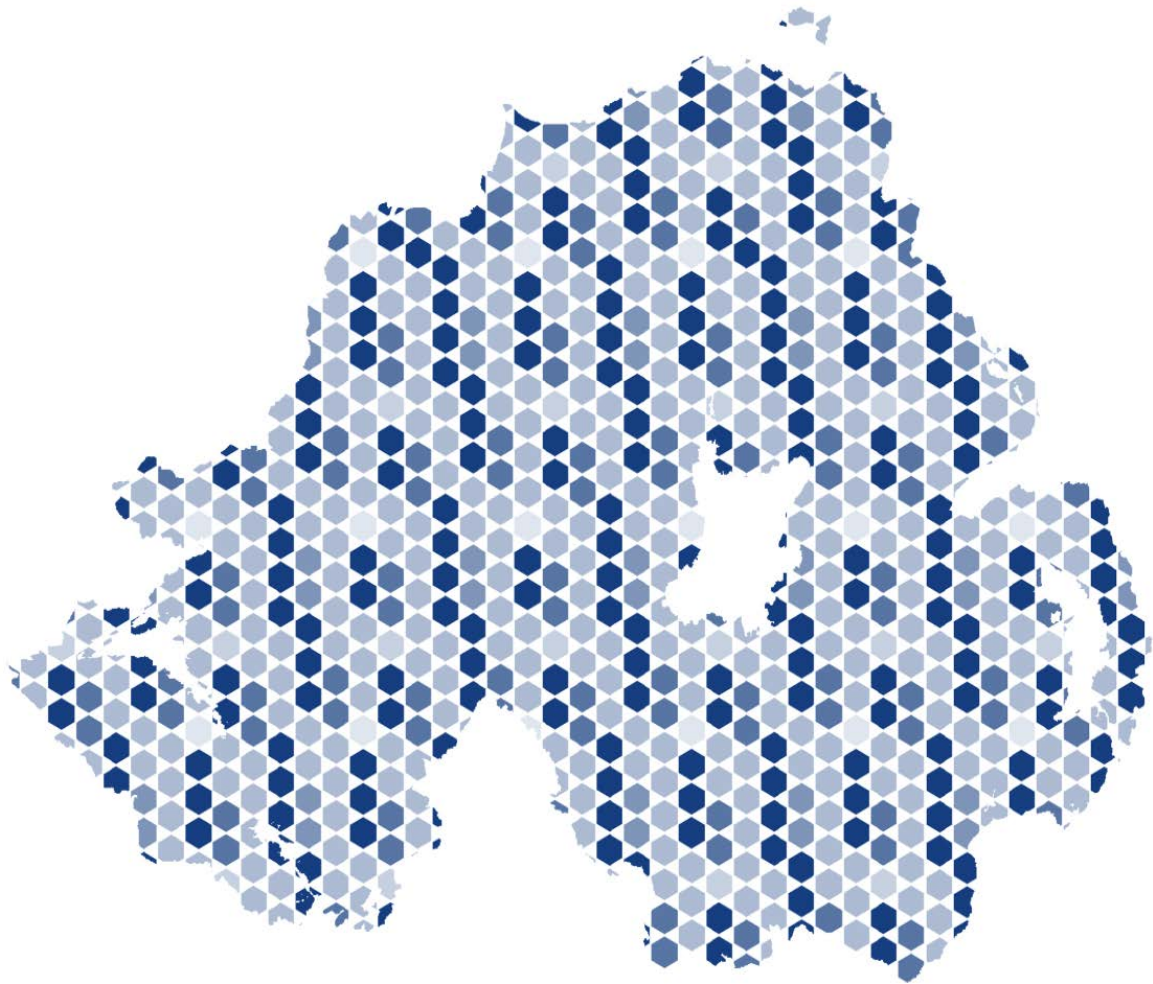


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Mount Lourdes Grammar School,
Enniskillen, County Fermanagh

All-girls' voluntary grammar 11 – 18 school

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



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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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Mount Lourdes Grammar School is a Catholic voluntary grammar school for girls situated in Enniskillen. The pupils attending the school come from all parts of County Fermanagh and beyond. Over the past four years, enrolment has increased slightly; in September 2016, over one-third of the year 13 pupils enrolled came from other schools in the area. Over the same period, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has doubled to around 15%. The school is an active member of the Fermanagh Learning Community.

