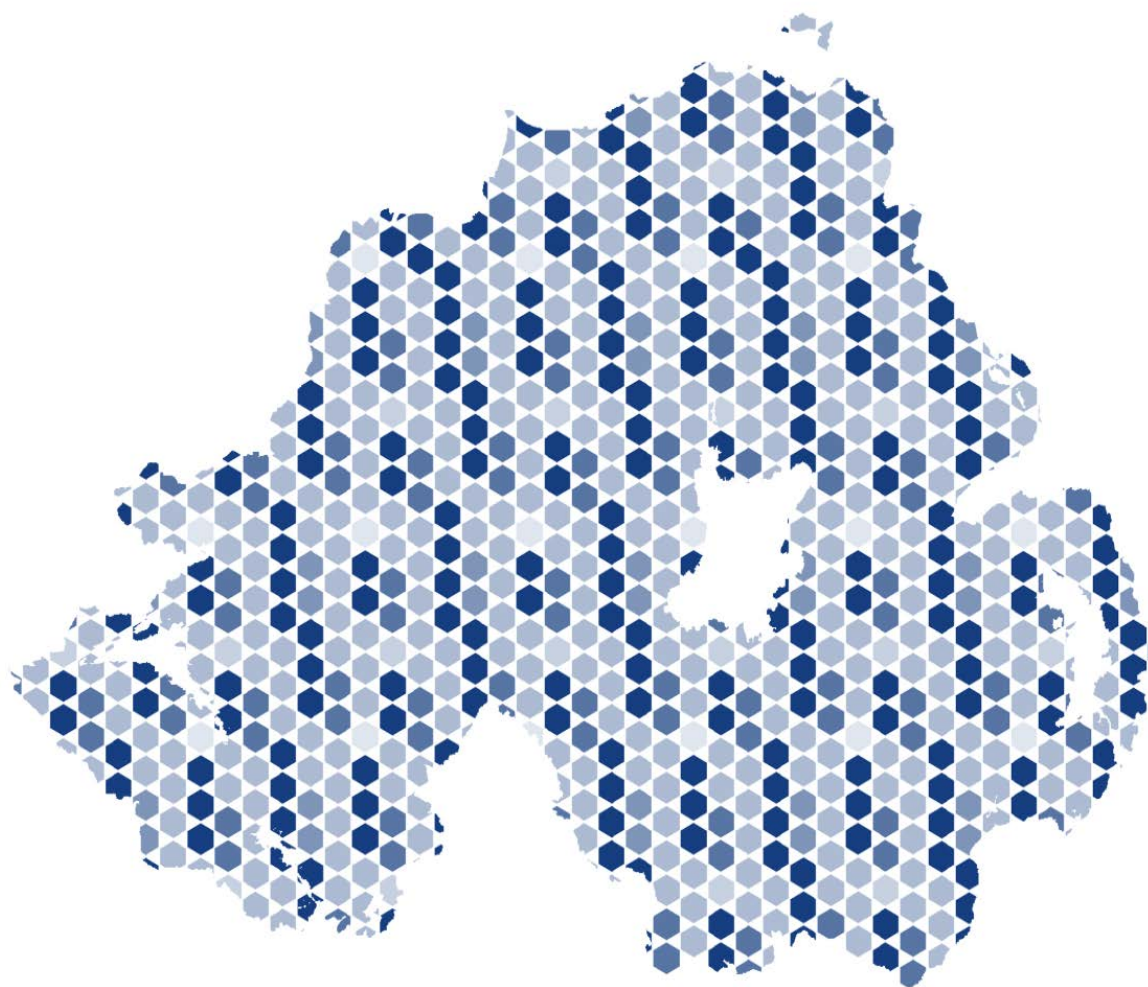


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dundonald High School,
Belfast

Controlled, co-educational, non-selective 11 – 16 school

Report of an Inspection in
January 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Dundonald High School is a controlled, co-educational, non-selective school for pupils aged from 11 to 16 years; it draws its pupils from a wide catchment area. Over the past three years, the total enrolment has increased significantly, with more than 90 pupils entering year 8 in September 2016. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSME) has also increased significantly and now stands at almost 60%. Around one-half of the pupils in the mainstream classes have been identified as requiring additional support in aspects of their learning. The moderate learning difficulties (MLD) unit provides for 34 pupils.

