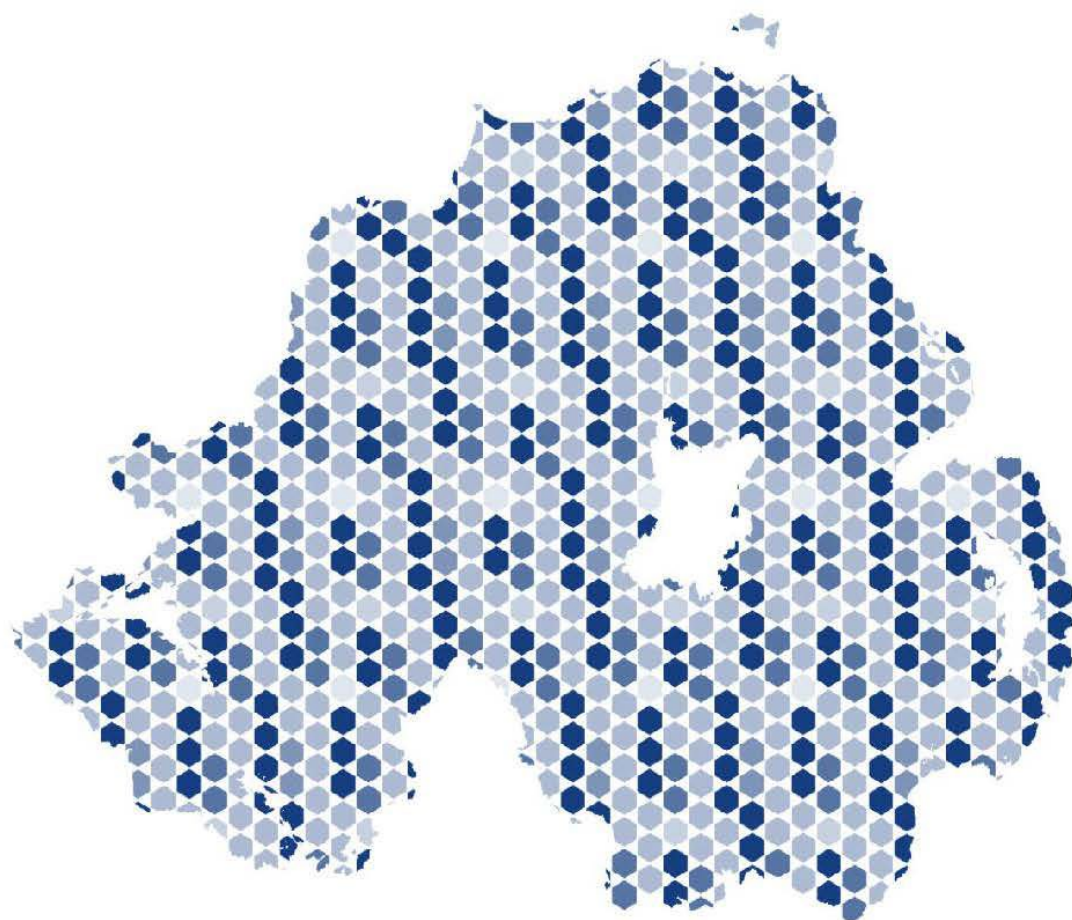


Education and Training Inspectorate POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Dalriada School, Ballymoney, County Antrim

11-18 co-educational voluntary grammar school DE Ref No: 342-0012

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
January 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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1. Context

Dalriada School attracts its pupils from around fifty primary schools in the Ballymoney and wider area across north county Antrim; it is oversubscribed regularly at year 8. As an active member of the Ballymoney Area Learning Community, the school collaborates with two local post-primary schools at key stage (KS) 4 to deliver a wider curriculum. The school collaborates well with two local post-primary schools through its long established shared education partnership, which provides beneficial opportunities for its pupils and staff alike.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute, and also workload and other management issues. The industrial action 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 inspection. The senior leadership and representatives of the board of governors co-operated with the inspection in relation to leadership and safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice among teachers 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.

Dalriada School	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Year 8 Intake	127	-	127	-	126	-	135	-
Total Enrolment	868	-	865	-	864	-	874	-
Attendance (NI Average*)	-	96.5 (95.5)	-	95.9 (95)	-	96.7	-	N/A
Free School Meal Entitlement	79	9.10%	68	7.86%	72	8.33%	65	7.45%
Pupils on SEN Register	28	3.23%	42	4.86%	49	5.67%	47	5.39%
No of Pupils with Statements	11	-	12	-	10	-	14	-

* Northern Ireland Statistic & Research Agency: Attendance at grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools: Detailed Statistics - 2016/17, 2017/18

N/A: Not available.

