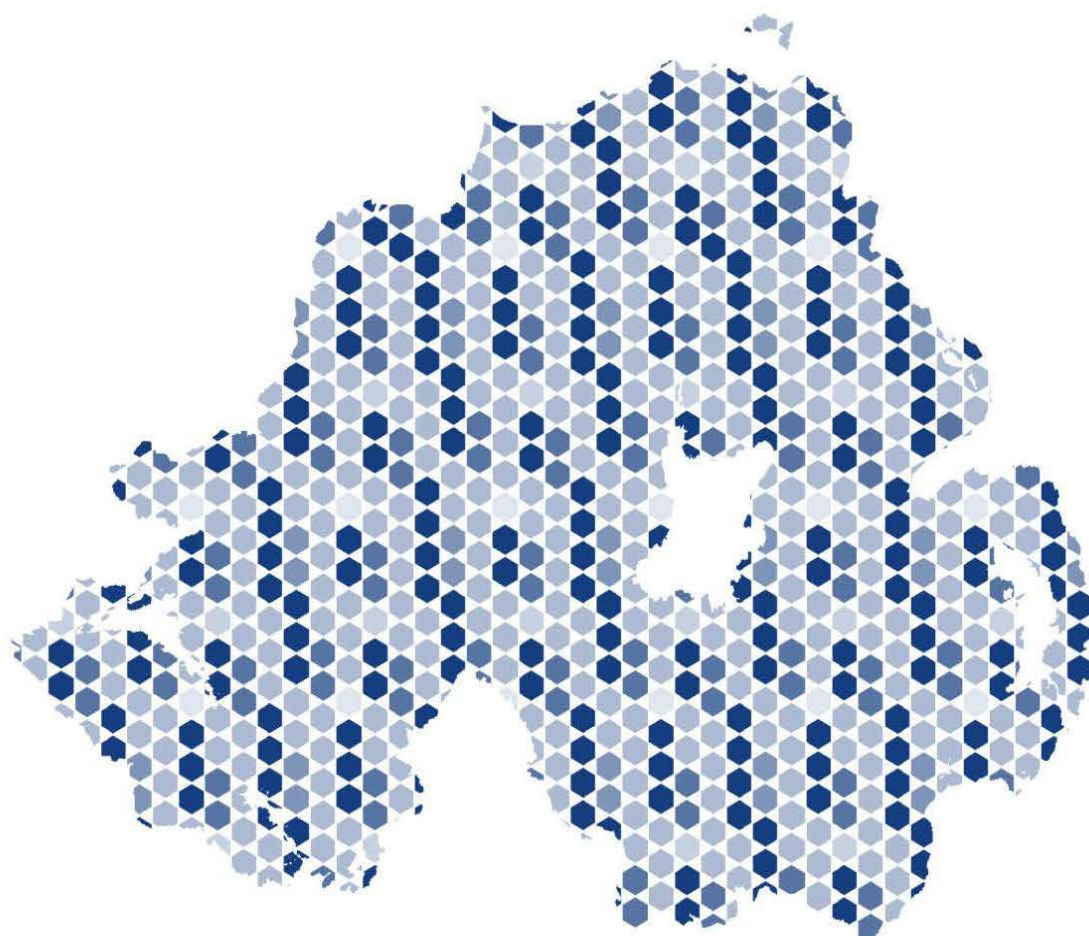# Education and Training Inspectorate
POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION

Friends' School, Lisburn, County Antrim

Co-educational voluntary grammar   DE Ref No: 442-0050

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in November 2019

CONTENTS

Appendices

1.   Context

Friends' School is one of nine Quaker schools in Britain and Ireland.   It draws its pupils from a wide geographical area, extending mainly across counties Down and Antrim and is over-subscribed regularly at year 8.   The school participates in a shared education programme with a maintained grammar school and is a member of the Lisburn Area Learning Community. Over the past three years there has been a significant re-structuring of senior and middle leadership.

The teaching 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.   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 inspection.   The governors and most of the senior leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to leadership responsibilities and safeguarding.   The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice of 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.

Friends' School	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Year 8 Intake	141	-	142	-	144	-	145	-
Total Enrolment	975	-	983	-	990	-	976	-
Attendance (NI Average*)	-	97.1 (95.5)	-	97.0 (95)	-	96.5 -	-	N/A -
Free School Meal Entitlement	42	4.31%	46	4.68%	50	5.05%	42	4.30%
Pupils on SEN Register	64	6.56%	61	6.21%	58	5.86%	31	3.18%
No of Pupils with Statements	17	-	15	-	18	-	23	-
No of Newcomer Pupils	*	-	*	-	6	-	*	-

Northern Ireland Statistic & Research Agency: Attendance at grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools: Detailed Statistics - 2017/18, 2018/19
N/A: Not available.
* Fewer than 5.

