

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION

## Campbell College, Belfast

All Boys' Voluntary Grammar, 11 to 18 School, DE Ref No 142-0020

Report of a Follow-up Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in October 2022



Providing Inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
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# Second follow-up to the inspection of Campbell College, Belfast, BT4 2ND (142-0020)

## Introduction

The original inspection of Campbell College (College) was carried out in October 2015<sup>1</sup> when the College's education provision was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

The first follow-up inspection, which was impacted by industrial action short of strike, took place in March 2017<sup>2</sup>. Owing to the action short of strike, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) was unable to evaluate the extent to which the important areas for improvement had been addressed, namely to:

- continue to raise the standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations;
- improve the quality of planning and assessment at all levels to meet more effectively the learning needs of all the pupils; and
- further develop and embed the self-evaluation processes, across the subject departments, to ensure the learning experiences are of a consistently high standard for all the pupils.

Consequently, Campbell College remained in the follow-up process.

The ETI carried out a monitoring visit in February 2022.

The second follow-up inspection, carried out in October 2022, was also impacted by industrial action short of strike<sup>3</sup>. Teachers in senior leadership positions co-operated with the follow-up inspection process. As a result, the College was unable to provide a complete inspection evidence base, including observations of teaching and learning, to demonstrate the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection report. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education being provided for children and young people<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the follow-up inspection proceeded on a partial basis and the key findings in this report are based on the evidence made available at the time of the inspection visit.

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<sup>1</sup> [Post-Primary Inspection - Campbell College, Belfast \(etini.gov.uk\)](https://www.etini.gov.uk/post-primary-inspection-campbell-college-belfast)

<sup>2</sup> [Follow-up Inspection \(Involving Action Short of Strike\) - Campbell College, Belfast 142-0020 \(etini.gov.uk\)](https://www.etini.gov.uk/follow-up-inspection-involving-action-short-of-strike-campbell-college-belfast-142-0020)

<sup>3</sup> At the time of the follow-up inspection, some of the teachers were mandated by their union to participate in legitimate industrial action short of strike, which includes not engaging with ETI inspections.

<sup>4</sup> [Article 102 of the Education and Libraries \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1986.](#)

## Key actions and changes

In the interval since the original inspection, the College received external support provided by the Education Authority (EA) in relation to extending the College's range of internal data to inform self-evaluation.

The following are the key actions or changes which affect the work of the College.

- The College's development plan and action plans were adjusted appropriately in light of inspection findings.
- The roles and responsibilities of the two vice-principals have been reviewed and realigned appropriately.
- The College's overall enrolment has increased from 922 in 2016-17 to 1017 pupils in 2022-23.
- The sixth form enrolment has increased from 203 to 251 and the number of pupils enrolled in the boarding department has also increased from 110 to 150.
- A new boarding wing opened in 2019; an extensive refurbishment of the College's listed estate commenced in August 2022 with upgrading of the science department and sports hall planned to commence in 2024.
- The number of teaching staff has increased from 66 to 75.
- The College is focused currently on re-establishing daily routines to reinforce the importance of attendance and punctuality.
- The College is continuing to develop its virtual learning environment to build further the digital capabilities of the pupils and staff including initiatives, such as digital badges, competitions, and access to online homework and self-assessments.

## Views of parents/carers and staff

All of the College's parents/carers and staff were provided with the opportunity to complete an online questionnaire.

Twenty-one percent of the parents/carers (189) responded to the online questionnaire, with 90 of them providing additional written comments. They expressed appreciation for the wide range of sporting opportunities and the learning support which help their child to progress and grow in confidence.

Nearly all (92%) of the parents/carers who responded indicated that they are happy with their child's learning experiences at the College, which they report are well matched to their abilities, interests and needs. In the 90 written comments provided, most of them were very positive, with just under one-quarter of them outlining some aspects of school life they would like to improve, for example, the online format of the parent-teacher meetings.

Around 11% of the staff responded to the questionnaire and a small number of them provided written comments. Overall, their feedback was mostly positive and reflected their satisfaction with, and support for, the life and work of the College.

Issues raised in the parent/carer and staff questionnaires were discussed with the principal, vice-principals and representatives of the Governing Body.

## Key findings

Inspectors were unable to evaluate the quality of the outcomes for learners, provision for learning, and the effectiveness of leadership and management. The following findings are based on the evidence available at the time of the follow-up inspection.

- The pupils from all key stages who met with inspectors spoke positively about their learning experiences and were able to offer their views of, and suggestions for, College improvement, in a measured and mature manner. Almost all of them reported that they feel safe in College and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.
- The pupils report that they have access to a diverse range of leadership, cultural and sporting opportunities that help them to develop their interests and wider skills.
- The pastoral curriculum has been re-organised to provide increased and regular contact time for tutors and pupils. The pupils value the relationships they build with their tutor and the support they receive. The appointment and training of sixth form well-being ambassadors has strengthened the College's continued focus on the mental health and well-being of the pupils.
- The senior leadership team (SLT) is working hard to address the important areas for improvement and is continuing to focus on improving the quality of provision and the outcomes that the pupils attain.
- The SLT has put in place comprehensive pupil tracking systems. Consequently, there is a whole College approach to assessment and analysis of academic and pastoral data which is being used to: track and report on pupil progress in learning; plan to meet the individual needs of the pupils; and provide targeted support and early interventions for pupils.

- The SLT, has further refined its use of quantitative and qualitative data, with the aim of addressing variations in the action planning processes across the curriculum. This is leading to more effective departmental review processes and target setting. Inspectors were unable to evaluate the extent of any impact the work has had in effecting improvements in learning and standards.
- The teachers across all key stages continue to plan and adapt the curriculum in line with the changing needs, interests and abilities of the pupils. In discussion with the members of the Governing Body, the governors identified curriculum review as a priority issue for 2022-23.
- The College has identified and is addressing well the cross-curricular approach to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). The College has identified the need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this approach, aligned to the pupils' progression to the next stage of education, training or employment.
- The College leadership team is highly committed to, and has prioritised, improving the quality of the learning experiences, as reflected in the transitional College Development Plan for 2022-23, with teachers engaging currently in a programme of professional learning. Inspectors were unable to evaluate the outworking of the transitional plan, including the appropriateness of the programme for professional learning and its impact on improving outcomes for pupils.

## Conclusion

The College's second follow-up inspection is incomplete due to the industrial action short of strike. The areas for improvement remain as the need to:

- continue to raise the standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations;
- improve the quality of planning and assessment at all levels to meet more effectively the learning needs of all the pupils; and
- further develop and embed the self-evaluation processes, across the subject departments, to ensure the learning experiences are of a consistently high standard for all the pupils.

The ETI has been unable to evaluate the College's progress in effecting the required improvements in the quality of its education provision for a period of seven years. The District Inspector will continue to monitor the College's progress, and the follow-up inspection will be completed at the request of the College up to and including April 2023. Subsequently, the inspection will be completed without further notice.

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