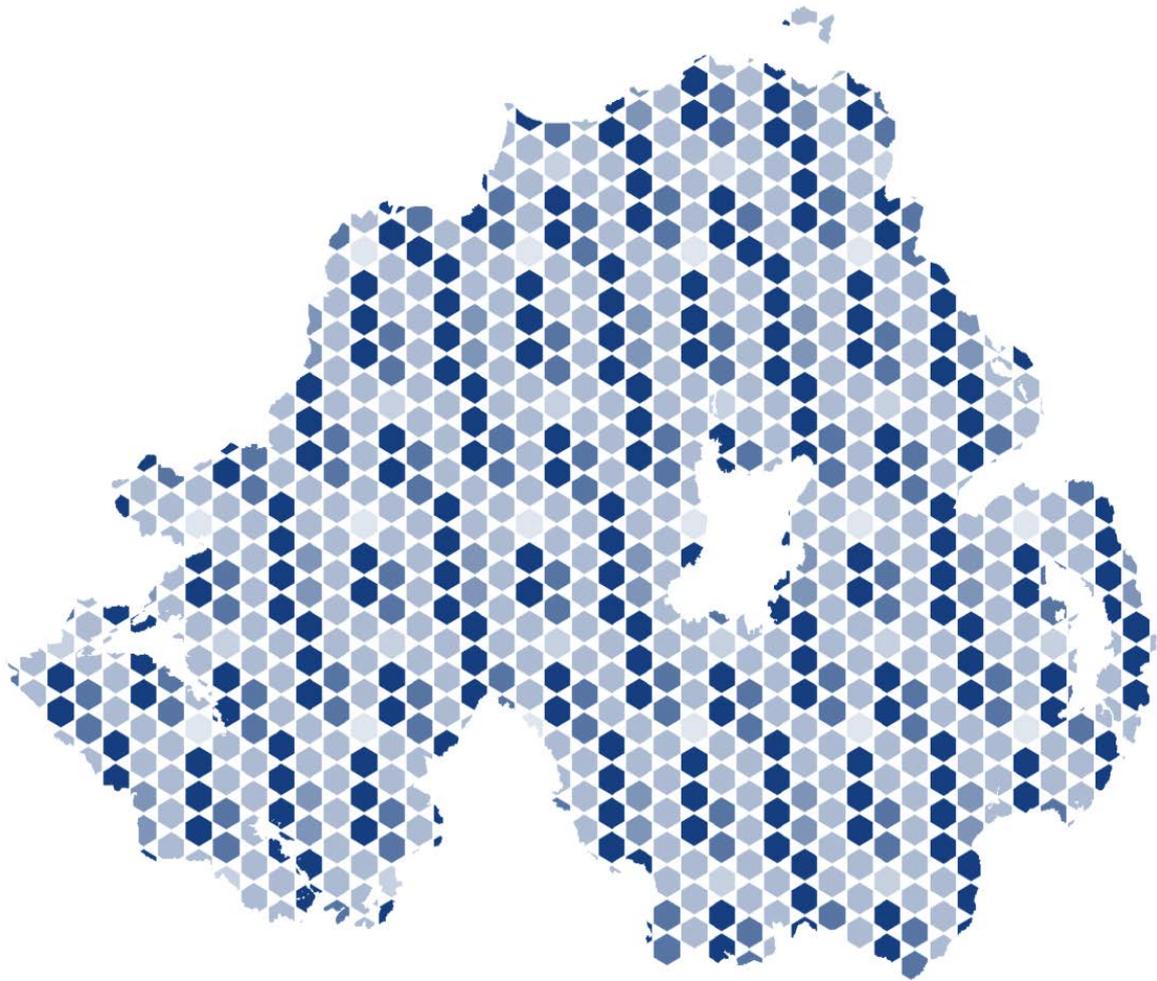


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Newtownhamilton High School,  
Newry, County Down

Controlled, non-selective, 11-16 school

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



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

The pupils attending Newtownhamilton High School come from the village and the surrounding rural catchment area. The school is in a well-established and successful shared education partnership with three other schools and, as an active member of the Newry and Mourne Area Learning Community (ALC), the school collaborates with a number of other post-primary schools and the local college of further education (FE), to widen its provision at Key Stage (KS) 4.