2.   Pupils', parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Just over forty percent of the pupils completed a confidential on-line questionnaire. Almost all reported that the school is a welcoming, inclusive environment and affirmed the opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Most of the pupils agreed that they are happy with their experiences and that they enjoy learning at school. A significant minority of the pupils indicated that they do not have enough opportunities to link their learning to real life situations in preparation for their future careers. One-quarter of the pupil responses included written comments, highlighting what they enjoy in their learning experiences and in the wider aspects of school life.

Forty-two percent of parents responded to the online confidential questionnaire. Almost all acknowledged that the school is highly regarded in the community and that their children enjoy learning at the school and are progressing well. A minority indicated that they would welcome more opportunities for the school to take their views into account. Forty percent of the parental responses provided additional written comments, a majority of which were positive and expressed appreciation for the work of the staff in facilitating positive learning experiences and extensive extra-curricular opportunities.

Overall twenty-seven percent of staff responded to the online confidential questionnaire; their responses affirmed that the school is well-led and managed and has an inclusive ethos.

In their written comments, the pupils and parents made reference to concerns in relation to specific accommodation issues, and some aspects of classroom provision. These concerns were discussed with the principal and representatives of the 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 history on 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 history; 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 friendly and show pride in their school. They explained clearly the values of peace and equality, and are developing a keen understanding of fairness, service to the community and respect for others. The pupils develop leadership skills through for example: membership of the school council; outreach programmes; charitable work; peer mentoring; and sports coaching.

- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining seven or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, has decreased slightly from 99.31% in 2017 to 94.41%, but remains in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average (for schools in the same free school meals band).

- In the two year period 2017 to 2018, 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), with most being well above (with the changes to GCSE grading, the 2019 outcomes at grades A* to B cannot be compared with previous years).

- In each of the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining three or more GCE A level qualifications at grades A* to C has remained consistently above the NI average (for schools in the same free school meals band).

- The outcomes attained by the pupils in almost all of the individual subjects at A level at grades A* to C are in line with or above the corresponding subject averages over the past three years (for those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages).

- Almost all of the year 12 pupils return to school to continue with their studies at post-16. The school leavers' destinations data for 2018 shows that almost all year 14 pupils progress to higher or further education.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and history;

- the progression in the pupils' learning; and

- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- In discussions with inspectors, the pupils were appreciative of the extensive range of experiences afforded to them by the school. They spoke about the enrichment and the skills gained by their participation in for example extra-curricular music, drama and sport.

- The subject offer at Key Stage (KS) 4 and post-16 meets the entitlement framework. In 2018/19 the school undertook a curriculum review and audit; consequently, the provision for physical education and Information and Communication Technology at KS 3 has been extended.

- The provision for careers is delivered through the employability strand of Learning for Life and Work at KS 3 and year 11, and through discrete periods of careers in years 10, 12 and post-16. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils spoke positively about the programme for careers education, information, advice and guidance and in particular, the guidance they received when making subject choices in years 10 and 12 and also their work experience in year 13. They indicated that they have opportunities to research and investigate possible careers through the planned programme of guest speakers and external providers.

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, and history across the school; and

- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- Members of the leadership team have a clear vision for school improvement. The school development plan has three overarching priorities: developing leadership; enhancing provision; and, improving outcomes. A research-based approach to learning and teaching and continuing professional development prioritises building capacity at all levels; a number of staff are completing external leadership courses.

- Recent work has been undertaken in the areas of behaviour management and enhanced communication with parents. It will be important to continue to monitor and review the impact of the improvement work to date on the quality of the learning experiences, along with a consequent need to review the learning and teaching policy.

- The governors have a wide range of complementary skills and professional knowledge which they use to good effect in their roles on the various sub-committees. They are well-informed about the life and work of the school, including the outcomes for learners, and support and challenge the leadership when appropriate. Based on the evidence at the time of the 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.

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. 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.

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

During inspection the following health and safety/accommodation matter was observed:

- open access to the school site and buildings.

The school needs to take mitigating action, including putting in place appropriate risk assessments and reduction measures.

Examination performance and other statistical data

Data Year 12 performance

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	98.6
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	97.78	94.41	94.41
*The NI average for grammar schools in the same FSM band**	94.3	N/A	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	99.31	97.78	94.41
*The NI average for grammar schools in the same FSM band**	94.3	N/A	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	100	100	96.5
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to FSM achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A - C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	100	100	80

