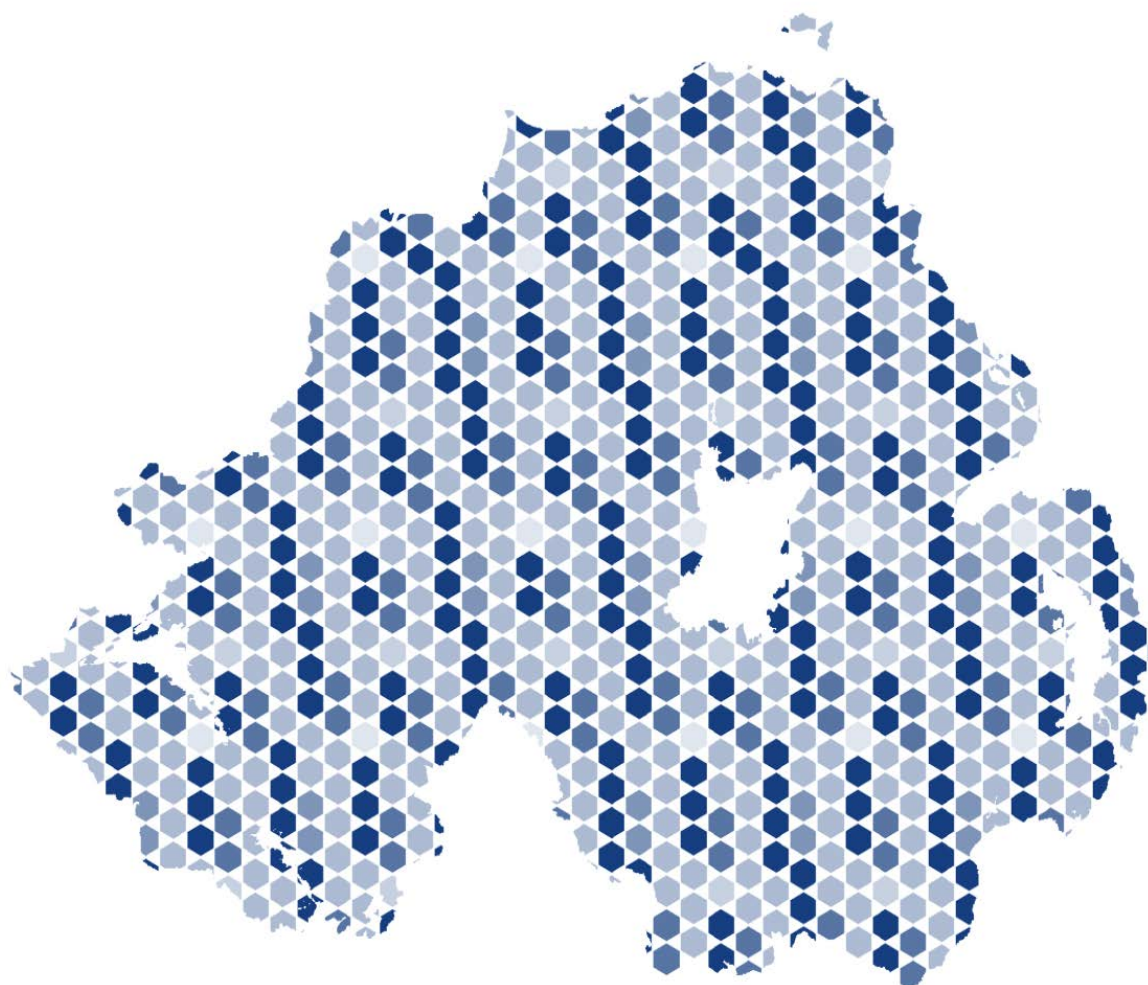


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Coleraine College,
County Londonderry

Controlled, non-selective, co-educational 11-18 school

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in October 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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CUSTOMER
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SECOND FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF COLERAINE COLLEGE, COUNTY LONDONDERRY, BT51 3LR (321-0300)

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a first follow-up inspection of Coleraine College in March 2016¹ when the quality of education remained as having important areas for improvement².

The areas for improvement identified at the first follow-up inspection were the need to:

- increase the pace of improvement work in order to improve further the quality of leadership and management at all levels and its impact on pupil experiences, outputs and performance outcomes; and
- improve the consistency in the quality and effectiveness of the learning and teaching, in order to raise further the standards pupils attain in public examinations and to sustain the improvements.

The school's action plans are of a good quality and identify key actions to promote improvement. The ETI conducted an interim follow-up visit in December 2016 and a second follow-up inspection in October 2017.

Two percent of parents (5) and 61% of staff (20) responded to the re-issued online questionnaire. The small number of parental responses expressed high levels of satisfaction with how the school is led and managed and the written comments praised the pastoral care and individual support the pupils receive, and the commitment of the principal and his staff. The responses from the staff were wholly positive and highlighted the impact of the leadership and the commitment of staff to provide the best education for the pupils.

In the interval since the first follow-up inspection, the key actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals remains relatively high, at just under 47%, while nearly one-half of the pupils require additional help with aspects of their learning;
- a new teacher of science is in post;
- the pupil enrolment has increased from 212 to 236;
- the school has phased out sixth form provision due to low uptake;
- a range of intervention, mentoring and support strategies have been put in place for pupils at risk of not achieving their optimum grades in GCSE English and mathematics;
- formalised processes to monitor the impact of learning and teaching are now in place; and
- directed time is used to disseminate good practice and build capacity.

¹ The follow-up inspection report can be accessed at: https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/follow-up-inspection-coleraine-college_1.pdf

² From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as satisfactory has been reported as having important areas for improvement

Key findings

The school is addressing with greater urgency the areas for improvement identified in the first follow-up inspection. Significant improvements have been achieved through a coherent and strategic improvement agenda, led extremely well by a committed and credible senior leadership team who are respected by the staff.

An appropriate emphasis has been placed on providing good quality, internally led, continuous professional development for staff, which is improving the learning experiences for the pupils and the outcomes they attain. There have been notable limitations in the support provided by the Education Authority, which has led to the school to finding alternative yet effective solutions to addressing the challenges they face.

Accountability arrangements have improved and the school now has a formal schedule in place for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the work of staff and its impact on pupils' learning and achievement. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluation are wide-reaching and effective and allow for appropriate support or challenge to be initiated, as appropriate.

As a result of the improvement work, the outcomes for pupils have improved significantly since the original inspection in 2014, and have been sustained well over the last three years. The percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics, is now 36%; this is in line with the average for similar schools. This is a significant achievement for this cohort of pupils who entered the school with particularly low levels of prior achievement; just under 80% of them had not achieved the expected levels in literacy and numeracy on entry to the school.

The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent, including English and mathematics, has increased well, but remains below the corresponding Northern Ireland average. While the gap in attainment relative to their peers is closing, the outcomes these pupils attain need to be improved further.

The percentage of the small number of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C has more than doubled over the last four years and is now 46%, which is above the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils progressing to further education has increased well from 24.5% at the time of the original inspection to 39.5%.

The school's internal data provides notable evidence of the value its provision adds to the pupils' progression and the learning outcomes they attain. Many pupils enter the school with a low starting point in terms of prior attainment and the school works hard to meet the pupils' needs by providing a more appropriate curriculum that is underpinned by attentive, responsive and effective care and support arrangements. Staff make effective use of pastoral and performance data, which shows that while some outcomes remain low, they mask notable value-added successes. The outcomes attained by the pupils reflect a strong performance when measured against initial targets based on pupil ability measured on entry to the school and the significant pastoral challenges many of them experience.

Planning, learning, teaching and assessment have improved significantly with 90% of the observed lessons evaluated as good or better; of which 60% were very good or better.

The leadership of the school, including the governors, has focused on the building of staff capacity and placing learning and teaching as the key driver for school improvement. Consequently, this ongoing focus is helping the school to develop a collegial learning culture that expects consistently good quality learning and teaching as its norm. This enhanced culture is reflected in a revived student council, which contributes to decisions about issues that affect the pupils.

The capacity of senior and middle leaders to monitor, evaluate and oversee actions that lead to improvement is effective and has shown a notable improvement.

The teachers have higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve and the school's internal data shows a notable decrease in the percentage of pupils excluded from its examinations achievement tally, however, pupil absence rates, and suspensions for poor behaviour remain higher than they should be.

The quality of provision for mathematics has improved and is now good. In the more effective lessons observed, the teachers use a variety of effective and well-structured learning and teaching strategies and the pupils are given opportunities to extend and challenge their mathematical thinking. Since the follow-up inspection, the GCSE outcomes attained by the pupils at grades A* to C in mathematics have improved to 52% and are now above the Northern Ireland average for similar schools. The school has made good progress in developing the pupils' numeracy skills and their application across the curriculum.

The quality of provision for English is also now good. Outcomes attained by the pupils at GCSE have more than doubled since the time of the original inspection. The impact of the whole-school focus on literacy is evidenced in the opportunities within English and across the curriculum to develop and expand the pupils' knowledge and skills in all modes of language, speaking and listening, reading and writing, as they progress through the school.

The arrangements for the care, welfare and support of the pupils remain a strength of the provision and the school supports well those pupils who are at risk of becoming marginalised through disaffection with the education system. The quality of working relationships in the school and the development of its learning culture are major strengths.

The school's action planning processes, in response to the original inspection, have taken appropriate account of the areas for improvement. The quality of the documentation is good. As the school continues to implement further its improvement agenda, it will be important for the principal and all the staff to sustain and build further on the progress made so far.

Conclusion

Coleraine College demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

The follow-up inspection has identified the following area for improvement:

- to continue to raise the outcomes attained by the pupils.

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