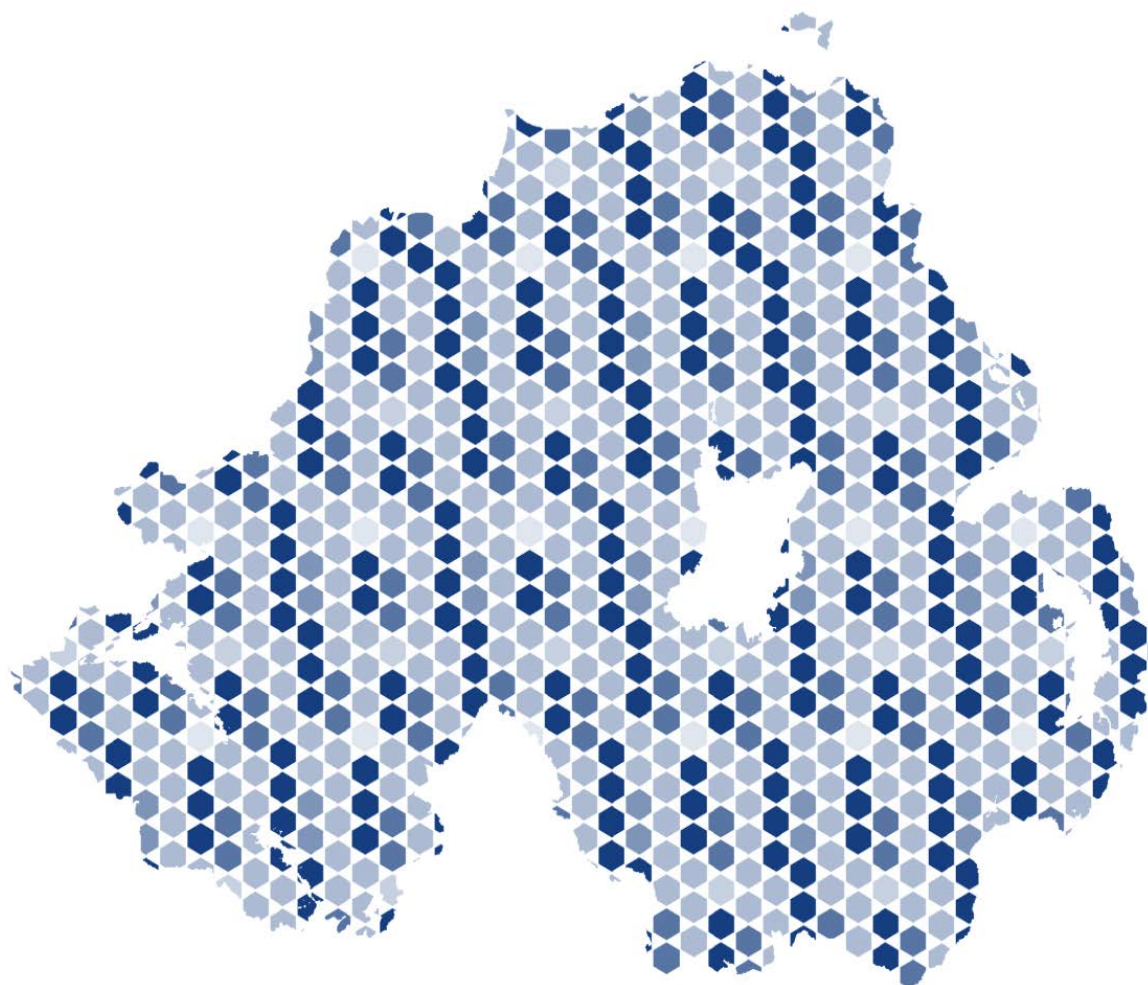


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Assumption Grammar School,  
Ballynahinch, County Down

All girls, voluntary grammar, 11-18 school

Report of a Sustaining Improvement  
Inspection (Involving Action Short of  
Strike) in May 2018



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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch (442-0086)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in April 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Assumption Grammar School as very good<sup>1</sup>. In the interim, a new vice-principal has been appointed to the senior leadership team. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on the 22 and 23 May 2018.

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 all of 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.

### **Focus of the inspection**

The purpose of the SII was to evaluate the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were the school's actions to:

- develop robust assessment processes to track pupil progress more effectively and raise outcomes further; and
- Improve further the learning experiences for the pupils.

Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the lines of inquiry.

### **Key findings**

- There has been a whole school focus on the use of baseline assessments to inform individual pupil and departmental targets. The use of a range of pastoral and academic data is focused on identifying underachievement and leadership at all levels work collaboratively to implement and monitor improvement strategies. This has resulted in early identification of potential underachievement and timely intervention which has consequently improved overall outcomes attained in public examinations at both GCSE and post-16.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils achieving A\*-B in mathematics at GCSE level has improved year on year. Furthermore, the percentage of pupils attaining 3 A\*-C at A-level has increased significantly in the past three years and one quarter of the subjects are now well above the NI average. Appropriately the senior leadership team have identified the need to analyse the data further to ensure that all pupils have been sufficiently challenged in their learning.

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<sup>1</sup> From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as outstanding or very good is reported as 'the school is demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.'

- Within the current School Development Plan cycle, priority has been given to whole school implementation of active learning and assessment for learning strategies. Curriculum maps are being used to identify cross-curricular skills and the sharing of teaching strategies has taken place within and between departments. Importantly, the pupil voice has been developed and is being used to inform and develop classroom practice. Over one-third of staff have participated in the Teaching and Learning Schools (NI) initiative and have shared this learning within the school to develop further a consistent approach to pedagogy and classroom practice. Priority has been given to self-evaluation and collaborative working across the curriculum and is focused on data analysis, book looks and lesson observations. Further work will be required to embed this practice within departments to ensure consistent learning experiences across the curriculum.

### **Safeguarding**

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The school needs to develop a more consistent approach to completing risk assessments and continue its review and update of pastoral policies, to include drugs education and positive behaviour management. Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

### **Conclusion**

Owing to the impact of 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 education provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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