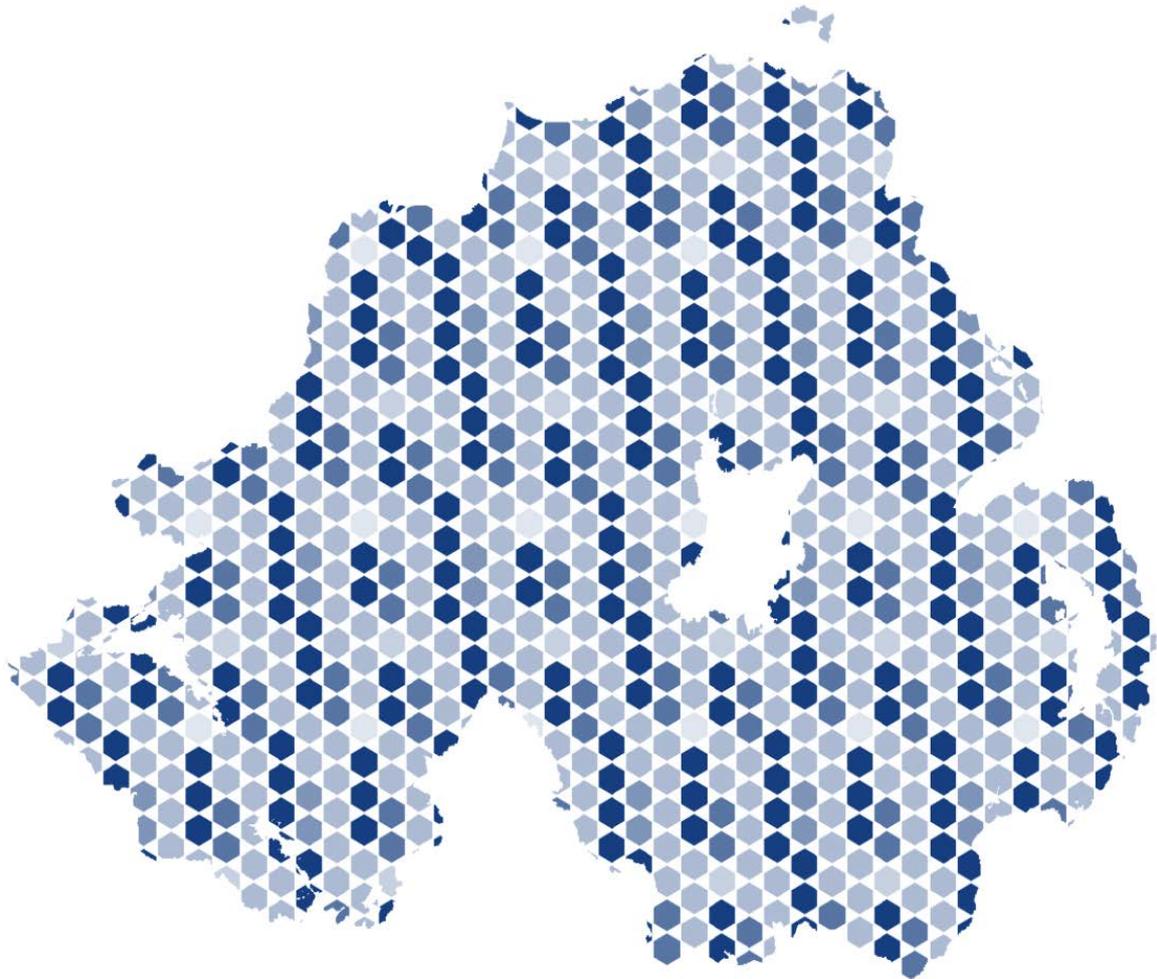


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Banbridge High School,
County Down

Controlled, co-educational 11-18 non-selective

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Banbridge High School, County Down (521-0047)

Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2014 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Banbridge High School as good¹. In the interim period, there have been new appointments to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and a resultant review of strategic roles and responsibilities. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 10 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 none of the teachers, except those on the SLT, would be co-operating with the inspectors. 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:

- sustain and improve further the pupils' attainments in public examinations; and
- develop a culture of reflective and independent learning.

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

Key findings

- The percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has improved from 36% in 2014 to 52% in 2017. Over the past three years, this is in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools in the same free school meals category. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalents at grades A* to C is in line with the NI average for similar schools.
- Over the past three years, a majority of the leavers at Year 14 progressed to higher education. However, attainment at post-16 is an area for improvement as it is still below the average for similar schools.

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as good is reported as 'the school is demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.'

- The school development plan prioritises creating positive learning outcomes through effective assessment, raising aspirations and reporting. Since the original inspection, the school has extended its tracking and monitoring system; it is focused on pupil progression, with an emphasis on the pupils taking ownership of their own learning. In discussions with a selection of pupils from across the key stages, they spoke about the benefits of setting goals and targets and reflecting regularly on their progress. They also spoke very positively about their experiences in school and expressed their appreciation of the academic and pastoral support they receive. However, owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate the impact of this school improvement work on developing a culture of reflective and independent learning.
- It will be 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 children and the staff.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The school continues to review, update and ratify the suite of pastoral policies to reflect the most recent departmental guidance. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe and secure in school and know who to talk to if they have any concerns about their welfare. 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.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by almost all of 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.

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