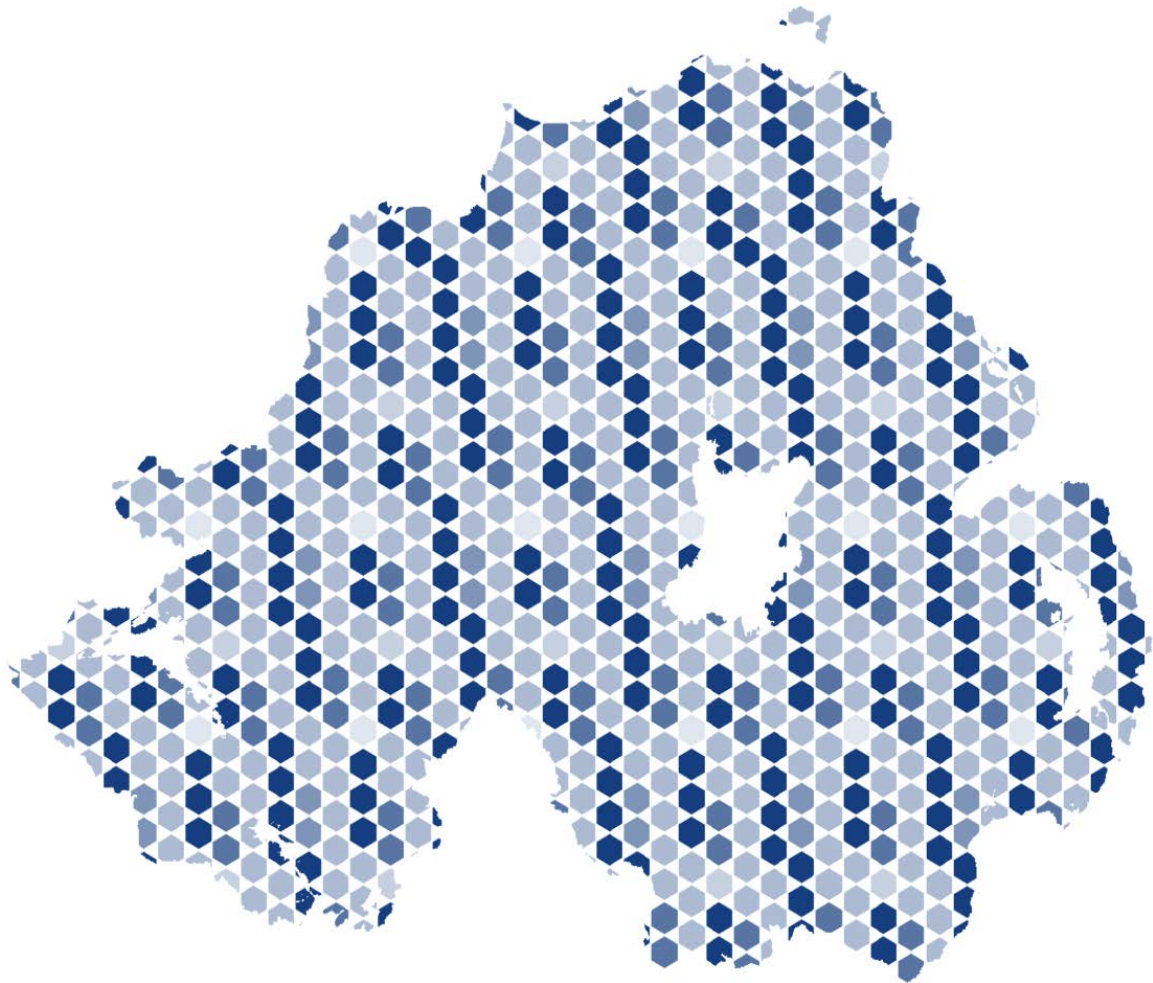


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Columb's College, Derry

All boys' Selective 11-18 School

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in March 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 St Columb's College, Derry (242-0054)

Introduction

The previous inspection in October 2014, evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Columb's College as good¹. In the interim there has been a re-structuring of the senior leadership team (SLT). A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 5 March 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 almost all of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors. 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:

- use data more effectively in order to set appropriate targets, track progress and raise attainment at all levels; and
- develop further the careers education, information and guidance (CEIAG) provision in the school.

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

Key findings

- The school development plan and associated action plans prioritise a range of strategies to track progress and raise attainment at all levels, including the introduction of a new assessment structure, tracking of pupil progress and a whole-school focus on high quality learning and teaching. The curriculum has been broadened at post-16 to include a range of general and applied subjects to meet better the needs, abilities and aspirations of the pupils.
- The re-structuring of the SLT has clearly and appropriately defined the strategic roles of the senior leaders in the implementation of the school's ongoing improvement agenda, including, closer links with curriculum leaders. The school is necessarily focused on improving the outcomes the pupils attain at GCSE and A Level; the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations are below the average for similar schools in the same free school meals band.

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as good is reported as 'the school is demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.'

- The school has focused on developing their CEIAG provision throughout the key stages; and, raising the profile of CEIAG across the school through a well-conceived staff development programme. There are effective links between the school, community and local industry; this is resulting in better work placement experiences at key stage 4 and post-16. In discussions with inspectors, the pupils talked positively about CEIAG, including, for example, the effective use of a range of past pupil experiences, external speakers, summer school opportunities and enrichment activities.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils spoke positively about the caring and friendly staff and the pride they have in their school. They reported that 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 the action short of strike being taken by almost all of 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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