The school prides itself on maintaining the values associated with its founders the Sisters of Mercy, including respect and inclusion; it promotes well the holistic development of each pupil, focusing on their academic, social, emotional and spiritual needs to ensure their talents and abilities are developed as fully as possible.

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.

Mount Lourdes Grammar School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Year 8 Intake	97	97	98	97
Enrolment	744	747	753	762
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.3% (95.8%)	95.1% (95.6%)	95.3% (93.5%)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage ¹	7.9	13.5	15	15.09
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	10.88% (81)	12.71% (95)	15.53% (117)	12.86% (98)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	*	*	*	8
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

Eighteen percent of parents (118) and 43% of the staff (38) responded to the online questionnaires; just over one-half of the parental responses included written comments. A majority of the parents who responded were supportive of the life and work of the school. Many of the parents' written responses affirmed: the welcoming atmosphere; the mutual respect between staff and pupils; the supportive teachers; the good progress in learning being made by their daughter; and that the school is well led and managed. The responses to the staff questionnaires were very positive and highly supportive of the work of the school.

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

They highlighted: the inclusive, welcoming school ethos; feeling valued; the very good relationships across the school community; and their strong support for the leadership of the principal. Some issues were raised by a minority of the parents in the questionnaires, which were discussed with the principal and governors (whilst maintaining the anonymity of the respondents.)

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, mathematics and modern languages; 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 who met with inspectors were articulate and confident; they were very supportive and proud of their school, in particular the very positive relationships with staff and the high levels of support they receive from them. During the inspection, the pupils were polite and courteous and engaged well with the inspection team. The pupils participate and achieve well in a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting, cultural and musical pursuits.

- Very good opportunities are created by the school for pupils to accept responsibility and to develop their leadership skills, through a range of initiatives including: the well-established student council; the peer mentoring system; and the Millennium Volunteer Award Scheme for the older pupils. The pupils report that they are supported well to develop the personal and life skills essential for them as contributors to an ever increasing challenging society.
- The outcomes attained by the pupils at GCSE level are a strength of the work of the school. Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE qualifications at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been consistently high and well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools in the same free school meals band. The pupils entitled to free school meals attain highly and in line with their peers. Over the same period, across all the GCSE subjects, the pupils attain above or in line with the subject averages for similar schools at grades A* to B.
- The outcomes attained by the pupils in GCE A level or equivalent require improvement; this has been recognised by the school as an improvement priority and actioned accordingly. Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C has been below the NI average for similar schools. While a majority of the subjects at GCE A level are in line with or above the respective three-year averages, around one-quarter of them are below and need to improve. The small number of pupils who take vocational subjects at post-16 attain highly in them.
- A high percentage of the year 12 pupils return to the school for post-16 study and the retention of pupils between years 13 and 14 is above the NI average. The proportion of pupils progressing to higher education courses is well above the NI average.

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 curriculum planning and review process remains a high strategic priority for the school. The process is set within the wider area-planning framework. The school collaborates well within the Fermanagh Area Learning Community to broaden the curriculum offer to meet the needs, abilities and career aspirations of the pupils. At post-16, the pupils have access to a good choice of subjects and progression pathways.
- The curriculum at key stage 4, however, is overly narrow; the school should increase the pace of the progress being made to establish a wider choice of pathways and subjects at this level. There is a need: for an inclusive and effective review, at all levels across the school community, of the curriculum provision; and to consider how the curriculum meets most effectively the needs of all of the pupils across the ability range.

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 is comprehensive, informed to good effect by meaningful consultation and self-evaluation. It details a range of well-considered priorities for school improvement. The continuing professional development of staff is aligned well with the whole-school priorities for improvement. While the senior leaders have good performance and pastoral data available, this needs to be used better to inform more definitively the evaluations in the development plan and to measure more sharply the impact of the key actions to promote improvement.
- The small, strategic senior leadership team is pupil-centred and works cohesively to bring about school improvement in the areas they oversee. Their roles and responsibilities are well-defined and they have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas which need to be prioritised for ongoing improvement. Going forward, the school should give consideration to broadening the team in order to enhance the range of expertise available and provide capacity-building leadership opportunities at this level.
- The use of data to underpin the self-evaluation and accountability processes continues to be a high priority for the school. As a result, the school has worked effectively to develop robust systems to collate, analyse and use consistently performance data to set targets, track and monitor the progress of individual pupils and inform interventions to support them; there is evidence of the underperformance of individual pupils being identified and addressed. The process would now benefit from work to streamline the available data to ensure more efficient use by the key staff in the school.
- The priorities and actions to bring about high quality learning and teaching are informed by consultation with pupils and teachers. The school is establishing well a culture that facilitates the identification and sharing of good practice with a view to enhancing, and providing greater consistency in, the pupils' learning experiences. In order to further advance this work, the school needs to: expand the monitoring, evaluating and quality assurance of the learning and teaching across the school; include a wider representation from subject areas, particularly in the learning and teaching working group; and to increase the pace of the actions to bring about improvement.

