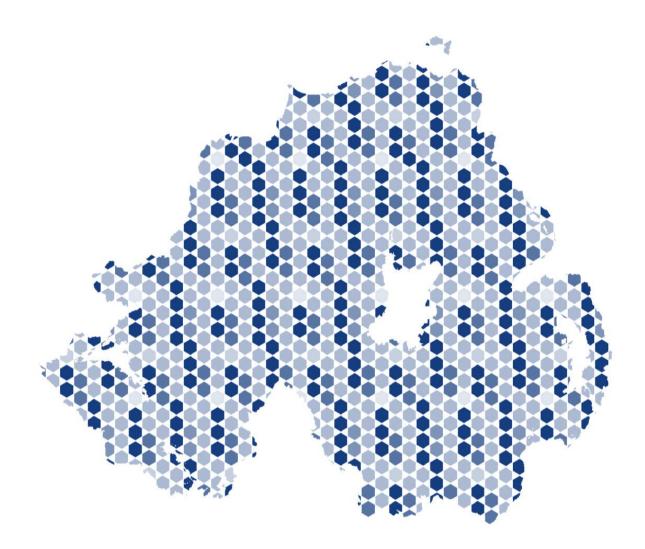
POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training Inspectorate

St Mary's College, Derry

Maintained all-girls', non-selective, 11-18 school

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



Providing inspection services for:

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

St Mary's College is an all-girls' all-ability school. It was opened in 1959 by the Sisters of Mercy in Creggan, Derry. In 2010, after celebrating a golden anniversary, St Mary's College moved to a new campus at Northland Road. Just over one-half of the pupils receive free school meals and over one-quarter require additional help with their learning. Despite a decline in the school-age population transferring to post-primary in the Derry City area in recent years, St Mary's College has consistently been oversubscribed at entry to year 8. Over the last four years, the school has reviewed its organisational structure. In addition, there has been significant change in both senior and middle leadership. The school participates in a well-established Shared Education partnership with two other local schools. As an active member of the Foyle Area Learning Community, the school engages with a number of other post-primary schools and the local college for further education, to widen its provision at post-16.

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-cooperation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that some of the staff 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 Mary's College	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Year 8 Intake	132	133	135	132
Enrolment	880	865	866	864
% Attendance (NI Average)	90.3%% (92.0%)	91.8%% (92.0%)	91.7% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage ¹	57.7%	61.1%	57.1%	54.3%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	27.5% (242)	27.4% (237)	27.3% (236)	28.0% (242)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	40	47	46	48
No. of newcomers	12	15	17	14

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

2. Views of parents, staff and pupils

Eight percent of parents (63) and just over one-quarter of staff (24) responded to the online questionnaires. The responses from almost all of the parents and most of the staff indicated high 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 and the school's good reputation within the community. The responses to the staff questionnaires were very positive, highlighting the caring and supportive learning environment provided for the pupils.

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

Forty-eight percent (419) of the pupils across the key stages also completed an online questionnaire; almost all identify their school as being welcoming and inclusive. Overall, most of the responses were highly positive about their experience of the school, with the pupils recognising how the school: teaches them to be safe online; helps them to understand and respect everyone; lets them know how to improve their work; and, when needed, get the help they require. Almost one-third of pupils provided written comments; they expressed their appreciation of all staff and the extra-curricular activities.

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; 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	

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils who met with inspectors were articulate and confident, reflecting the school's emphasis on the strength of the pupil voice. Across the year groups, they spoke positively about their opportunities to take on leadership roles and achieve success in local, national and international competitions.
- Overall the pupils, including those entitled to free school meals, attain very highly at GCSE or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics; this is a significant strength. It is notable that almost all of the pupils attained five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C in 2016 and 2017. The outcomes of the pupils in most of the subjects at GCSE grades A* to C are in line with, or above, the corresponding three-year averages. The outcomes for pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning have improved over the last three years and they achieve well at GCSE.
- The pupils attain well at GCE A level or equivalent. Improving attainment at this level has been a key priority for school improvement over the last three years. Significantly, over two-thirds of pupils attained three A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C in 2017.
- The school has established a robust tracking system and is able to follow the progression of every pupil from transition through the respective key stages. The school's retention from year 12 to year 13 is significantly above the NI average; the proportion of pupils staying on from year 13 to year 14 is also above this average. Most of the year 14 pupils progress to a wide variety of level 4 courses in further and higher education.