* 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 examination outcomes

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	145	135	143

(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**
Arabic (GCSE/FC_5910)	0	-	-	*	100.0
Art & Design (GCSE/FC_3510)	32	90.6	76.0	11	100.0
Biology (GCSE/FC_1010)	129	97.7	83.3	64	89.1
Business Studies (GCSE/FC_3210)	61	85.2	69.1	40	62.5
Chemistry (GCSE/FC_1110)	129	94.6	86.0	64	81.3
Chinese (GCSE/FC_5950)	*	100	N/A	*	100.0
Design and Technology (GCSE/FC_8900)	32	90.6	73.5	19	63.2
Economics (GCSE/FC_4410)	10	100.0	83.6	0	N/A
Engineering (GCSE/FC_000)	*	50.0	55.6	0	N/A
English Language (GCSE/FC_5030)	280	98.9	80.4	143	89.5
English Literature (GCSE/FC-5110)	275	96.4	79.4	136	86.8
French (GCSE/FC_5650)	165	83.6	64.3	63	87.3
Geography (GCSE/FC_3910)	127	85.8	73.4	58	86.2
German (GCSE/FC_5760)	55	80.0	60.3	26	73.1
History (GCSE/FC_4010)	120	92.5	76.8	67	85.1
Home Economics (GCSE/FC_3310)	31	96.8	83.4	46	87.0
Information Technology (GCSE/FC_2650)	59	74.6	80.1	19	63.2
Italian (GCSE/FC_5690)	0	-	-	*	100.0
Mathematics (GCSE/FC_2210)	280	97.9	73.6	143	98.6
Mathematics Further (GCSE/FC_2330)	120	97.5	86.6	54	94.4
Moving Image Arts (GCSE/FC_8210)	20	100.0	N/A	12	91.7
Music (GCSE/FC_7010)	39	94.9	87.6	15	86.7
Photography (GCSE/FC_KJ1)	*	100.0	N/A	0	-
Physical Education (GCSE/FC_7210)	50	98.0	73	23	82.6
Physics (GCSE/FC_1210)	118	99.2	84.8	50	94.0
Religious Studies (GCSE/FC_4610)	273	91.9	79.3	139	79.9
Science (Double Award) (GCSE/FC_1370)	133	91.7	72.2	69	71.7
Spanish (GCSE/FC_5750)	102	91.2	70.8	65	80.0

* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years
** 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	86.55	89.23	87.59
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 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 A-level examination outcomes

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	119	130	137

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

Subject	Number of Entries over three years	School Three-year average A* to C	Northern Ireland Three-average A* to C
Art & Design (GCE/A_3510)	18	100.0	93.7
Biology (GCE/A_1010)	152	92.8	82.9
Business Studies (GCE/A_3210)	95	94.7	89.1
Chemistry (GCE/A_1110)	114	94.7	88.8
Chinese (GCE/A_5950)	*	100.0	N/A
Design and Technology (GCE/A_8900)	19	94.7	N/A
Digital Technology (GCE/A_2650)	13	53.8	73.6
Economics (GCE/A_4410)	27	96.3	87.7
Electronics (GCE/A_1730)	*	100	N/A
English Literature (GCE/A_5110)	52	100.0	85.5
French (GCE/A_5650)	24	100.0	92.3
Geography (GCE/A_3910)	87	92.0	86.9
German (GCE/A_5670)	*	100.0	N/A
Health & Social Care (GCE/A_0003)	31	96.8	89.2
History (GCE/A_4010)	75	98.7	83.6
Home Economics (GCE/A_3310)	29	89.7	N/A
IT Development (GCE/A_CL4)	*	57.1	N/A
Mathematics (GCE/A_2210)	149	94.0	88.8
Mathematics Further (GCE/A_2330)	12	100.0	95.5
Moving Image Arts (GCE/A_8210)	14	100.0	N/A
Music (GCE/A_7010)	23	100.0	85.4
Physical Education (GCE/A_7210)	25	88.0	84.9

Physics (GCE/A_1210)	54	86.0	79.1
Politics (GCE/A_4830)	44	95.5	86.7
Portuguese (GCE/A_5730)	*	100.0	N/A
Religious Studies (GCE/A_4610)	52	92.3	88.3
Software Systems Development (GCE/A_2610)	14	100.0	84.8
Spanish (GCE/A_5750)	36	100.0	94.3
Travel & Tourism (GCE/A_0017)	11	90.9	80.1

Staying on rate 2018/19

% Yr12 staying on to Yr13	97.1	NI Av. Year 13	84.7
% Yr13 staying on to Yr14	96.5	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%	149 100%	1287 100%	1 100%	640 100%	11 100%	7833 100%	133 100%			
Employment	530 5.4%	3 2%	74 5.7%	0 0%	77 12%	0 0%	379 4.8%	3 2.2%			
Institute of Further Education	2066 21.2%	9 6%	988 76.8%	0 0%	467 73%	3 27.3%	611 7.8%	6 4.5%	0	7	2
Institute of Higher Education**	6661 68.2%	117 78.5%	* *	0 0%	* *	0 0%	# #	117 88%		0	117
Training***	320 3.3%	1 0.7%	173 13.4%	0 0%	44 6.9%	0 0%	103 1.3%	1 0.8%			
Unemployment	59 0.6%	0 0%	11 0.9%	0 0%	8 1.3%	0 0%	40 0.5%	* *			
Others	124 1.3%	19 12.8%	41 3.2%	1 100%	# #	8 72.7%	# #	6 4.5%			

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 supressed.
** 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: 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), meetings with members of the senior leadership; 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	393	40.3	102	26.0
Parents	339	42.4	139	41.0
Teacher	17	28.3	*	17.6
Support staff	13	26.0	*	38.5

The tabulated SIMS information and the tables for Year 12 and Year 14 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.