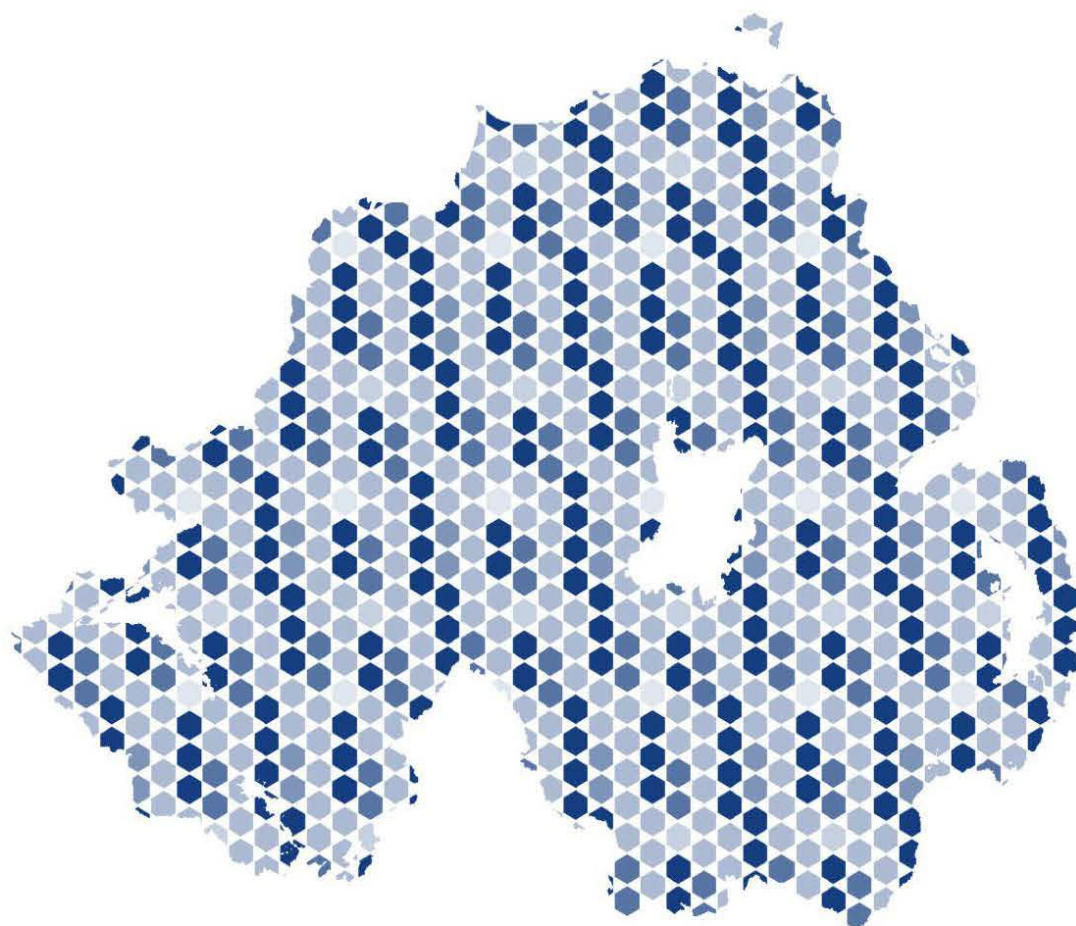


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Malachy's College, Belfast

Voluntary Grammar, selective, boys' 11-19 school DE Ref No: 142-0030

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in January 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Introduction

St Malachy's College took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection in December 2016. In the interim a number of strategic changes have been implemented at senior leadership level, including in relation to the continuing fusion of the arrangements for the welfare and well-being of the pupils and raising standards across the school. In addition, the sub-committees of the board of governors have been realigned to focus more specifically on standards and achievements and the future knowledge and skills requirements of the local and wider economy.

A sustaining improvement inspection was conducted in January 2020.

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. This 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 leaders and members of the 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 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 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 lines of inquiry during the inspection were the school's actions to support pupils in realising their individual potential by:

- sustaining and raising outcomes, including in public examinations; and
- developing further the pupils' self-reliance and resilience and the skills of independent learning through effective pastoral care.

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 well-planned and strategic investments in teacher professional learning are aligned well to the priorities agreed in the current school development plan.

- The monitoring arrangements are built upon an analysis of a range of quantitative and qualitative sources of evidence. Scrutiny of academic reports and pastoral information support the integration of a range of activities designed to enhance the pupils' progress to meet their potential. Setting targets for individual pupils is an important feature of the work; targets are focused on the fusion of learning and pastoral support in helping the pupils engage more effectively in their learning and in achieving their goals.
- Since the last inspection, the attainment of pupils at GCSE continues to be a strength of the school. Over the corresponding period, most subjects at GCSE level performed in line with, or above, the respective NI subject averages (in those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages). Over the past three years, while the outcomes have fluctuated, most pupils attain three or more examinations at GCE 'A' level (including equivalents) at grades A*-C.
- The pupils who met with the inspectors spoke with clear understanding about the progress they are making in developing their independent learning skills. The key stage 3 pupils spoke about how assessment frameworks assist them in improving the quality of their written work, encouraging them to transfer their skills across the areas of learning and apply their knowledge in different contexts. The older pupils spoke about how they deepen their understanding of key concepts, connect ideas from different sources and challenge themselves to achieve the high standards they have set. The pupils spoke perceptively of the importance of leading their own learning, with regular opportunities to comment on their progress and the effectiveness of their work. They discussed how in response, the teachers adjusted the lessons, assignments and feedback to assist them in meeting their targets. The senior pupils appreciated the many leadership opportunities afforded them through the wide range of enrichment activities organised by the school. They reflected that their engagement has deepened their knowledge of their strengths as individuals and opened up ways in which they can make a positive contribution to their school and the wider community. The pupils spoke highly of the guidance and support they receive from their teachers and other agencies which enables them to make informed choices, within a flexible framework, as they prepare for the next stage of their learning and career pathways.
- 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, with whom the inspectors met, 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 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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