Dundonald High School	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Year 8 Intake	32	45	68	93
Enrolment	237	241	276	341
% Attendance (NI Average)	90% (92.0%)	89.2% (92.0%)	88.8% (93.5)	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	45.6	53.2	57.1	58.4
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	50.6% (120)	59.3% (143)	62.7% (173)	51.9% (177)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	56	62	65	27
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the Learning Support Centre (if appropriate)	22	30	37	34

Source: data as held by the school.

N/A not available

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on the MLD unit in this inspection.

2. Views of parents and staff

Two percent of parents (6) and 24% of staff (13) responded to the online questionnaires. The responses to the staff questionnaires were positive, highlighting the school's supportive, team-working ethos.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary inspection is to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Requires significant improvement
Quality of provision	Requires urgent improvement
Leadership and management	Requires urgent improvement

The overall provision: for mathematics is an important area for improvement; for English, requires significant improvement; and in the MLD unit, requires urgent improvement².

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- In two of the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools; last year it was in line with the average. The percentage of FSME pupils who attain at this level has fluctuated over the same period, but remains well below the average for similar schools.
- Over the past three years, at GCSE grades A* to C or equivalent, around one-half of the subjects taken by the pupils are performing well below the NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band. While the remaining subjects are in line with or above the corresponding three-year average for similar schools, three of these seven subjects were taken by small numbers of pupils and in only one of the past three years.
- In English and mathematics, the outcomes attained by the pupils are a significant area for improvement.
- The outcomes attained by the pupils in the MLD unit are also a significant area for improvement. As a consequence of the lack of baseline assessments, the teachers are unable to plan for, or measure accurately, their progress. The narrow curriculum pathway restricts the range of qualifications available to these pupils.
- Due to the lack of individual education plans for the majority of the pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning in the mainstream school, their progress and attainment are not monitored. It is inappropriate that no baseline assessment of the newcomer pupils in the school is carried out.
- A majority of the pupils are courteous and willing to learn. In just under one-half of the lessons, they responded well to the purposeful tasks provided by the teachers. The senior pupils benefit from, and appreciate, opportunities to take on leadership roles. However, the development of the pupils' interpersonal, thinking and communication skills is inconsistent and, as a consequence, their attainment is limited.

² The areas for improvement have been reported to, and discussed with, the relevant department(s) and senior leadership of the school.

- The proportion of pupils progressing to further education courses is well above the NI average. The standards attained by the high numbers of pupils studying vocational subjects vary, but are mostly good.

6. Quality of provision

- There is undue variation in the quality of planning across the subject areas; in too many departments the planning is not sufficiently detailed to drive progression in learning and to identify the most appropriate teaching methods. There is also too much variation in the effectiveness of the teachers' use of assessment, notably marking for improvement, to measure pupil progress and to plan appropriately for future learning.
- Over one-half (52%) of the lessons observed during the inspection had important areas for improvement or required significant improvement. These lessons are underpinned by low expectations of what the pupils can achieve; the activities are not sufficiently challenging and, as a result, the pupils become disengaged and do not make sufficient progress.
- Just under one-half (48%) of the lessons observed were good or very good in promoting learning. In the effective practice: the working relationships are mutually respectful; the learning experiences engage and challenge the pupils and include opportunities for them to discuss their learning; and the teachers use questioning skilfully to deepen the pupils' thinking and to assess their understanding.
- The provision for learning in English requires significant improvement; in mathematics it is an important area for improvement.
- The provision in the MLD unit requires urgent improvement, due in part to the discontinuity in staffing and leadership. The lack of resources within the MLD unit is impacting negatively on the pupils' outcomes. Importantly, the narrow curriculum and, in some cases, inappropriately structured timetables restrict the development of the pupils' learning and personal skills. The pupils are not adequately prepared for transition to their next stage of learning. The links with external agencies require further development so that the individual needs of all the pupils are addressed.
- The provision for the large proportion of pupils in the mainstream school who require additional support with aspects of their learning is not compliant with current legislation and requires urgent improvement. The pupils' needs are not being met; the teachers do not know the pupils' individual requirements and therefore cannot put plans in place to support them, including appropriate differentiation and the arrangements for concessions in public examinations.
- While the school has prioritised literacy in the past two years, as evident in the staff training and the creation of a literacy team to oversee the development of literacy across the school, the benefits of this focus have yet to impact significantly on the skills applied, and standards attained, by the pupils. Numeracy opportunities have been identified across the curriculum, but numeracy is not promoted consistently enough. The school needs to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the implementation of the various literacy and numeracy initiatives across all departments to ensure the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are sufficiently and more coherently developed.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's approach to the care and welfare of the pupils does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes. In recent years there has been a notable improvement in behaviour for learning, as evidenced, for example, in the falling suspension rates.
- There remain, however, several key areas for development, including:
 - to improve the pupils' attendance rates, which are consistently below the NI average;
 - to improve the very limited taught provision for personal and social development; and
 - to review and update a number of the pastoral policies and to ensure that they are consistently understood and applied by staff across the school.
- The school is developing systems to assess, track and monitor the pupils' progress, but does not as yet use the internal and external data adeptly enough to inform and support purposefully the learning and teaching.
- The curriculum at key stage (KS) 3 is generally broad and balanced. While the curriculum offer at KS 4 blends vocational and general subjects at levels 1 and 2, the curriculum does not as yet provide suitable career pathways matched to the interests, abilities and aspirations of all the pupils.
- The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) across the school has significant areas for improvement; it is not sufficiently effective or progressive. As a result, the pupils are not well enough informed about the range of pathways and opportunities available to them. A comprehensive review of the provision has appropriately outlined the main areas for improvement, including: more detailed planning for the delivery of the taught programme for CEIAG; and an evaluation of the quality and impact of the provision across the school.