- 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 have a good blend of complementary skills and carry out their roles conscientiously. They are committed and value strongly the inclusive and pupil-centred ethos. The governors are well-informed about the life and the work of the school and aware of the areas in which improvement is necessary; they understand well the challenges and opportunities facing the school. The governors are supportive of the senior leaders and staff and carry out their challenge function with sensitivity. In order to develop further their knowledge of the curriculum, and support more the ongoing improvement work, the governors need to increase communication and engagement with the key post holders in the school.
- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding reflect broadly 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 SIMS² and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Mount Lourdes Grammar School achieving seven 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 band³.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	100	100	97.93
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	97.89	97.98	97.94
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	93.1	94.1	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	97.89	95.96	95.88
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	92.2	91.0	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	100	98.99	100
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)	100	100	100

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 Mount Lourdes Grammar School achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A* to C.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	98.44	96.33	99.10
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	71.32	66.97	72.95
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	74.30	75.80	N/A

² SIMS: School Information Management System

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

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

	2013	2014	2015
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	95	99	97

Subject	Number of Entries	School Three-year average at A* to B	Northern Ireland Three-year average at A* to B
Art & Design	64	89.06	85.6
Design and Technology	66	93.94	86.0
Drama	36	94.44	81.3
Economics	92	94.57	89.0
English Language	291	97.59	90.2
English Literature	60	95.00	89.6
French	124	79.03	75.4
Geography	84	86.90	86.0
German	34	76.47	76.4
History	173	82.66	82.8
Home Economics	116	100.00	90.2
ICT	95	97.89	90.9
Irish	45	100.00	83.2
Mathematics	291	83.89	78.8
Music	51	96.08	90.8
Religious Studies	291	93.81	88.4
Science Double Award	291	88.49	78.3
Spanish	101	91.09	81.9

* indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

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

Subject	Number of Entries	School Three-year average at A* to C	Northern Ireland Three – year average at A* to C
Art & Design	41	95.12	91.8
Biology	105	82.86	83.4
Business Studies (Applied)	55	98.18	85.4
Chemistry	51	72.55	86.3
Design and Technology	24	83.33	74.3
Economics	46	80.43	87.3
English Literature	49	89.80	83.9
Geography	49	89.80	87.9
Health & Social Care (Applied)	91	97.80	85.4
History	84	86.90	87.4
Home Economics	93	94.62	89.8
ICT	37	72.97	83.5
Mathematics	42	78.57	89.8
Politics	35	91.43	90.0
Religious Studies	100	91.00	89.8
Sociology	60	78.33	77.4
Spanish	24	95.83	93.4
Physical Education	28	78.47	75.9
French*	17	82.35	90.0
Irish*	11	100	95.1
Moving Image Arts*	6	66.67	90.1
Music*	7	71.43	85.2
Physics*	19	84.21	83.7
Science (Applied)*	**	100	69.8

* indicates fewer than 20 entries over 3 years

** indicates fewer than 5 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	
Performing Arts	100	100	100	12
Engineering	100	-	100	*

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 Mount Lourdes Grammar School, from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average for 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	88.5	94.8
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	91.3	95.2

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 Mount Lourdes Grammar School 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	120	9204			
Employment	2.5%	4.8%			
Further Education	15.0%	21.5%		9	18
Higher Education	81.7%	69.5%			98
Work-based Learning (Training)	0.8%	1.8%			
Unemployed	0.0%	1.1%			
Unknown	0.0%	1.3%			

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication 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), some 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 management⁴:

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 learners. It requires external support to do so. 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.

⁴ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit.

Accommodation/health and safety

During inclement weather conditions, the roof in the sports hall leaks presenting significant risk to the health and safety of the pupils. The roof needs to be repaired as a matter of urgency.

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