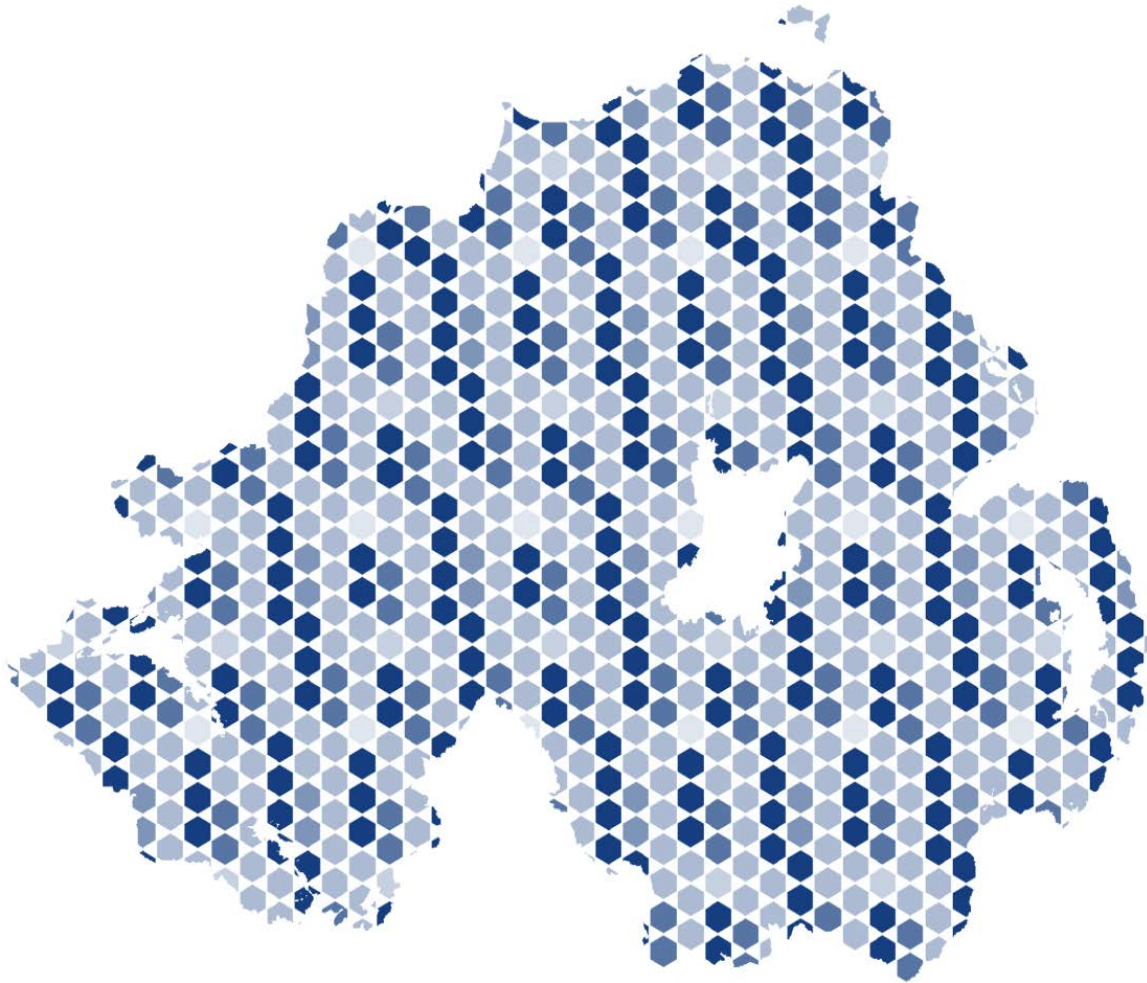


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Patrick's College, Ballymena,  
County Antrim

Maintained, co-educational, non-selective 11-19 school

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
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CUSTOMER  
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EXCELLENCE



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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

St. Patrick's College is situated in the town of Ballymena and draws its pupils from the town and its environs. Over the past three years, whilst the entry to Year 8 has increased, the school is currently undersubscribed. During the same period, whilst there has been a reduction in the percentage of pupils requiring additional help with aspects of their learning, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of newcomer pupils attending the school. A new principal was appointed to the school in September 2017 after a two-year period of transitional leadership arrangements.

The school is a member of the Ballymena Learning Together Area Learning Community and participates in a transition programme with neighbouring primary schools and a shared education programme with a local controlled post-primary school.