2. Pupils', parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Sixty percent of the pupils completed the online questionnaire. Overall, most of the responses were positive about their experience in the school, with the pupils appreciating, for example, the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities available to them and the support and guidance that they receive from the staff. Just under three-tenths of the pupils responding provided written comments, sharing their views of school life and their learning experiences. While around forty-five percent of these written responses were wholly positive, some of the pupils reported that they would welcome further consistency in the operational outworkings of a small number of school policies, the detail of which has been shared with the school.

Twenty-three percent of parents and a small number of staff responded to the online questionnaire. Most parents who responded agreed that their child is making good progress in school and were positive about the life and work of the school. The parents commented positively in particular, on the care, welfare and support provided for the pupils and about their general contentment with the work of the school.

The individual concerns which were raised through the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and the representatives from the board of governors.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the learners;
- 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

- The pupils who met with inspectors were articulate, mature and confident; they spoke clearly and positively about their school experiences. There are high levels of pupil participation and high achievement in an extensive range of sporting, cultural, creative and charitable activities, with a notable number of pupils attaining sporting and cultural honours at regional and UK level. The senior pupils are developing leadership skills through for example, membership of the prefect team, school council, house captain system and leading mentoring programmes.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining seven or more GCSEs (including equivalents) at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, including for the small numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, has been consistently in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average (for schools in the same free school (FSM) meal band). The pupils who require additional help with their learning have achieved well.
- The outcomes attained by the pupils in almost all of the individual subjects at GCSE at grades A* to B are in line with or above the corresponding NI subject averages (in those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages) for 2017 to 2018, with over one-third being well above (with the changes to GCSE grading, the 2019 outcomes at grades A* to B cannot be compared with previous year). There is a gender differential (around 20%) in the outcomes attained between the boys and girls at this level and closing this gap is an appropriate target for improvement, which the school acknowledges.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining three or more GCE A level qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to C has been consistently in line with, or above the NI average (for schools in the same free school (FSM) meal band). Outcomes in almost all of the subjects at A level are in line with, or above, the corresponding NI subject averages (in those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages) over the past three years, with all of the subjects above in 2018 and 2019.
- The school leavers' destinations data indicates that almost all year 14 pupils in 2018 progressed to higher education study.

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

- In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they value the positive and mutually respectful relationships at all levels; and the pastoral and academic support they receive from the staff. The senior pupils appreciate how their work is monitored closely through the tracking system at KS 4 and post-16; they had a clearly articulated sense of belonging and they spoke about their school with pride.
- There is a proactive student council that has a role in school improvement, including contributions to whole school policy development and in achieving operational improvements around the school. Consequently, the council allows pupils to have a say in matters affecting them, while working alongside staff in a common purpose to develop key policies that impact on pupils' learning experiences, as well as seek solutions to issues.
- Curriculum planning is kept under constant review and informed by a range of qualitative and quantitative information including, pupil and parental feedback, the analysis of pupil targets across the key stages and the monitoring of outcomes in public examinations. As a result, the curriculum is broad, balanced and flexible; it meets the entitlement framework at both KS4 and post-16; and supports the pupils to attain well in public examinations and proceed to the next stage of education or employment.
- The careers provision is delivered through Learning for Life and Work at KS3 and KS4, and through discrete periods of careers in years 10 to 14. The school is currently reviewing the provision for Learning for Life and Work at KS3 and KS4 to optimise flexibility and maximise time allocations to support other subjects across the curriculum.
- In discussions with the pupils they spoke positively about their opportunities in class to research and investigate viable career progression pathways, the support from their teachers to help inform subject choices, and the planned programme of events which included visiting speakers, mock interviews, and careers events.