7. Leadership and management

- The school development process, including action planning, lacks rigour. The associated processes for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the provision do not focus sufficiently on measuring the impact of the planned actions.
- There has been significant change in the make-up of the senior leadership team (SLT) over the past two years. While the members of the SLT are committed to the school's place at the heart of the community, reflecting the school's motto, their strategic vision and direction are under-developed. External support will be required to re-structure and build the collective capacity of the SLT members to monitor the provision and effect the required improvements.
- The quality of monitoring and action planning by middle leaders is too variable. In a minority of instances, there are examples of ongoing, robust evaluation; the senior leaders need to identify and disseminate this good practice.

- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are very supportive of the school and senior leaders. In order to develop further their ability to challenge senior leadership, the governors need to be better informed about how well the provision is matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils and, as a consequence, the outcomes they attain.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people reflect broadly the guidance issued by the relevant Departments. The pupils report that they feel safe in the school and that they know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

CONCLUSION

8. Overall effectiveness

Dundonald High School needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

The main areas for improvement are to:

- improve the quality of the planning, learning, teaching and assessment across the school;
- improve the provision in English, mathematics, the MLD unit and for those pupils identified with additional educational needs;
- raise the standards attained for all the pupils, including in public examinations; and
- build the strategic capacity, at all levels, of the senior and middle leadership.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS³ and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Dundonald High School achieving five or more GCSEs (A* to C and A* to E) and equivalent subjects, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band⁴.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	71.1	97.2	89.3
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	50.0	80.6	64.3
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁵</i>	<i>74.1</i>	<i>75.0</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	36.8	19.4	32.1
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>44.4</i>	<i>46.3</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	60.5	97.2	67.9
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	30.8	8.3	16.7

³ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁴ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁵ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level (over the past three years)
Grades A* - C

	2014	2015	2016
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	38	36	28

GCSE Subject	Number of Entries	School A* - C %	NI A* - C %
Art & Design	32	34.4	77.1
Design & Technology	30	63.3	61.5
English Language	66	39.8	63.2
History	42	59.2	61.7
Hospitality and Catering	35	68.6	56.6
Information and Communication Technology	47	97.9	74.2
Learning for Life and Work (PSE)	30	36.7	74.7
Mathematics	60	39.5	51.5
Leisure and Tourism*	8	62.5	48.3
Geography*	12	41.7	61.1
Music*	10	40.0	79.3
Science Single Award*	15	80.0	48.5
Spanish*	9	100.00	82.0

* indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: KS 4

Other courses taken in at least two of the last three years.

Level 2	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total entry over 3 years
	% A* - C	% A* - C	% A* - C	
Business & Services	77.4%	79.4%	75.0%	93
BTEC Business	100%	78.9%	100%	25
BTEC Science	80%	100%	73.1%	77
BTEC Sport	90%	100%	71.4%	46
OS Carpentry	100%	N/A	0%	*
OS Patisserie	85.7%	N/A	93.8%	23

* indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

Leavers' destinations

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from Dundonald High School who leave school to enter further education, another school, or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

	NI	School	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	6845	50		
Employment	11.7%	4%		
Institute of Further Education	44.9%	76%		38
Another School	16%	10%		
Work-based Learning (Training)	20.6%	4%		
Unemployed	4.4%	2%		
Unknown	2.5%	4%		

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary>.

Inspectors observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation, data and the pupils' written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils (individually and in groups), teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management⁶:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school 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 school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

⁶ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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