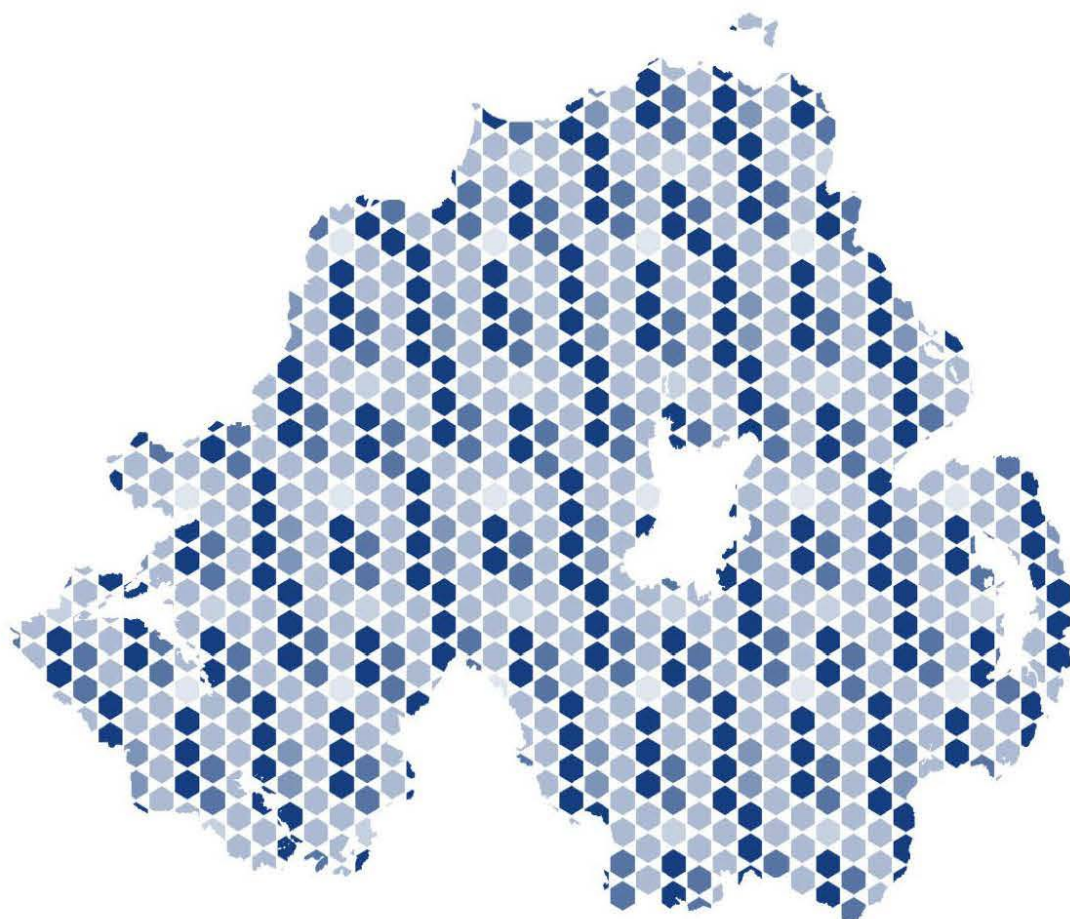


# Education and Training Inspectorate POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



## St Ronan's College, Lurgan, County Armagh

Co-educational, non-selective, 11-19 all-ability grammar school DE Ref No: 542-0314

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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## **Introduction**

The previous inspection in [November 2016](#) evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Ronan's College as having the capacity to identify and bring about improvement. Since the last inspection, the capped enrolment of 1590 has increased from 1397 to 1625 pupils, with an uplift to 1650 from September 2020. The management structure within the school has been reviewed and strategically developed further. The Careers Department has been restructured and there have been a number of teaching appointments, as well as the appointment of a full-time youth worker. The school is awaiting the commencement of a capital build and currently operates on two sites, with Key Stage (KS) 3 on the Waring Street campus and KS 4 and KS 5 on the Francis Street campus.

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 leadership and some middle leaders 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 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 lines of inquiry during the inspection were the school's actions to continue to:

- embed the school's ethos by ensuring everyone is encouraged and supported to be their best; and
- build further the capacity of staff in delivering high quality and appropriately differentiated learning experiences.

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**

- A culture of self-evaluation and reflection within the school community is focused on celebrating success together by ensuring everyone is encouraged and supported to be their best.

- The school has prioritised improving further the outcomes achieved by all pupils at KS 4 and post-16. Over the past three years, a majority of pupils attained seven or more GCSEs (including equivalents) at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals who attained five or more GCSEs (including equivalents) at A\* to C, including English and Mathematics is above the Northern Ireland average (for schools in the same free school meals band). At post-16 the proportion of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels (including equivalents) at grades A\* to C has increased from 51.1% in 2017 to 61.7% in 2019.
- Since the last inspection, there has been continued prioritisation of a consistent whole school approach to planning for learning and teaching, with a particular focus on differentiation in the all-ability classroom. Qualitative and quantitative data is used to inform a range of pastoral and curricular strategies, including targeted interventions and support to: reduce barriers to learning; address the individual needs and well-being of pupils; and engage and motivate all pupils in their learning.
- Ongoing development of pupils' learning experiences is informed by the active pupil voice, as evidenced by the variety of learning experiences provided through the enriched curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities and the further development of the rewards system. Developing and applying their information and communication technology skills, pupils have delivered training to feeder primary school principals and also collaborated on projects with primary school pupils. Pupils benefit from careers events and initiatives, linking with the business community.
- In discussions with inspectors, pupils from across the key stages, reflected well on how their leadership roles and responsibilities make a meaningful contribution to school life. They articulated clearly what the school's ethos and values mean to them. The pupils also spoke positively about how their learning and personal development is enhanced by the school's involvement in Shared Education Partnerships with other schools in the area.
- Pupils explained how they are supported at each stage in their learning to make progress and identify potential career pathways. They spoke with enthusiasm about how the learning experiences beyond the classroom have allowed them to develop their employability skills, including communication, decision-making and team-working skills, build confidence in a range of formal and social situations and undertake meaningful problem-solving activities.
- Capacity building for staff has continued to focus on distributed leadership. Staff across all levels have been encouraged and supported to take up opportunities to build their capacity through involvement with other schools, external organisations; and through taking additional qualifications, to work collaboratively and disseminate their learning to the wider staff. Application by pupils of their thinking and wider skills in meaningful contexts

informs reflection by staff on the taught curriculum in the classroom. Staff spoke positively about how the further development of the school's management structures enables greater consistency in embedding the identified whole school development priorities.

- 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 reflects 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 report that they feel safe 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.

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