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 and assessment in promoting learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision;

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

7. Leadership and management

- School development planning is informed well by consultation with teachers, pupils, governors and a focus group of parents from which emerge priorities that drive the improvement agenda. Formalised meetings are scheduled to monitor progress and the senior leadership team has clear oversight which informs their regular reports to governors. While there are examples of reflective self-evaluation underpinning action planning, there is variability in the quality of the action plans across the school, some of which would benefit from the inclusion of more specific and quantifiably measureable targets.
- The senior leadership team work collegially and have a shared and strategic vision for the school which is centred on improving further the learning experiences provided for the pupils and the outcomes they achieve. The leadership places appropriate value on developing the capacity of leaders at all levels and in promoting distributive and collaborative working practices.
- The governors have a wide set of professional skills, which are applied well to oversee the strategic direction of the school and its development. They engage with all aspects of school work and life through their sub-committees, which provide them with very detailed reports and first-hand insights. The governors are well-informed about the pupils' outcomes in public examinations and are responsive to the various pastoral, educational and financial challenges. 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 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. 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 pupils report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

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 has identified an urgent health and safety matter relating to the fire alarm system which is being progressed by the relevant stakeholders.

APPENDIX B

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and GCSE Equivalent Subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE and Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	100	100	99
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	95.12	95.12	94.53
<i>The NI average for grammar schools in the same FSM band*</i>	95.4	94.3	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	94.31	95.12	93.75
<i>The NI average for grammar schools in the same FSM band*</i>	94.3	94.3	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	98.37	100	96.88
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to FSM achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A - C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	91.67	100	100

* Median for each year from the Department of Education benchmarking Quartiles for non-grammar schools in the same FSM band.

[BENCHMARKING DATA GCSE & Level 3 Post-primary Schools 2016/17](#)

[BENCHMARKING DATA GCSE & Level 3 Post-primary Schools 2017/18](#)

Year 12 GCSE (including equivalent) examination outcomes

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	123	123	128

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

Subject	Number of Entries over two years (2017/18)	School Two-year Average A*to B	Northern Ireland Two-year average A*to B	Number of Entries in 2019	School 2019 A*to B**
Agriculture (BTEC/EC2_SA1)	*	100.0	N/A	*	100.0
Arabic (GCSE/FC_5910)	*	100.0	N/A	-	-
Art & Design (GCSE/FC_3510)	28	89.3	76.0	17	41.2
Biology (GCSE/FC_1010)	186	88.2	83.3	97	88.7
Business Studies (GCSE/FC_3210)	66	66.7	69.1	28	78.6
Chemistry (GCSE/FC_1110)	174	82.2	86.0	86	72.1
Computer Studies (GCSE/FC_2610)	18	72.2	69.3	15	73.3
Design & Technology (GCSE/FC_8900)	-	-	-	19	94.7
Design & Technology Electronic Products (GCSE/FC_9010)	61	80.3	N/A	-	-
Drama (GCSE/FC_5210)	32	78.1	82.2	20	65.0
Engineering (GCSE/FC_0009)	17	82.4	55.6	*	25.0
English Language (GCSE/FC_5030)	246	86.2	80.4	128	78.1
English Literature (GCSE/FC_5110)	102	93.1	79.4	55	83.6
French (GCSE/FC_5650)	113	61.1	64.3	52	67.3
Geography (GCSE/FC_3910)	69	84.1	73.4	23	91.3
German (GCSE/FC_5670)	65	49.2	60.3	25	60.0
History (GCSE/FC_4010)	161	89.4	76.8	92	88.0
Home Economics (GCSE/FC_3310)	30	96.7	83.4	17	82.4
Information Technology (GCSE/FC_2650)	106	85.8	80.1	35	74.3
IT/Art (GCSE/FC_8210)	23	87.0	N/A	14	92.9
Mathematics (GCSE/FC_2210)	246	87.4	73.6	128	84.4
Mathematics Further (GCSE/FC_2330)	98	84.7	86.6	56	92.9
Music (GCSE/FC_7010)	31	90.3	87.6	13	92.3
Physics (GCSE/FC_1210)	160	93.8	84.8	87	88.5
Religious Studies (GCSE/FC_4610)	171	95.3	79.3	82	85.4
Spanish (GCSE/FC_5750)	88	58.0	70.8	53	52.8
Sport/PE Studies (GCSE/FC_7210)	49	71.4	73.0	30	66.7

* indicates fewer than 10 entries.

** With the 2019 changes to GCSE grading, the outcomes at grades A* to B cannot be compared with previous years.

Data Year 14 performance

GCE A Level or equivalent	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Percentage of Year 14 taking A levels and Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A levels	83.61	81.48	86.67
The NI average for grammar schools in the same FSM band*	79.2	81.0	N/A

* Median for each year from the Department of Education benchmarking Quartiles for non-grammar schools in the same FSM band.

