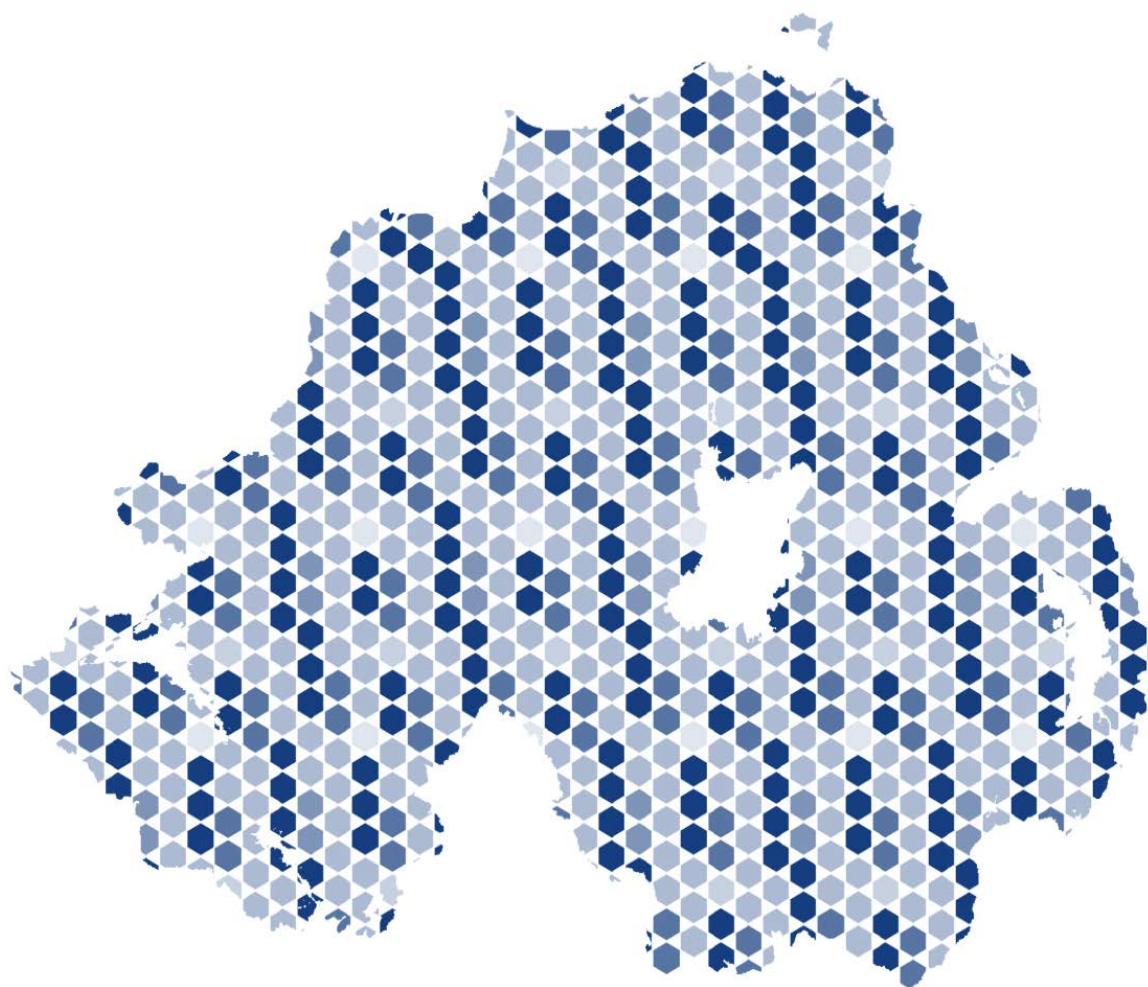


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Cross and Passion College,
Ballycastle, County Antrim

11-18, co-educational, all ability school

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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CUSTOMER
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle (323-0227)

Introduction

The previous inspection in April 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Cross and Passion College as very good¹. In the interim a new principal was appointed in September 2016 and the senior leadership team has remained broadly the same. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 10 and 11 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 a minority of the teachers 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 to:

- evaluate the outcomes for pupils, particularly at post-16; and
- assess the effectiveness of the broader pupil welfare and support provision.

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

Key findings

- The outcomes for pupils remain a strength and have improved notably at post-16. Most of the pupils continue to attain 5 or more GCSEs, or equivalent, and a majority attain 5 or more GCSEs, or equivalent, at grades A*-C including English and mathematics. In the last two years, around 75% of the year 14 pupils achieved 3 or more A levels at grades A*-C, or equivalent, placing the college significantly above the respective NI average for similar non-selective schools and above the average for grammar schools who have a similar proportion of free school meal entitlement. These are very good outcomes and reflect the successful initiatives that the determined and assiduous leadership has put in place to improve provision and outcomes further for pupils, while fostering a culture of high aspiration.
- The college's work in attending to the pastoral needs of its pupils continues to be a notable strength of the provision. Appropriate and on-going self-evaluation and consultation informs a wide range of effective programmes, initiatives and individual interventions which a large number of pupils benefit from.

¹ 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.'

- In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils spoke positively about their lessons and the wider educational provision, such as the extensive extra-curricular offer, the pupil well-being programme and the extended study facilities, including the opening of the library for them during evenings. The junior pupils enjoy their learning and are well settled to post-primary education. The senior pupils value highly the leadership roles afforded to them and spoke with great pride about their sense of community as a pupil body, which includes explicitly their peers and friends who share lessons with them and are enrolled at Ballycastle High School. Both groups commented positively about the friendly relationships they have with one another and with the staff in general.

Safeguarding

- During the inspection, the school provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, all of the pupils reported they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of action short of strike being taken by the staff, 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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