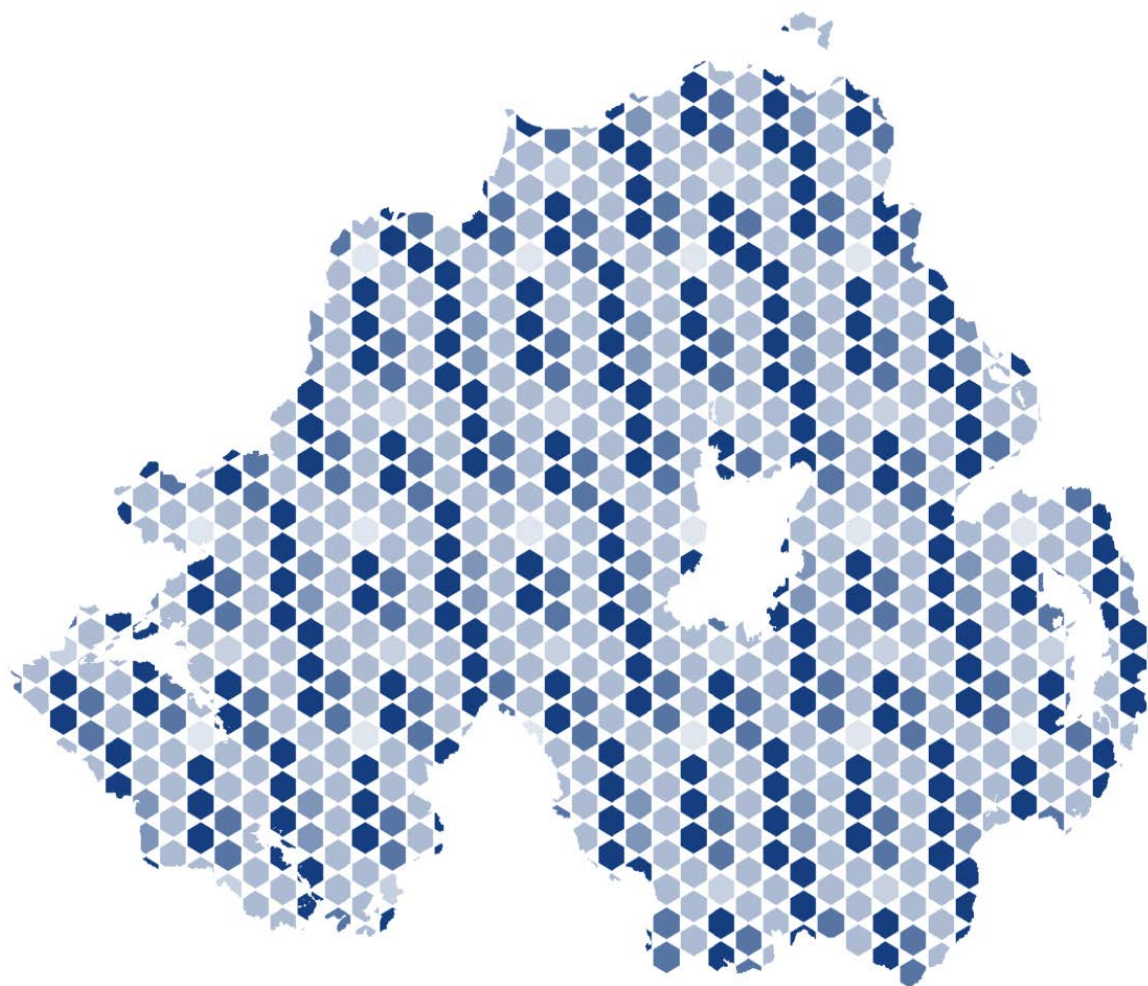


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Regent House School, Newtownards, County Down

Co-educational 11-18 controlled selective school DE Ref No: (441-0063)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Introduction

The previous inspection in December 2016 evaluated the overall effectiveness of Regent House School as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement¹. In the interim a number of changes have occurred at senior and middle leadership.

A sustaining improvement inspection was conducted in December 2019.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute, and also workload and other management issues. The industrial action includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspection. The senior leadership and members of middle leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to leadership and safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice among teachers 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 inspection focused on evaluating 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 line of inquiry during the inspection was the school's actions to:

- sustain and improve further the overall standards attained by pupils in public examinations at key stage (KS) 4 and post-16 through continued review of the curriculum, careers guidance, interventions with pupils and engagement with parents.

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 line of inquiry.

Key findings

- The pupils who met with the inspectors spoke with pride about their school, showing clear appreciation of the support they receive in their learning from the teachers. They value the opportunities to develop their leadership skills through participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The senior pupils who met with the inspectors spoke positively of the guidance and support they receive to make informed choices about subjects and career options.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/follow-up-inspection-regent-house-school-newtownards-county-down-441-0063.pdf>

- The provision for curriculum and careers education, information and guidance is kept under constant review. Curriculum planning is flexible, well-informed by robust monitoring and responsive to the changing needs and interests of the pupils. Careers provision is aligned closely and adapted to curriculum planning in order to broaden the pupils' knowledge of the skills, qualities and qualifications required to secure viable career progression pathways.
- Since the last inspection the school has continued to increase the number and diversity of subjects to create alternative and successful progression pathways for the pupils. As a result, the curriculum at KS4 and post-16 is broad and balanced, exceeds the entitlement framework and supports pupils to attain high standards in public examinations and progress to the next stage of education or employment.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has remained above the Northern Ireland (NI) average²; the proportion of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to B, including English and mathematics has increased from 75% in to 82%. Over the same period, the proportion of pupils attaining three or more A level qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to C has increased from 74% to 93% which is significantly above the NI average³. It is notable this year that 68% of the pupils attained three or more A level qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to B.
- The senior leadership team have well-defined roles and responsibilities; they work collegially and strategically to lead the on-going improvement work in the school. The school provided a range of first-hand evidence of monitoring and evaluation, which included: quantitative evaluations of pupil interviews and intervention strategies used in mentoring and coaching pupils; the effectiveness of increased parental engagement to motivate pupils; and how the arrangements for selective study have been aligned to support pupils during examinations.
- 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 issued by the Department of Education. 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. The pupils 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.

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.

² For schools in the same free school meal band.

³ For schools in the same free school meal band.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2020

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk