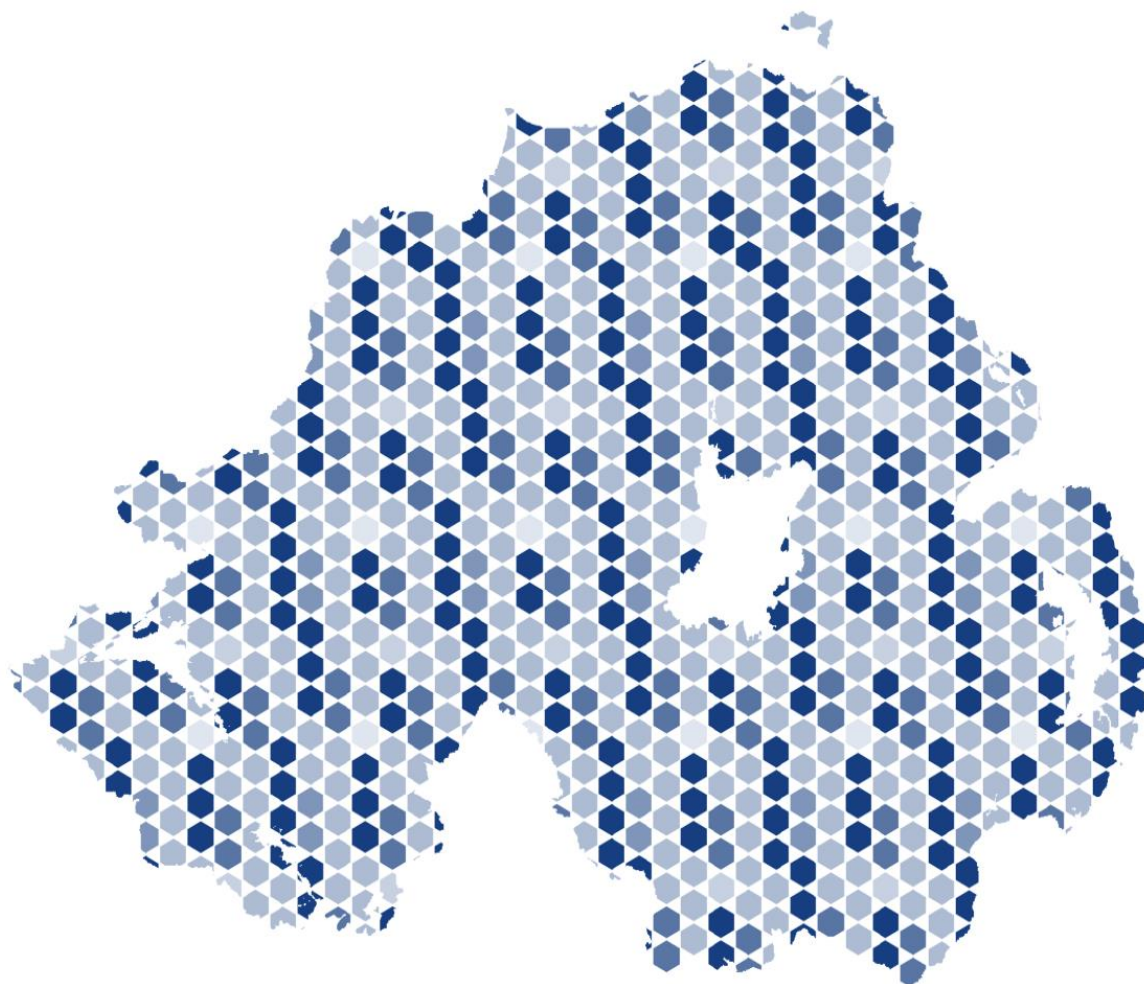


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Benedict's College,  
Randalstown, County Antrim

Maintained, non-selective, 11-16 school, DE Ref 323-0308

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

### 1. Context

The pupils attending St Benedict's College come from the towns of Randalstown and Antrim. Just under two-fifths of the pupils receive free school meals, just over ten percent are newcomer pupils and over one-half require additional help with their learning. While enrolment has been steady over the last four years, the school operates at three-quarters of its capacity. There was an acting- principal in post in 2017-18 and a principal has taken up position permanently in September 2018. The school participates in a well-established shared education partnership with two other local schools and is active in two local area learning communities in relation to staff development and transitions. The school has been the recipient of a range of externally accredited awards.