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 the senior leadership team would be co-operating with the inspection. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

Newtownhamilton High School	2015-16	2016 -17	2017-18	2018-19
Year 8 Intake	40	39	39	42
Enrolment	177	191	187	188
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.7 (92)	94.4 (91.8)	94.7 (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	24.9	25.7	22.4	26.6
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	18.6 (33)	23.6 (45)	21.9 (41)	21.8 (41)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	12	14	14	16
No. of newcomers	6	11	11	9

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

## 2. Pupils', parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Ninety-three percent (174) of the pupils completed the online questionnaire; their responses were extremely positive. The pupils' responses reflected their appreciation of: the inclusive and welcoming environment within the school; the support provided by the staff for their learning and development; and, when needed, the access to help in relation to well-being and pastoral matters. Almost one-half of the pupils provided additional written comments; they reported that they are very happy in school and have a strong sense of community identity. In addition, they appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities and shared education opportunities available to them. A very small number of individual issues were raised; these were discussed with the principal and representatives of the governors.

Twelve percent of the parents (16) and most of the non-teaching staff (14) responded to the online questionnaires. The responses were very positive and the written comments were very supportive of the work of the school. The parents highlighted, in particular, their children's enjoyment of school within a caring and supportive learning environment; they commented positively on the quality of teaching, the consistently high outcomes and the approachable senior leadership team. The non-teaching staff emphasised the teamwork and the support and guidance provided for both pupils and staff. The very few individual issues raised 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.

As a result of the action short of strike, the online questionnaire information was not completed by teaching staff. Therefore it is not possible to report on their views.

### 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.

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, and mathematics and numeracy; 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 are courteous and welcoming to visitors. They have a strong sense of identity with, and pride in, their school and local community, whilst recognising the importance and advantages of learning and sharing with others, including the work within the shared education partnership. Across the year groups, the pupils take on leadership roles and responsibilities which develop well their personal, social and employability skills.

- The outcomes for pupils in public examinations are a significant strength. Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is consistently above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools<sup>2</sup>. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals achieving at this level is also above the corresponding average.
- Attainment by the pupils in most of the individual subjects at GCSE grades A\* to C is in line with, or above, the corresponding three-year averages. It is notable that attainment in a majority of the individual subjects is more than ten percentage points above the corresponding NI average, with English and mathematics being significantly above.
- In recent years, four pupils have been awarded 'Student of the Year' for their success in the School Partnership Programme, which is delivered in collaboration with the local FE provider and other ALC schools.
- In 2017, the pupils in year 12 progressed to employment and a range of post-16 provision including transferring to year 13 in another post-primary school, FE and training.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

## **6. Quality of Provision**

- The curriculum is broad and balanced across the key stages. It provides an appropriate range of general and applied subjects which are matched well to the pupils' interests, abilities and career aspirations. At KS 4, the school collaborates effectively through the ALC and the shared education partnership, to broaden the range of courses offered to the pupils.
- The taught programme of employability at KS 3 is enhanced appropriately by a careers programme at KS 4, which is complemented by workshops, external visitors, work experience and collaboration across the ALC.
- In discussion with the inspectors, the pupils talked enthusiastically about their learning. They reported that they enjoy practical, investigative activities across the curriculum, paired and group work and appreciate the support and feedback from their teachers. The pupils articulated maturely the benefits of the extensive range of shared learning experiences for them and the wider community.

