32.31       |

<sup>2</sup> SIMS: School Information Management System

<sup>3</sup> See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

<sup>4</sup> See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.



## GCE A level examination results at grades A\* to C from 2013-14 to 2015-16

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 Belfast Model School for Girls achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to C, and two or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to E.

| GCE A Level or equivalent   | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects | 56    | 52    | 65    |
| Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels   | 28.81 | 18.97 | 35.38 |
| Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels   | 91.53 | 98.28 | 93.85 |

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

|                                    | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort | 150  | 137  | 118  |

| Subject                           | Number of Entries | School<br>Three-year average at<br>A* to C | Northern Ireland<br>Three-year average at<br>A* to C |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Art & Design                      | 93                | 59.14                                      | 82.7   |
| English Language                  | 376               | 58.78                                      | 72.5   |
| English Literature                | 43                | 88.37                                      | 89.3   |
| French                            | 53                | 81.13                                      | 78.7   |
| Geography                         | 56                | 51.79                                      | 69.5   |
| History                           | 181               | 40.88                                      | 67.4   |
| Information Technology            | 246               | 71.95                                      | 77.6   |
| Mathematics                       | 374               | 39.57                                      | 51.4   |
| Performing Arts (Vocational)      | 51                | 70.59                                      | 73.7   |
| Religious Studies                 | 90                | 50.00                                      | 72.3   |
| Science additional                | 63                | 68.25                                      | 77.2   |
| Science Single Award              | 221               | 30.32                                      | 49.7   |
| Spanish                           | 39                | 51.28                                      | 84.5   |
| Sport(PE) Studies                 | 40                | 30.00                                      | 72.2   |
| Business Studies *                | 23                | 8.70                                       | 63.6   |
| Design and<br>Technology: Product | 28                | 60.71                                      | 74.4   |
| Drama *                           | 27                | 59.26                                      | 78.7   |
| Music *                           | 22                | 40.91                                      | 80.0   |

\* indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

## OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4

*Other courses taken in at least two of the last three years.*

| <b>Level 2</b>                    | 2013-14<br>% A*-C | 2014-15<br>% A*-C | 2015-16<br>% A*-C | Total entry over 3<br>years |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| BTEC Business                     | -                 | 83                | 64                | 24                          |
| BTEC T&T                          | 43                | 0                 | 38                | 44                          |
| Occupational<br>Studies Childcare | -                 | 94                | 91                | 68                          |

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

| <b>Subject</b>                                      | <b>Number of<br/>Entries</b> | <b>School<br/>Three-year average at<br/>A* to C</b> | <b>Northern Ireland<br/>Three-year average<br/>at A* to C</b> |
|---|------------------------------|---|---|
| Art & Design  | 24                           | 58.33   | 91.8  |
| History   | 36                           | 66.67   | 87.4  |
| Information Technology (Single<br>Award Vocational) | 61                           | 80.33   | 87.7  |
| Religious Studies                                   | 21                           | 52.38   | 89.8  |
| Sociology   | 47                           | 68.09   | 77.4  |
| English Literature *                                | 7                            | 100   | 83.9  |
| Geography *   | 14                           | 42.86   | 87.9  |
| Government & Politics *                             | 8                            | 25.00   | 90.0  |
| Media Film and TV Studies *                         | 8                            | 75.00   | 90.1  |
| Performing Arts (Single Award<br>Vocational) *      | 19                           | 73.68   | 73.6  |
| Science (Single Award<br>Vocational) *              | 39                           | 74.36   | 69.8  |
| Spanish *   | 12                           | 41.67   | 93.4  |

\* indicates fewer than 20 entries over 3 years

## OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: POST-16

| Level 3                         | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | Total entry over 3 years |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------------|
|                                 | % A*-C  | % A*-C  | % A*-C  |                          |
| BTEC Business                   | 89      | 25      | 86      | 38                       |
| BTEC Travel and Tourism         | 50      | 100     | 78      | 15                       |
| CTEC ICT (Cambridge National)   | 100     | 100     | 100     | 24                       |
| CTEC Sport (Cambridge National) | 100     | -       | 100     | 11                       |
| CACHE Diploma (Childcare)       | 82      | 23      | 100     | 32                       |

## Staying on rate

Based on data held in SIMS by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at Belfast Model School for Girls, from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average for non-selective schools (from school census returns to the Department of Education for the most recent year for which data is available.)

|                             | NI Average | School |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------|
| % Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13 | 47.8       | 73     |
| % Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14 | 78.2       | 80.1   |

## Leavers' destinations

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from Belfast Model School for Girls who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

|                                | School | NI    | Level 2 (No.) | Level 3 (No.) | Level 4 (No.) |
|--------------------------------|--------|-------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Total Number of Leavers        | 126    | 13157 |               |               |               |
| Employment                     | 24.6%  | 10.9% |               |               |               |
| Further Education              | 31.7%  | 44.5% | 11            | 21            | 2             |
| Higher Education               | 22.2%  | 23.3% | 0             | 0             | 30            |
| Work-based Learning (Training) | 12.7%  | 15.4% |               |               |               |
| Unemployed                     | 5.6%   | 3.9%  |               |               |               |
| Unknown                        | 2.3%   | 2.1%  |               |               |               |

### **Inspection methodology and evidence base**

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

Inspectors scrutinised documentation, data and held formal and informal discussions with pupils (individually and in groups), teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all 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 management<sup>5</sup>:

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

|  |
|--|
| 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.   |
| 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.  |
| 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.   |
| 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. |

<sup>5</sup> And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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