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 only the senior leaders 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. Patrick's College	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Year 8 Intake	66	66	78	76
Enrolment	532	522	506	511
% Attendance (NI Average)	91.5% (92.0%)	91.1% (93.5%)	90.6% (N/A)	(N/A) (N/A)
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	38.5%	38.9%	41.7%	40.5%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	28.6% (152)	28.2% (147)	24.3% (123)	22.7% (116)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	22	23	19	17
No. of newcomers	114	145	194	209

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

N/A not available

### 2. Views of parents and staff

A very small number of parents (6) and one-sixth of the staff (10) responded to the online questionnaire. Almost all of the responses indicated satisfaction with the work and life of the school. The very few issues highlighted in the written comments were communicated to the principal and representatives of the governors.

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

### 3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest 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.

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy there was a supplementary focus on modern languages in this inspection.

Owing to the action short of strike, 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, mathematics and modern languages;
- the quality and impact of planning, teaching and learning on promoting successful learning; 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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	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 are friendly and welcoming to their school. As they progress through the year groups they develop leadership and inter-personal skills through, for example, mentoring roles, charitable fundraising, opportunities for participation in extra-curricular programmes and membership of the school council.
- The school has identified appropriately the overall attainment of pupils at GCSE as an area for improvement.

- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C has fluctuated and the three-year average remains well below the respective Northern Ireland (NI) average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band.
- During the same period, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has also fluctuated and the three-year average remains below the respective NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals category. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining at this level is well below that of their peers.
- The outcomes attained by the pupils in one-half of the individual subjects at GCSE grades A\* to C are below the NI average. Over the past three years, in the small number of subjects available, there has been an increase year on year in the proportion of pupils attaining three or more GCEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, and the outcomes at this level are in line with the corresponding NI average. However, the attainment of girls at this level in the same period is a cause for concern.
- A majority of the pupils stay on from year 12 to year 13, but an unduly high proportion of pupils do not progress from year 13 to year 14. A curriculum review is under way to address this issue.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English, mathematics and modern languages;
- the progression made by the pupils in their learning; and,
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The school is reviewing the provision at key stage (KS) 3 to match the curriculum more closely to the needs and aspirations of the pupils and, appropriately, to determine a more suitable number of languages to be studied by the pupils. The curriculum at KS 4 and post-16 has been reviewed and extended through the introduction of a small number of new subjects in school and through collaboration within the area learning community. However, the range of subjects available at KS 4 and post-16 remains too narrow and inflexible. The limited range of qualifications available at post-16 is reflected in the low proportion of pupils staying on from year 13 to year 14 and in the overall outcomes attained. Consequently, it will be necessary to review the entry policy to post-16 study, track more closely the pupils' progression in subject areas and monitor the leavers' destinations in order to inform further curriculum planning, review and progression pathways.
- In discussions with inspectors, the pupils report that they value in particular the support and guidance they receive at transition to year 8, the positive relationships they have with their teachers and the assistance provided by the pupil mentors. While the years 11, 12 and 14 pupils benefit from work experience placements, some expressed a view that their knowledge of career pathways is limited.

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 and assessment in promoting successful learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision;
- the quality of provision in English, literacy, mathematics and numeracy and modern languages across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The newly formed senior leadership team works collegially and articulates a shared vision for school improvement, developing further the provision and raising attainment in public examinations. However, there is not a sufficiently clear delineation of roles and responsibilities across the wider senior leadership team.
- The school development plan identifies a number of appropriate priorities to support the improvement work of the school. The staff development programme is not sufficiently aligned to these priorities and should reflect in particular the need for further development of an inclusive ethos. There are processes in place for self-evaluation, but there is variation in the quality of action-planning, notably in the use of quantitative and qualitative data to set targets and measure progress made.
- The governors offer both support and challenge, as appropriate, particularly in making key appointments, both to progress the improvement work in provision and attainment and to support those pupils most at risk from disengaging with school. They are well-informed about the standards attained by the pupils in relation to NI benchmarks and have been proactive in addressing under-performance in key subject areas. In conjunction with the employing authority, the governors are planning for, and effecting, a further reduction in the school's financial deficit. 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 senior leadership;
- 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. 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 school needs to continue the process of updating key pastoral policies. 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**

1. There are some points of unsecured access to the school buildings and to the external classrooms which present a risk to the safety of staff and pupils.



## 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 SIMS<sup>2</sup> and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in St Patrick'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>3</sup>.

<b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	97.1	98.5	97.1
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	58.6	50.0	68.6
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category<sup>4</sup></i>	<i>68.0</i>	<i>72.3</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	34.3	27.3	45.7
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>42.1</i>	<i>43.5</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	91.4	83.3	81.4
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)	31.0	13.3	31.4

Source: Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks.

