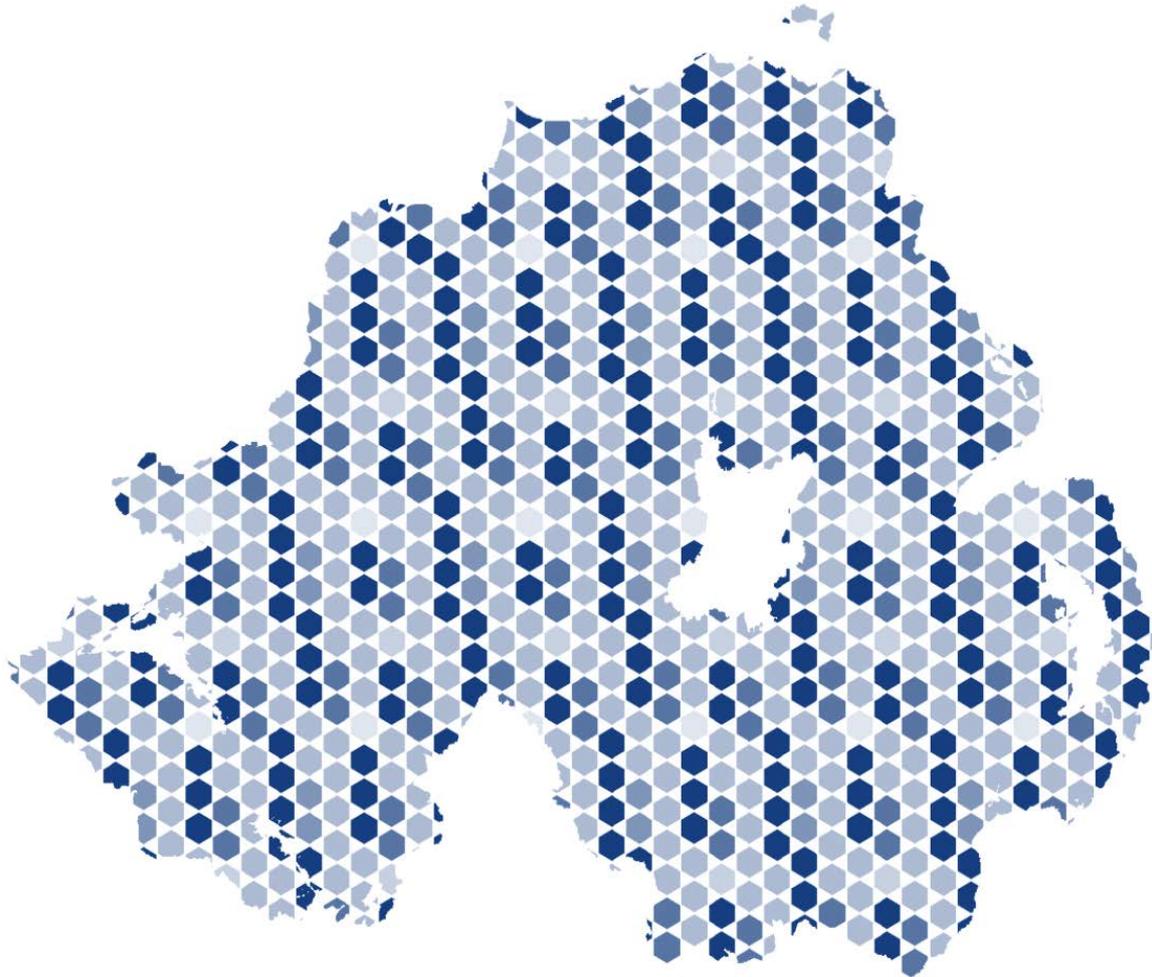


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Fivemiletown College, Fivemiletown, County Tyrone

Controlled, Co-educational 11-18 school DE Ref No: 521-0097

Report of a Follow-up Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in October 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



THIRD FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF FIVEMILETOWN COLLEGE, FIVEMILETOWN, BT75 0SB (521-0097)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a second follow-up inspection of Fivemiletown College in October 2017¹ which concluded that the school needed to address important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement identified in the second follow-up inspection were:

- to develop further the action planning process, especially at middle leadership level, to effect improvement;
- to ensure pupils are better informed around career progression pathways and to further broaden the curriculum offer, particularly at post-16; and
- to further improve the learning and teaching, including more effective questioning and increased opportunities for the pupils to develop their personal confidence and oracy skills.

The report identified also that it would be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school's provision and budget for the school's sixth form provision in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

In August 2018 the Department of Education made the decision that the school remain within the Formal Intervention Process under the Every School a Good School policy².

The school's action plans were generally of a good quality; however the ETI recommended that the school review some of the sections.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in September 2018 and a third follow-up inspection in October 2019.

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 none of the teachers or leadership would be co-operating with the inspection. A representative of the board of governors co-operated with the inspection in relation to its leadership 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 the inspection.

In the interval since the second follow-up inspection, the school has received external support provided by the Education Authority in relation to leadership and management and action-based research studies in the area of learning and teaching.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- the appointment of a permanent vice-principal;

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/follow-inspection-fivemiletown-college-fivemiletown-county-tyrone>

² <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/every-school-good-school-policy-school-improvement>

- an increase in the school enrolment from 358 pupils in 2018 to 377 pupils at the point of the inspection;
- a new collaborative arrangement at post-16 with a local post primary school;
- mechanisms are now in place for greater accountability of departments by the governors in relation to individual subject performance; and
- processes are in place for earlier identification of pupils at risk of under-achieving.

Views of parents and staff

As a result of the action short of strike, the online questionnaire information was not distributed to parents or staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on their views.

Key findings:

- In the past two years the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, has increased and is now well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average³. The school has identified appropriately the need to reduce the differential in the attainment of the girls and the attainment of the boys at this measure.
- In the same period however, of the small number of pupils in receipt of the free school meals entitlement, there has been a significant decrease in the percentage attaining at this important benchmark.
- It is a matter of concern that in 2019, notwithstanding that the cohort was much smaller than the previous year, the proportion of the pupils attaining three or more A levels (including equivalents) at grades A* to C decreased significantly to 22%, which is over 40 percentage points below the NI average⁴. The school has made curricular changes for the current Year 14 pupils, 2019-2020.
- Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching within the classrooms.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate the following areas for improvement:

- to develop further the action planning process, especially at middle leadership level, to effect improvement;
- to ensure pupils are better informed around career progression pathways and to further broaden the curriculum offer, particularly at post-16; and
- to further improve the learning and teaching, including more effective questioning and increased opportunities for the pupils to develop their personal confidence and oracy skills.

³ For schools in the same Free School Meals band.

⁴ For schools in the same Free School Meals band.

Consequently, there remains a need for Fivemiletown College to address the important areas for improvement⁵.

It remains important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff continue to plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, including the post-16 provision, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the staff, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

⁵ The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Education Authority that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

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