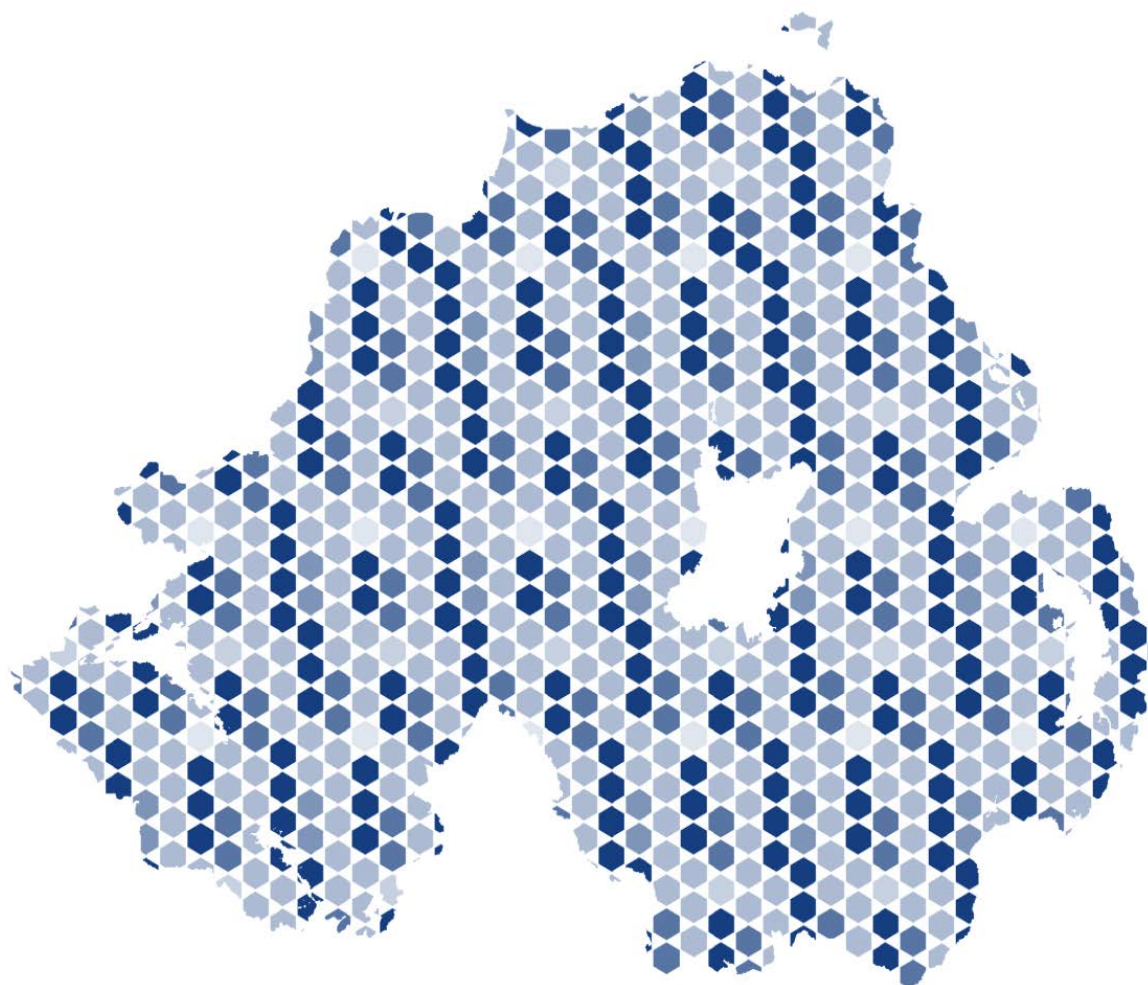


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bloomfield Collegiate School,
Belfast

Controlled, all girls', selective 11-18 school

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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CUSTOMER
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Bloomfield Collegiate School, Belfast (141-0315)

Introduction

The previous inspection in January 2015, evaluated the overall effectiveness of Bloomfield Collegiate School as good¹. In the interim period, there have been significant changes in the wider senior leadership team. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 30 April 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 only the principal and the vice-principals 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:

- use data and other available information to ensure that targets set for pupils are sufficiently robust in order to raise standards further, particularly at GCSE grades A* to B; and
- disseminate the best practice in planning, teaching and learning.

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

Key findings

- Attainment at GCSE is an area for improvement, with the proportion of pupils attaining 7 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, having been below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools in two out of the last three years. The outcomes attained by the pupils in a majority of the individual subjects at GCSE grades A* to B are below the respective three year NI average. The school is prioritising the attainments at both these levels as an area for improvement.
- Since the inspection in January 2015, the attainment at GCSE English Language at grades A* to B is on an upward trend and is now in line with the NI average for similar schools.
- Appropriately, the school this year is identifying underachievement, through target setting and the analysis of internal data, at the earliest opportunity and is implementing an intervention programme to enhance the pupils' outcomes. It will be important to monitor and evaluate the impact of these improvement strategies.

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.'

- Since 2015, the school has set up a number of mechanisms to disseminate the best practice in planning, teaching and learning. The Continuously Improving Practice (CIP) sessions are a forum for staff to: share expectations and understanding of the pedagogy that supports effective pupil learning; engage in professional dialogue; and, develop as learning leaders. The school's leadership reports that action short of strike this year is having an adverse effect on the progress of this improvement work.
- Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI is unable to evaluate the impact of the CIP sessions on classroom practice. However, in discussions, the pupils expressed their enjoyment of lessons and highlighted in particular how the integration of Information and Communication Technology improves the quality of their engagement and motivation.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. In discussions with a selection of pupils from across the key stages, 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. They speak positively about how the teachers foster good working-relationships in a caring community environment. 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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