### 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 Patrick'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 and two or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A\* to E.

<b>GCE A Level or equivalent</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	70.2	71.2	69.4
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	50.9	54.2	55.6
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>46.4</i>	<i>46.7</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	87.7	88.1	86.1
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>97.7</i>	<i>97.7</i>	<i>N/A</i>

<sup>2</sup> SIMS: School Information Management System

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

<sup>4</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 (over the past three years)**

**Grades A\* to C**

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

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	70	66	70

GCSE Subject	Number of entries over three years	School A* to C%	NI A* to C%
Art & Design	77	87	76
Business Studies	27	53.3	62
Construction Studies	50	84	N/A
Engineering Materials	24	8.3	68
English Language	192	69.8	66
English Literature	29	100	85
French	11	100	77
Geography	13	38.5	64
History	44	59.1	63
Home Economics	25	52	70
Home Economics: Child Development	60	48.3	67
Hospitality and Catering	20	50	61
Information Technology	97	85.6	73
Mathematics	198	41.4	51
Mathematics (General)	10	70	N/A
Motor Vehicle Studies	32	34.4	53
Music	30	73.3	80
Performing Arts	50	48	61
Polish	37	97.3	N/A
Preparation For Work/PSE	22	63.6	74
Religious Studies	178	60.1	64
Science (Additional)	55	65.5	78
Science (Core)	56	66.1	43
Science (Single Award)	146	58.9	70
Sport/PE Studies	36	88.9	68
Arabic	*	100	N/A
Irish	*	100	95
Mathematics Further	*	100	86

\*Indicates fewer than 10 entries over three years

## OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS (EQUIVALENTS): KEY STAGE 4

Level 2	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total entry over 3 years	School A* - C %
	% A* - C	% A* - C	% A* - C		
Business Studies (OS)	100	100	66.7	13	84.6
Construction Studies (OS)	75	100	100	6	83.3
Engineering (OS)	66.7	100	66.7	11	81.8
Practical Craft (OS)	100	100	100	7	100
Preparation for Work (NQF)	100	100	N/A	12	100
Computer Use (NQF)	100	N/A	N/A	*	100
D&T Graphic Products (OS)	100	N/A	100	*	100
Preparation for Work (OS)	N/A	N/A	0	*	0

\* indicates fewer than 5 entries over 3 years

## GCE EXAMINATION RESULTS

### Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level or equivalent (over the past three years)

#### Grades A\* to C

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

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	56	56	35

GCE A Level Subject or equivalent	Number of entries over three years	School A* to C %	NI A* to C %
Art & Design (Voc Applied)	18	94.4	N/A
Art & Design (Voc Double Award)	12	100	N/A
Computer Use (NQF)	8	100	N/A
Construction (BTEC)	13	84.6	N/A
English Literature	6	66.7	84.9
Health & Social Care	22	36.4	84.8
Health & Social Care Double Award	30	40	81.4
History	8	25	85.4
Home Economics: Child Development (NQF)	7	71.4	N/A
Information Technology (Voc) (CAM/D13)	24	91.7	N/A
Information Technology (Voc) (CAM/ID3)	37	97.3	N/A
Performing Arts (Voc)	17	100	90.8
Polish	21	100	N/A
Sports Coaching (BTEC)	27	96.3	N/A
Biology	*	50	83.6
Business Studies	*	100	90.8
Childcare Skills (NQF)	*	100	N/A
Engineering (NQF)	*	100	N/A
Home Economics	*	100	92.5
Moving Image Art	*	100	92.3
Media Film and TV Studies	*	50	85.2

\* indicates fewer than 5 entries over 3 years

## STAYING ON RATE<sup>5</sup> 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
% Year 12 staying on to Year 13	48.4	57.3
% Year 13 staying on to Year 14	75.2	50.7

## LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS 2015/16

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 Patrick'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	114	12996			
Employment	21 (18.4%)	1511 (11.6%)			
Institute of Further Education	33 (28.9%)	5745 (44.2%)	14	15	5
Institute of Higher Education	35 (30.7%)	3051 (23.5%)			35
Work-based Learning (Training)	13 (11.4%)	1976 (15.2%)			
Unemployed	12 (10.5%)	467 (3.6%)			
Unknown	0 (0%)	246 (1.9%)			

<sup>5</sup> 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: <http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary>.

The arrangements for this inspection included: meetings with the principal and senior leaders with specific responsibilities; meetings with some non-teaching staff; meetings with representatives from the governors and groups of pupils; and, the opportunity for all parents/guardians, 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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