[BENCHMARKING DATA GCSE & Level 3 Post-primary Schools 2016/17](#)

[BENCHMARKING DATA GCSE & Level 3 Post-primary Schools 2017/18](#)

Year 14 GCE (including equivalent) examination outcomes

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	122	108	120

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

Subjects	Number of Entries over three years	School Three-year average A*to C	Northern Ireland Three-year average A*to C
Art & Design (GCE/A_3510)	11	100.0	93.7
Biology (GCE/A_1010)	92	81.7	82.9
Business Studies (GCE/A_3210)	73	97.3	89.1
Chemistry (GCE/A_1110)	63	95.2	88.8
Chinese (GCE/A_5950)	*	100.0	N/A
Classical Civilisation (GCE/A_6530)	70	90.0	N/A
Computer Studies/Computing (GCE/A_2610)	21	100.0	84.8
D&T Product Design (GCE/A_9080)	44	86.7	62.4
Engineering (BTEC/SD3_XA1)	*	100.0	N/A
English Literature (GCE/A_5110)	77	98.7	85.5
French (GCE/A_5650)	21	85.7	92.3
Geography (GCE/A_3910)	37	91.9	86.9
German (GCE/A_5670)	*	100.0	N/A
Health & Social Care (GCE/A_0003)	25	100.0	89.
Health Studies (BTEC/SD3_PA1)	*	100.0	N/A
History (GCE/A_4010)	142	93.7	83.6
Home Economics (GCE/A_3310)	16	100.0	N/A
Information Technology (GCE/A_2650)	66	95.6	73.6
IT/Art (GCE/A_8210)	*	100.0	N/A

Journalism (GCE/A_KD1)	*	100.0	N/A
Mathematics (GCE/A_2210)	114	95.6	88.8
Mathematics Further (GCE/A_2330)	*	100.0	95.5
Music (GCE/A_7010)	23	100.0	85.4
Performing Arts (GCE/A_0015)	*	100.0	84.2
Physics (GCE/A_1210)	62	90.5	79.1
Religious Studies (GCE/A_4610)	40	92.5	88.3
Russian (GCE/A_6090)	*	100.0	N/A
Spanish (GCE/A_5750)	*	100.0	94.3
Sports Studies (BTEC/SD3_MA1)	21	95.2	N/A
Sport/PE Studies (NQF/L3_7210)	*	100.0	N/A

* Indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years.

Staying on rate 2018/19

% Yr12 staying on to Yr13	89.5	NI Av. Year 13	84.7
% Yr13 staying on to Yr14	92.9	NI Av. Year 14	86.9

Leavers' Destinations 2017/18

	NI No & %	School No & %	NI Yr12 No & %	School Yr12 No & %	NI Yr13 No & %	School Yr13 No & %	NI Yr14 No & %	School Yr14 No & %	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 and above (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	9760 100%	131 100%	1287 100%	13 100%	640 100%	10 100%	7833 100%	108 100%			
Employment	530 5.4%	0 0.0%	74 5.7%	0 0.0%	77 12%	0 0.0%	379 4.8%	0 0%			
Institute of Further Education	2066 21.2%	20 15.3%	988 76.8%	# #	467 73%	# #	611 7.8%	* *	0	17	*
Institute of Higher Education**	6661 68.2%	101 77.1%	* *	0 0%	* *	0 0%	# #	101 93.5%		0	101
Training***	320 3.3%	0 0.0%	173 13.4%	0 0.0%	44 6.9%	0 0%	103 1.3%	0 0%			
Unemployment	59 0.6%	0 0.0%	11 0.9%	0 0.0%	8 1.3%	0 0%	40 0.5%	0 0%			
Others	124 1.3%	10 7.6%	41 3.2%	* *	# #	* *	# #	# #			

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2017/18 - GRAMMAR SCHOOLS (excludes special and independent schools).

* Fewer than 5 cases.

Figures suppressed.

** Includes universities and teacher training colleges.

*** 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.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI’s [Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework](#) publication is available on the ETI website.

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.

Questionnaire	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments	Percentage with comments
Pupil	528	60.4	149	28.2
Parents	169	23.4	75	44.4
Teacher	*	*	0	0
Support staff	*	*	0	0

*fewer than 5 returns

The tabulated SIMS information and the tables for Year 12 examination outcomes in individual subjects have been verified by the school.

GCSE Grading 2019

The Department of Education has indicated there are no plans to change school performance measures at A*-C with the introduction of the new C* grade. For GCSEs graded 9-1 this performance measure will be 9-4. For the ETI, data on performance in public examinations continues to be only one of the measures that contributes to the evaluation of outcomes for learners.

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 (and the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable):

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

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.

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