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 principal, senior leaders and the safeguarding 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.

St Benedict's College	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Year 8 Intake	67	80	71	79
Enrolment	370	378	380	380
% Attendance (NI Average)	90.5% (92.0%)	90.6% (91.8%)	89.2% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	35.1%	40.7%	37.9%	38.7%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	23.8% ( 88 )	32.0% (121)	36.8% (140)	52.1% (198)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	26	23	26	20
No. of newcomers	37	40	53	45

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

N/A not available

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

Five percent (20) of the pupils completed the online questionnaire. Overall, the responses were positive about their experience in the school, with the pupils appreciating, for example, the support and guidance that they receive with their work, health and well-being and preparation for future careers. Just over one-third of the pupils responding provided written comments, sharing their views of school life and their learning experiences.

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

Nine percent of parents (27) and a significant minority of staff (18) responded to the online questionnaires. The responses from most of the parents and the staff were positive and indicated good levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents highlighted, in particular, the commitment of staff to raising the self-esteem and confidence of the pupils, enabling them to make good progress and preparing them well for the next stage of their learning. The responses from the staff were positive, highlighting the inclusive, welcoming and caring ethos of the school and the supportive learning environment provided for the pupils.

Issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and governors.

### 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, mathematics and numeracy;
- 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
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	No performance level available
<b>Quality of Provision</b>	No performance level available
<b>Leadership and management</b>	No performance level available

## KEY FINDINGS

### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils who met with inspectors were articulate and confident. They are very proud of their school and spoke with enthusiasm about their learning. The pupils value the opportunities to participate in a range of sporting, eco, and cultural activities. The senior pupils take on leadership roles and responsibilities which develop their personal, social and employability skills; many of them benefit from opportunities to mentor and support the younger pupils.
- In two of 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, is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools<sup>2</sup>.
- The outcomes attained by the pupils in a majority of the subjects at GCSE grades A\* to C are in line with, or above, the corresponding three-year averages. The school is aware of the variability in the standards achieved at grades A\* to C in the vocational subjects and, as a result, has adjusted the curriculum offer at Key Stage (KS) 4.
- In two out of the past three years, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is broadly in line with or above the NI average for similar schools.
- While its data shows that the newcomer pupils are making good progress in their language skills and understanding, the school needs to monitor more effectively the individual standards and progress for all pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning.
- Three-fifths of the pupils who leave at the end of year 12 go to further education which is above the corresponding NI average, while, one-third transfer to year 13 in another school.
- The school needs to apply more accurately the ineligibility criteria as set out by the Department of Education (DE) in its Summary of Annual Examinations Results process; greater rigour in the administrative aspects of this withdrawal process is necessary, to ensure that all documentation is comprehensive and retained.

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.

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

## **6. Quality of Provision**

- At KS 3, the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. At KS 4, the school has made good progress in recent years in reviewing the curriculum choice to include a range of courses to meet more appropriately the needs and abilities of individual pupils. While there is flexibility within KS 4 to allow improved access across the pathways, the school needs to monitor the suitability of some of the qualifications for individual pupils and to avoid duplication in the offer.
- The pupils who met with inspectors spoke very positively about the enrichment activities from which they benefit; the additional learning experiences which develop their skills and interests; and about their shared education programme engagement in a student council and choir with pupils from two other local schools.
- The school identifies appropriately pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning based on a range of academic baseline assessment data. There is a range of interventions and support provided, but the school now needs to measure the effectiveness of these interventions and develop a whole-school approach to supporting pupils with special education needs.
- In discussions with inspectors, the pupils spoke positively about the academic and pastoral support they receive. They are highly appreciative of the work of the teachers to help them achieve their targets. The pupils in KS 4 spoke appreciatively about the opportunities they have for work experience across a range of careers.

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 and mathematics and numeracy across the school; and,
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- Following an extensive consultation process, appropriate priorities have been identified for school improvement, notably in standards, learning and teaching, curriculum provision, and leadership and management. Staff professional development is afforded a high priority and is becoming more closely aligned to the key priorities identified.

- The school development planning process is being revised appropriately to ensure that it is underpinned by: a rigorous process of self-evaluation; the more effective use of assessment data in order to improve further the pupils' learning and the standards they attain; and action planning which starts from a clear baseline and sets out measurable targets which will enable leadership at all levels to monitor the impact of the improvement work.
- The school previously had pupils being educated outside the school in an unregulated setting during 2016/2017 and 2017/2018; this practice ceased from June 2018 in light of the DE/Education Authority (EA) guidance in relation to the specific setting which the pupils had attended. However, there are implications for the associated exam entry policy and the financial management of these arrangements during this period.
- The governors are highly supportive of the school and are well informed of the strengths and areas for further development. They have a wide skill set and work pro-actively in the areas of finance, staffing and the shared education programme. The governors are developing well their capacity to provide appropriate challenge. In order to develop further this role and to promote greater accountability, the governors need to be presented with a wider range of first-hand evidence. 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 DE. Currently the school is reviewing and updating its pastoral policies in line with current DE guidance, some due to be ratified and others in the process of being more thoroughly reviewed through consultation processes. 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.

**Health and safety/accommodation**

1. There are a number of points of unsecure access within the school estate, in particular:
  - to the school site;
  - to the main school building;
  - to the outlying buildings; and
  - between the outlying buildings and the main school building.
2. A number of CCTV cameras are not functioning.
3. There are no vision panels on the Library and First Aid room doors.
4. There are broken slats on the ramp access to mobile classrooms.



## 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 St Benedict's College 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 St Benedict's College 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>
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE &amp; Equivalents in at least 5 subjects</i>	100	100	100
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects</i>	72.3	55.7	69.2
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category<sup>5</sup></i>	72.3	68.5	N/A
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	49.2	42.9	46.2
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	43.5	44.3	N/A
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects</i>	89.2	78.6	94.2
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)	40	37.5	52.6

<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	65	70	52

GCSE Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries over three years	School A* to C %	NI A* to C %
Art & Design	27	100	75.8
BTEC Performing Arts	41	80.4%	N/A
BTEC Computer Architecture / Systems	65	79.8	N/A
BTEC Hospitality	27	70.4	N/A
Business Studies (Occupational Studies)	22	65.6	N/A
Construction	19	89.5	N/A
Construction Studies	14	50.0	N/A
Design and Technology	25	32.0	70.5
Design & Technology (Occupational Studies)	13	43.8	N/A
English Language	164	80.9	67.5
English Literature	37	92.2	84.5
Food Science/Technology	10	30.0	N/A
French	12	50.0	74.9
Geography	24	58.3	64.8
History	21	75.0	65.0
Home Economics: Child Development	19	54.2	70.0
Information Technology	47	55.3	71.5
Irish	22	95.5	95.5
Learning for Life and work (LLW)	15	40.0	74.1
Mathematics	161	62.4	52.7
Media Studies	59	74.6	65.4
Preparation for Adult Life (Occupational Studies)	11	100	N/A
Preparation For Work (Occupational Studies)	28	14.3	N/A
Religious Studies	136	72.6	65.1
Science Double Award	48	93.2	83.4
Science Single Award	138	78.8	70.0
Sport/PE Studies	38	72.7	70.1
Construction Studies (Occupational Studies)	*	100	N/A
Design & technology – Graphic Products (Occupational Studies)	*	33.3	N/A
Engineering (Occupational Studies)	*	42.9	N/A
Horse Care (NQF)	*	100	N/A
Media Studies Double Award	*	100	N/A
Personal and Social Education	*	100	N/A

\* 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
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	49.2	32.9
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	74.2	N/A

## Leavers' Destinations<sup>7</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.(%)	NI Yr12 (%)	School Yr12 (%)	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	12256	47		47		
Employment	1497 (12.2%)	4 (8.5%)	6.7%	4 (8.5%)		
Institute of Further Education	5512 (45.0%)	32 (68.1%)	60.9%	32 (68.1%)	3	29
Training <sup>8</sup>	1924 (15.7%)	8 (17.0%)	28.0%	8 (17.0%)		
Unemployment	448 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2.7%	0 (0.0%)		
Others	223 (1.8%)	3 (6.4%)	#	3 (6.4%)		

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2016/17 - NON-GRAMMAR SCHOOLS<sup>9</sup>

- fewer than 5 cases
- # figures suppressed

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

<sup>8</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>9</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 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>10</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>10</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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