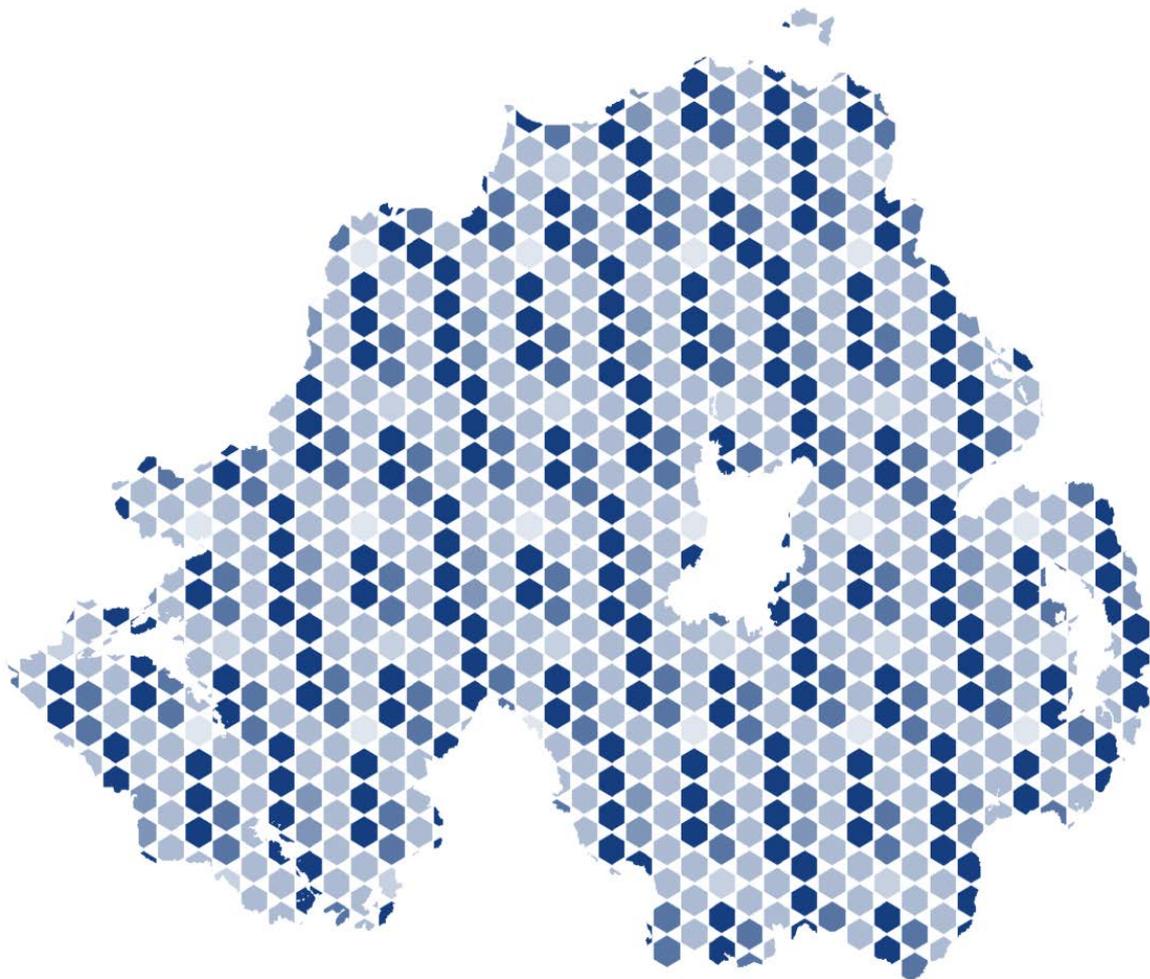


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Holy Trinity College, Cookstown, County Tyrone

Co-educational, maintained non-selective DE Ref No (523-0278)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Holy Trinity College, Cookstown, County Tyrone (523-0278)

Introduction

The previous inspection in February 2016¹, evaluated the overall effectiveness of Holy Trinity College as demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted in May 2019.

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 the senior leadership team and the head of English 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 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:

- embed high quality learning and teaching in order to improve the outcomes attained by the pupils, in particular in English at GCSE; and
- develop further the pupil voice and participation in order to enhance the learning experiences provided for the pupils.

Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking and impact of the identified actions associated with the lines of inquiry.

Key findings

- Central to the work of the school is the coherent, joined-up approach to the holistic development of the pupils and their well-being. This is evident in the wide range of creative initiatives in place, underpinned by a comprehensive programme of staff development and meaningful collaboration with other schools and outside agencies.
- Since the last inspection, there has been year-on-year improvement in the outcomes attained by the pupils in English at GCSE and the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C is now above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools². The proportion of pupils, including those pupils entitled to free school meals, attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C and including English and mathematics, has also improved and is well above the corresponding average. Appropriately, the school is focusing on improving the outcomes at post-16 following a decrease in the proportion of pupils achieving three or more A levels or equivalents at grades A*-C in 2018.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/post-primary-inspection-holy-trinity-college-cookstown.pdf>

² In the same free school meal band.

- The school has developed existing, and created new, opportunities for the pupils to contribute meaningfully to school improvement. The pupils reported that their views are valued, listened to and acted upon. They spoke with pride about the important roles and responsibilities they carry out as prefects, 'anti-bullying' and 'health and well-being ambassadors' and through membership of the School Council, junior, middle and senior leadership teams. The older pupils articulated maturely how the leadership opportunities available to them develop their skills, confidence and independence.
- The pupils spoke confidently and enthusiastically about their learning experiences, both within and beyond the classroom. They highlighted their enjoyment of group work, problem-solving and investigations, and expressed their appreciation of the support from their teachers. The pupils explained how, through target setting, feedback and discussions, they are able to reflect on and improve their work. The ETI was unable to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The pupils reported that they feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. 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 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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