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

- There is an ongoing focus on curricular provision at key stage (KS) 3. At KS 4 and post-16, the curriculum is underpinned by flexibility and is designed to engage, inspire, challenge and stretch all of the pupils. There is a consistently strong uptake of science, technology, engineering and mathematics related subjects at both KS 4 and post-16. Enrichment opportunities across the key stages are a key strength of the curricular and extra-curricular provision.
- At KS3 there is a taught programme of employability. Pupils at KS 4 and post-16 benefit from the discrete careers provision which enables them to identify appropriate pathways for progression. The school prioritises a whole-school, cross-curricular approach to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) which is complemented by an extensive programme of events and experiences throughout the year. Work experience placement opportunities are available to all year 13 pupils and, appropriately, for pupils following particular courses across years 12, 13 and 14.

- A wide range of intervention and support is provided for pupils at risk of not achieving their potential, based on a detailed knowledge of the pupils' individual needs and abilities. Additionally, the school has developed a bespoke programme of study designed to prepare a target group of pupils for the next steps in education and life.
- In discussions with inspectors, the pupils expressed their pride in their school and sense of belonging to the St Mary's family. They appreciate the whole staff's commitment to providing pastoral and academic support; the mutual respect and the strength of the relationships at all levels.

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 successful learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the CEIAG provision;
- 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

- The senior leadership team provide highly effective leadership. They
 communicate clearly a strategic vision for and shared commitment to the holistic
 development of every pupil. They work well together to monitor, evaluate and
 review all aspects of the provision, and have fostered a collegial ethos where all
 members of the school community are enabled to contribute to the school
 improvement work.
- The school development planning process is informed by well-conceived, extensive consultation with pupils, parents, staff and governors. Central to the school development plan (SDP) are the seven promises to pupils which reflect the school's pupil-centred ethos and the key priorities for improvement. The staff development programme is closely aligned with these priorities. Continuing professional development opportunities are focused on building capacity and expertise for all staff. The legacy of the school's previous engagement in a range of initiatives, including Promoting Improvement in English and Mathematics, has supported self-evaluation across the school. The senior leaders have identified appropriately the need to refine the SDP and use more effectively the wide range of quantitative and qualitative information gathered from ongoing review to inform the evaluations. The quality of action planning is variable. The action plans will benefit from having more robust baseline statements and more specific, measurable targets.

• The governors are knowledgeable about the standards attained by the pupils; they play a key role in the school development planning process, providing support and challenge as appropriate. Their expertise is harnessed effectively to help link the provision for learning with the needs of the economy. 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. Appropriately, the school continues to review and update its pastoral policies. 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

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2014-15 to 2016-17

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 St Mary's College achieving five or more GCSEs (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	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
*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	78.8	94.8	95.2
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category ⁴	72.9	72.2	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	58.5	64.3	58.7
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	32.9	38.1	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	91.8	98.3	99.0
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)	53.1	55.2	52.3

GCE A level and equivalent examination results at grades A^* to C from 2014-15 to 2016-17

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 St Mary's College achieving three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C, compared with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2014- 15	2015-16	2016-17
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	87.7	90.8	99.0
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	48.1	46.0	70.6
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category ⁵	33.3	41.0	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'.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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)

	2015	2016	2017
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	123	115	104

Grades	A* -	С
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GCSE Subject	Number of	School	NI
	Entries	A* to C	A* to C
		%	%
Art & Design	64	100	82
Business Studies Vocational ⁶	35	94.3	76
Business Studies ⁶	31	100	70
Design & Technology	64	79.7	80
English Language	332	73.2	75
English Literature	118	87.3	89
French	23	87	80
Geography ⁷	44	90.9	71
Health & Social Care	100	90	68
History	60	80	70
Home Economics: Child Development	104	66.3	69
Information Technology (DA_2650)	34	100	N/A
Information Technology (DA_0010) ⁷	50	98	90
Irish	21	95.2	97
Mathematics	333	72.4	51
Music	42	92.9	83
Preparation for Work (LLW)	134	89.6	83
Religious Studies	77	85.7	73
Science (Additional)	164	70.7	78
Science (Core)	210	84.8	49
Spanish ⁷	31	87.1	85
Sport / PE Studies	32	62.5	74
Drama ⁶	*	100	80
Statistics	*	37.5	73

* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

 ⁶ In 1 out of the last 3 years
 ⁷ In 2 out of the last 3 years

OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS (EQUIVALENTS): KEY STAGE 4

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total entry	School
Level 2	% A*- C	% A*- C	% A*- C	over 3 years	A*-C %
ASDAN Key Skills: Improving own learning (Learning Skills)	100	100	100	92	100
ASDAN Key Skills: Problem Solving	100	100	100	92	100
ASDAN Key Skills: Working with others	100	100	100	93	100
BTEC Applied Sciences	N/A	N/A	95.3	43	95.3
BTEC Applied Sciences (NQF)	63.3	N/A	N/A	49	63.3
BTEC First Award in Health & Social Care	N/A	94.7	100	30	96.7
BTEC Health Studies (NQF) Level 2	76.5	N/A	N/A	34	76.5
BTEC ICT First Award in ICT	N/A	100	100	17	100
BTEC ICT (NQF) Level 2	93.3	N/A	N/A	30	93.3
BTEC Science (General/Combined)	N/A	70	65.3	79	67.1
Occupational Studies: Beauty Services	100	100	N/A	6	100
Occupational Studies: Business Studies	N/A	N/A	85.7	7	85.7
Occupational Studies: D&T Graphic Products	N/A	8.6	13.2	126	11.1
Occupational Studies: Preparation for Adult Life (PAL) (Personal and Social Education)	92.7	100	83.3	49	91.8
Occupational Studies: Practical Craft	100	100	100	15	100
Princes Trust: Cert in Personal Development (Preparation for Work)	100	100	100	55	100
Self-Development (NQF)	N/A	100	100	87	100

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level or equivalent

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

Grades A* - C

	2015	2016	2017
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	81	87	85

A Level Subject or equivalent	Number of	School	NI
	Entries	A* to C	A* to C
		%	%
Art & Design	20	95	93
BTEC Applied Sciences	20	100	N/A
BTEC Business and Finance	12	91.7	N/A
BTEC Computer Use	20	100	N/A
BTEC Health Studies	24	83.3	N/A
Business Studies (Vocational)	19	100	83.9
Business Studies	30	93.3	90.9
Computer Use (NQF)	16	100	N/A
Design and Technology	24	83.3	92.9
Engineering	31	77.4	N/A
English Literature	19	47.4	84.9
Geography	22	63.6	90.4
Health & Social Care	86	89.5	85.8
Health Studies (NQF)	15	80	N/A
History	37	70.3	88.6
Information Technology	23	100	85.5
Information Technology (Voc)	36	97.2	87.7
IT/Art	23	87	93.1
Music	16	12.5	84.4
Politics	15	46.7	89.3
Religious Studies	21	66.7	89.7
Applied Sciences (NQF)	*	100	N/A
Biology	*	28.6	83.9
BTEC Business Studies	*	50	N/A
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Hospitality	*	85.7	N/A
BTEC Childcare Skills	*	85.7	N/A
BTEC Performing Arts (Single Award)	*	100	N/A
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE)	*	83.3	N/A
Chemistry	*	0	85.7
Drama	*	0	89.5
French	*	100	87.8
Journalism	*	57.1	N/A
Irish	*	100	95.2
Mathematics	*	50	91.2
Media: Communication & production	*	100	N/A
Persian	*	100	N/A
Polish	*	100	N/A
Spanish	*	100	92.8

* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

STAYING ON RATE⁸ 2016/17

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	48.4	73.8
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	75.2	82.3

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 St Mary's College 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	157	12996			
Employment	7 (4.5%)	1511 (11.6%)			
Further Education	85 (54.1%)	5745 (44.2%)	19	36	30
Higher Education	46 (29.3%)	3051 (23.5%)			46
Work-based Learning (Training)	7 (4.5%)	1976 (15.2%)			
Unemployed	3 (1.9%)	467 (3.6%)			
Unknown	9 (5.7%)	246 (1.9%)			

⁸ The 'Staying On Rate' is taken to mean the pupils who stay on at the school from year 12 to year 13 or transfer from year 12 to year 13 in another school; and, then from year 13 to year 14.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

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

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; and the opportunity for all pupils, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire. In addition, the inspection team reviewed documentation provided by the school and pupil performance data.

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

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 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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