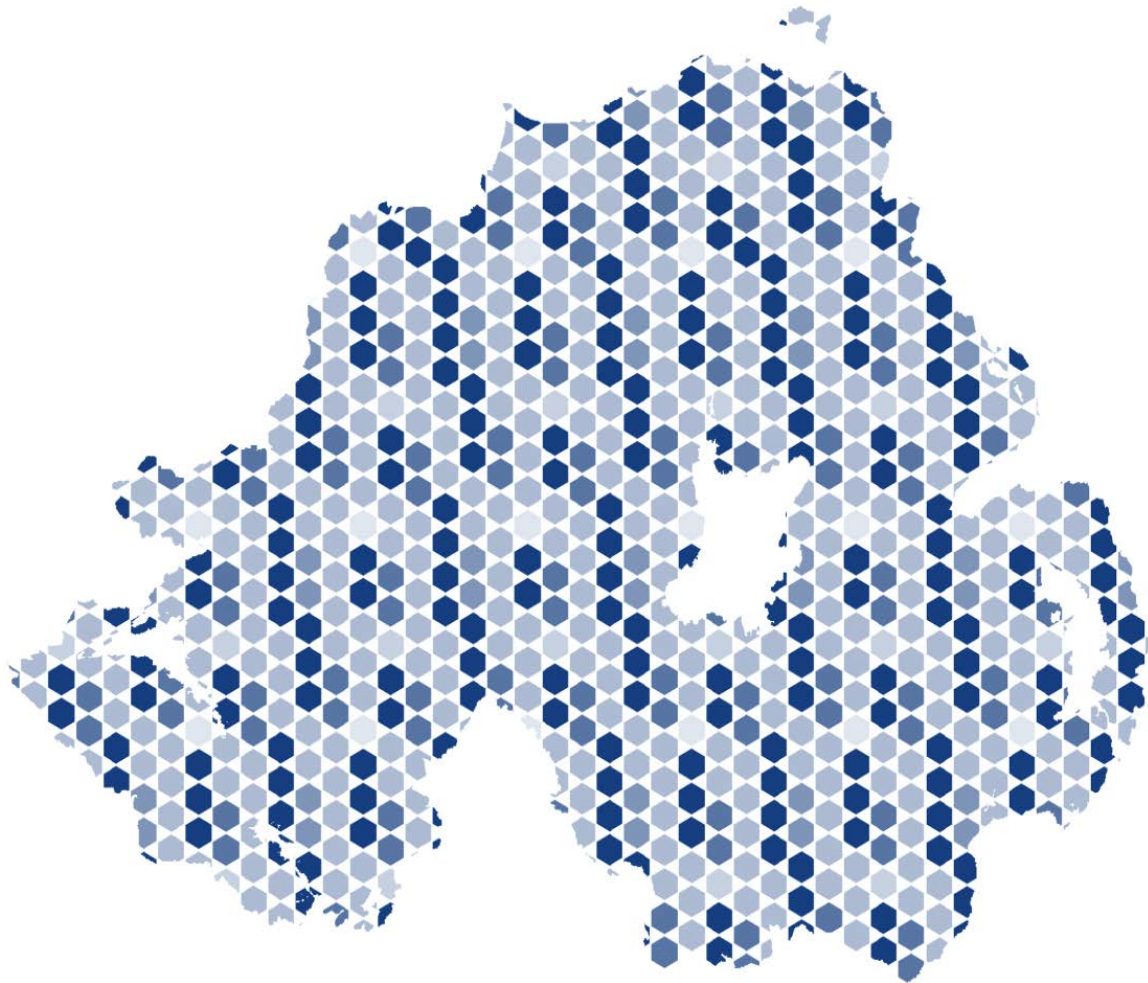


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Cecilia's College, Derry

Maintained all-girls', 11-18, all-ability school

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Cecilia's College, Derry (223-0188)

Introduction

The previous inspection in September 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Cecilia's College as having capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

In the interim period, there has been significant change in senior leadership, with three appointments to the senior leadership team (SLT). Since the last inspection the school has received a number of externally accredited awards for teaching and learning, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), leadership and management and have achieved the Investors in Pupils award. A sustaining improvement (SII) was conducted in September 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 members of the SLT 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:

- address the variation in achievement across subjects at GCSE and GCE A level in comparison to the Northern Ireland (NI) average of similar schools; and
- improve the effectiveness of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting successful outcomes.

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

- Since the last inspection the school has focused on improving the standards achieved by the pupils and consistency of outcomes across subject areas. The pupils attain very highly at GCSE or equivalent at grades A*-C, including English and Mathematics. The achievements by pupils entitled to free school meals and by pupils with additional needs, have significantly improved at both GCSE and GCE A Level.

- Bespoke training has focused on capacity building of middle leadership and the school has developed more robust tracking procedures which include information on individual pupils. The flexible approach to curriculum planning and development, with an emphasis on rigorous processes of departmental and whole-school self-evaluation has impacted positively on outcomes at individual subject level. The school has promoted the sharing of good practice and the effective use of ICT to support learning and improve the quality of learning and teaching. This has been further enhanced by the school's innovative approaches to developing a key stage 3 skills-based curriculum in conjunction with the local business community and through the shared education programme. The pupil voice in the school is given a high priority through: regular consultation; surveys of learning and teaching across the curriculum and the junior and senior leadership teams. The pupils who met with inspectors spoke confidently and passionately about the wide range of opportunities they have to express their opinions and the various leadership opportunities available to them across the key stages, for example as digital leaders, house leaders and through the school council and leadership teams.

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 who met with the inspectors expressed their appreciation of the pastoral and academic support they receive from the friendly and caring staff; they are very proud of their school. 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.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of 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 provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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