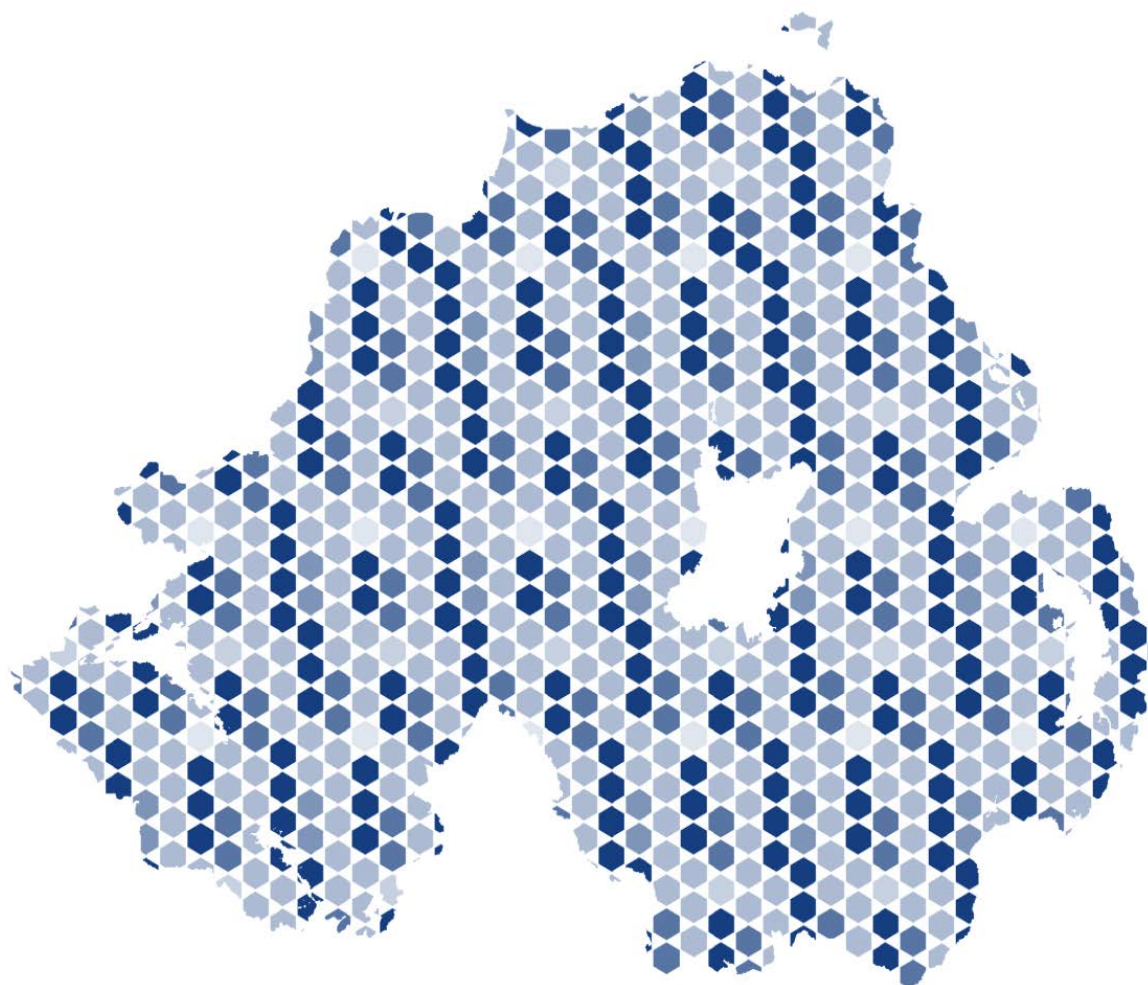


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Our Lady of Lourdes High School,
Ballymoney, County Antrim

Maintained, non-selective, co-educational 11-16 school

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



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 Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney (323-0075)

Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Our Lady of Lourdes High School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement¹.

In the interim period, the senior leaders established improvement teams to address the areas for further development identified in the inspection report. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted in October 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 the principal and senior leaders 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:

- extend the contribution of individual subjects to the promotion of careers education, information and guidance (CEIAG); and
- share with all the staff the most effective practice of the learning support centre.

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

The high standards in public examinations attained by the pupils, including those with additional needs in aspects of their learning, have been sustained. In 2018, all of the pupils in year 12 attained at least five GCSE or equivalent qualifications at grades A*-C. When English and mathematics are included, three-quarters of these pupils attained five or more GCSE or equivalent qualifications at grades A*-C. The outcomes and career pathways for the pupils with additional needs in aspects of their learning in both the mainstream and the learning support centre remain a strength.

The work of the improvement teams is underpinned by well-structured action plans and the action plan for CEIAG focuses clearly on extending the contribution of individual subjects to its promotion; flexible timetabling has also facilitated dedicated careers information days.

¹ https://www.eti.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/post-primary-inspection-our-lady-of-lourdes-high-school-ballymoney_0.pdf

There has been a focus on providing whole-staff professional development led by the teachers in the learning support centre. Additional members of staff have been trained in diagnostic testing and part-time staffing and resources to support the pupils' progress in literacy have been provided through the Ballymoney Learning Community and the Extended Schools programme.

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 the school budget, in order to assess the current and future needs of the pupils 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. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils spoke very positively about their learning and the support they receive from all staff. They reported that they feel safe in school and are aware of 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. As part of the ongoing review of key policies and procedures, the school's safeguarding team has identified the need to update the anti-bullying policy to reflect recent changes in legislation.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of action short of strike being taken by most of the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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