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<sup>2</sup> In the same free school meal (FSM) band

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 ;
- 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 senior leadership team (SLT) has a clear strategic vision for the school and the community it serves. The needs, interests and aspirations of the pupils and a commitment to developing the pupils to their full potential are at the centre of all decisions on planning, curriculum and resources. Despite the significant challenges facing a small school, the leadership, staff and governors have worked creatively to offer pupils a range of learning experiences which secure high outcomes and progression.
- The school development plan (SDP) outlines a number of appropriate priorities which focus on improving further the learning experiences provided for, and the outcomes achieved by, the pupils. A key priority is the further development of shared education, which is valued highly by the school community.
- The governors are proud of the pupils and staff, the school's very good reputation and the support it receives from the local community. They understand well their role in the school development planning process and support and challenge, as appropriate, the SLT and the staff in taking forward the priorities for 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.
- It remains important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

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. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

## **CONCLUSION**

## **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.

## APPENDIX A

### Health and safety/accommodation

- The employing authority, governors and principal need to carry out a risk assessment in relation to access to the site.
- Not all classrooms doors have viewing panels.

## Examination performance and other statistical data

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

Based on data held by the school in SIMS<sup>3</sup> and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Newtownhamilton High School achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent at grades A\* to C and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band<sup>4</sup>.

The table also includes the percentage of year 12 pupils in Newtownhamilton High School achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent, including English and mathematics at grades A\* to E. In this instance, there is no NI average available.

<b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	92.9	80.6	82.1
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category <sup>5</sup>	75.8	81.8	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	78.6	72.2	69.2
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	56.6	61.4	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	96.4	100	92.3
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	80	40	66.7

<sup>3</sup> SIMS: School Information Management System

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

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

## Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level or equivalent

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

### Grades A\* - C

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	28	36	39

GCSE Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries	School A* to C %	NI A* to C %
Art & Design	25	92	75.8
BTEC Childcare Skills (Double Award)	**	100	N/A
BTEC Sport/PE Studies (Double Award)	**	100	N/A
Business and Services (Occupational Studies)	*	100	N/A
Business Studies	22	81.8	60.7
Construction Studies (Occupational Studies)	28	94	N/A
Design and Creativity (Occupational Studies)	**	100	N/A
Design and Technology	25	96	65.9
Engineering (Occupational Studies)	25	100	N/A
English Language	94	90.4	67.5
English Literature	12	100	84.5
Farm Studies	*	100	N/A
French	52	59.6	74.9
Geography	44	38.6	64.8
History	21	90.5	65
Home Economics	31	61.3	67.7
Information Technology	42	73.8	71.5
Learning for Life and Work	101	71.3	74.1
Mathematics	94	88.3	52.7
Mathematics Further	18	94.4	84.8
Motor Vehicle Studies	26	84.6	52.3
Music	**	85.7	81.3
Preparation for Work (Occupational Studies)	*	100	N/A
Religious Studies	40	92.5	65
Sport/PE studies	33	57.6	70.1
Science Double Award	52	96.2	83.4
Science Single Award	51	84.3	70

\* indicates fewer than 5 entries over 3 years

\*\* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

## STAYING ON RATE<sup>6</sup> 2017/18

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

	NI Average	School <sup>7</sup>
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	49.5	10.5

## Leavers' Destinations<sup>8</sup> 2016/17

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

	NI No. (%)	School No. (%)	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	12256	34		
Employment	1497 (12.2)	* (6.7)		
Institute of Further Education	5512 (45)	20 (58.8)	2	18
Training <sup>9</sup>	1924 (15.7)	13 (39.4)		
Unemployment	448 (3.7)	0		
Others	223 (1.8)	0		

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2016/17 - NON-GRAMMAR SCHOOLS<sup>10</sup>  
\*fewer than 5

<sup>6</sup> The percentage of pupils who stay on at school compared with the Northern Ireland average for all schools, this rate is calculated in terms of pupils who progress their level of study, whether at their original or a new school. Pupils that move schools between years are counted as 'staying on' at their original school as they are progressing their study within the school system.

<sup>7</sup> Percentage transferring to year 13 in another post-primary school.

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

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> Excludes special and independent schools.

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

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

The arrangements for this inspection included: meetings with the principal, meetings with some staff with specific responsibilities, support staff; representatives of the parent teacher association, representatives from the governors and groups of pupils; review of documentation and data; and the opportunity for all pupils, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

## Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)

### 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>11</sup>:

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

<sup>11</sup> And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

## Overall effectiveness

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

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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