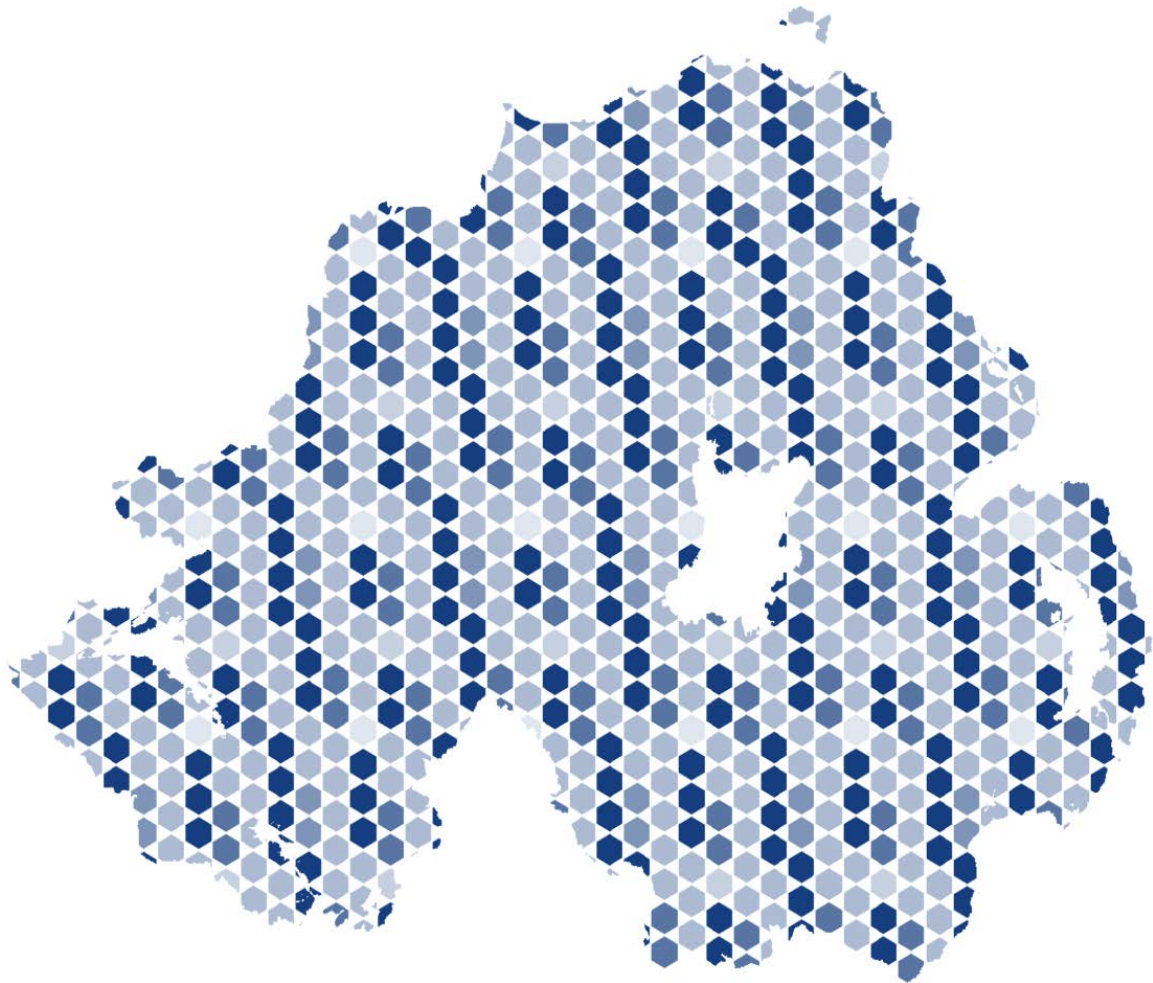


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Grammar School,
Donaghmore, County Tyrone

11-18, voluntary co-educational selective school

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in May 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 Joseph's Grammar School, Donaghmore, County Tyrone (542-0073)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2015 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Joseph's Grammar School as very good¹. In the interim, the accommodation has been extended to include a sports hall and a drama studio. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 30 May 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 the principal and vice-principal 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 to:

- improve the quality of the provision in the key stage 3 mathematics curriculum so as to promote greater challenge and engagement for all pupils; and
- provide greater consistency in the delivery of numeracy across the curriculum so that pupils have opportunities to apply and develop further their mathematical skills in a range of contexts.

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

Key findings

- The actions to promote improvement in the areas under focus are underpinned by a well-planned programme of staff development which is focused on pedagogy and on the diverse learning and pastoral needs of the pupils. This is particularly evident in the transition work with primary schools. In addition, the pupils' views are sought through well-conceived surveys and questionnaires which are analysed thoroughly, and which inform the improvement work.

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

- Much time has been invested in developing a consistent approach to the promotion of numeracy across the curriculum. The key stage 3 schemes of work for mathematics have been revised in order to include how pupils apply their mathematical skills in other subject areas, to provide greater challenge and to reflect the requirements of the new specification for GCSE mathematics. The standards attained by the pupils in mathematics in public examinations are in line with the corresponding three year averages. The action plan for mathematics focuses appropriately on improving further the learning experiences and outcomes for pupils.
- In discussion with inspectors, the pupils spoke positively about how they are supported in their learning and in making subject and career choices. They articulated maturely how the varied extra-curricular and enrichment activities develop their wider skills.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. 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. 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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