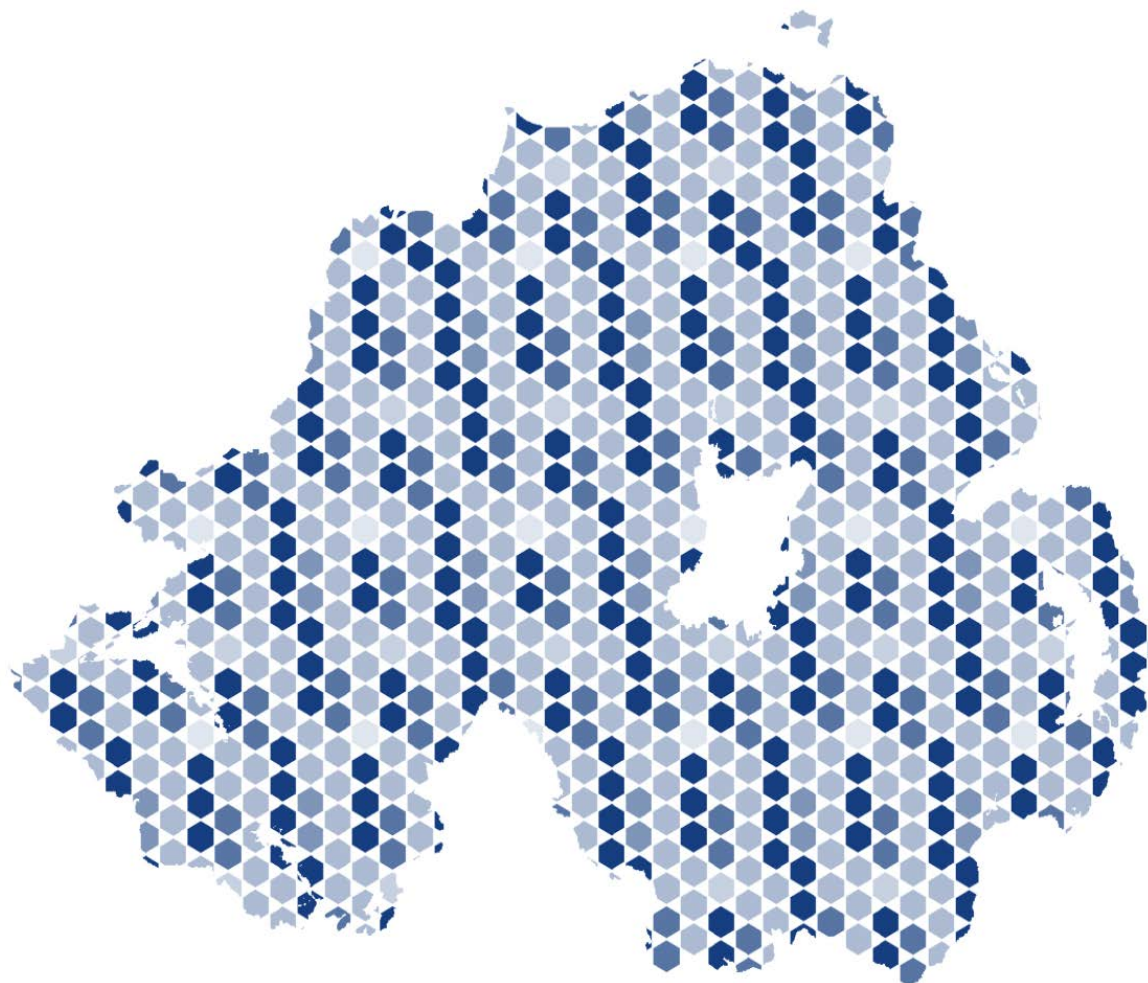


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Belfast High School, Newtownabbey,  
County Antrim

Co-educational voluntary grammar school

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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Department of Education  
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## **Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Belfast High School, Newtownabbey (342-0077)**

### **Introduction**

The previous inspection in January 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Belfast High School as good<sup>1</sup>. In the interim period there has been: transitional headship arrangements; restructuring of the senior leadership team (SLT); and a number of appointments to the teaching staff. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 14 March 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 some of 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:

- empower leaders at all levels to evaluate the effectiveness of what they do to bring about improvements in classroom practice and the standards the pupils achieve, specifically focused at outcomes at GCE level or equivalent; and
- effect greater consistency in the quality and effectiveness of improvement planning.

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

### **Key findings**

- At post-16, the pupils attain very well in individual subjects and in three GCE A Levels at grades A\*-C.
- Attainment at GCSE is an area for improvement having been well below average in two out of the last three years.
- A whole-school monitoring and tracking system is focused on the progress of pupils across the school; teacher evaluations of learning reflect on individual pupil progress and intervention strategies. Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to see the outworking and impact of the school's actions to effect greater consistency in the quality and effectiveness of improvement planning.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.'

## **Safeguarding**

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance by the Department of Education. The school needs to: ensure that the governing body has a trained designated governor for child protection; and, continues to review, update and ratify the suite of pastoral policies to reflect the most recent departmental guidance. 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 almost all of 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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