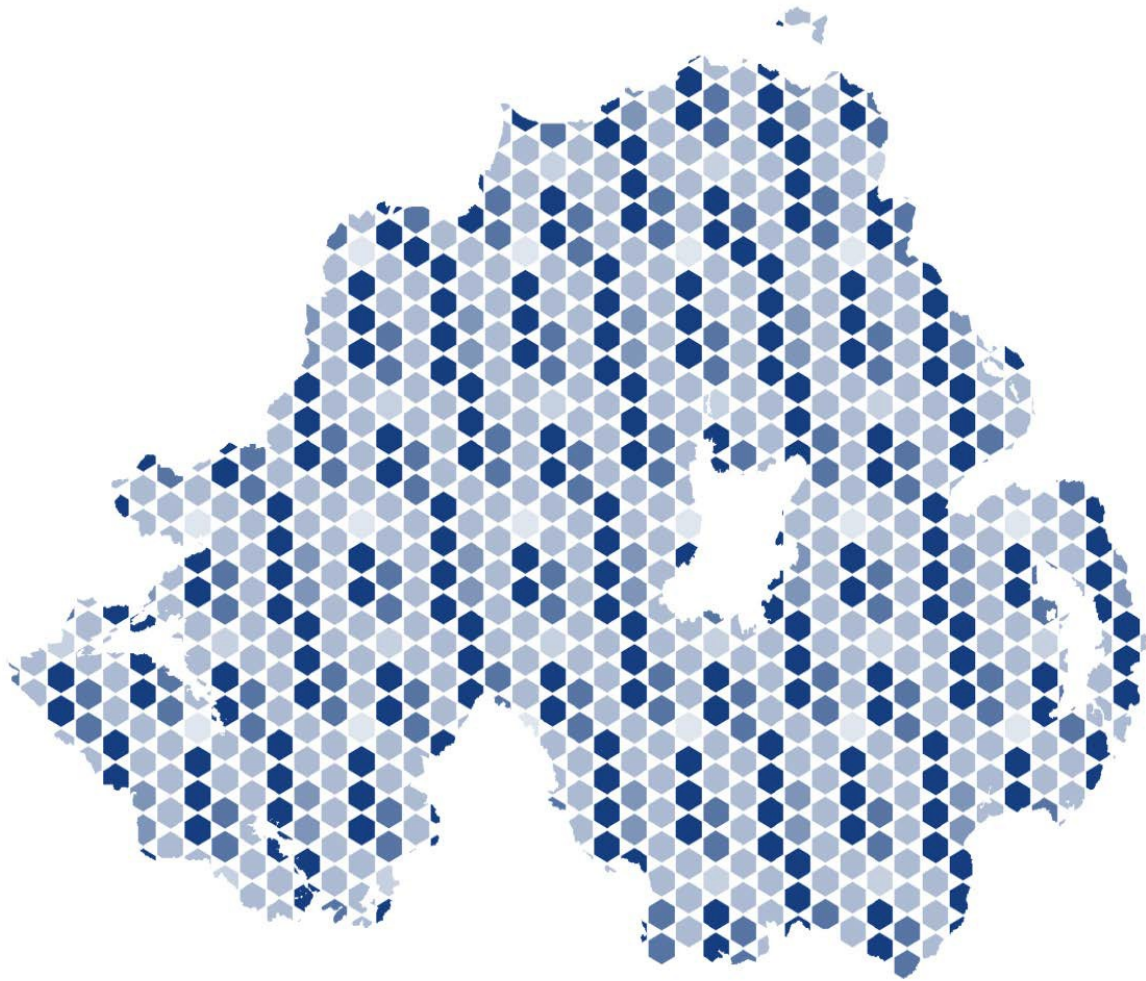


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Louise's Comprehensive College, Belfast

Maintained, all girls' non-selective, 11 -19 school, DE Ref
123-0053

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in November
2018



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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1. Context

St. Louise's Comprehensive College is situated in West Belfast in an area of high economic and social need; three-fifths of the pupils are in receipt of free school meal entitlement (FSME). The pupils are drawn from a wide range of primary schools across the city of Belfast. It is an all-ability single-sex girls' school; however, there are boys attending the school full-time for post-16 provision and their outcomes in public examinations are counted in the school's examination data. Over the past four years, the school's enrolment has fluctuated slightly and is currently at 1477 pupils; when the boys enrolled at other schools but attending St. Louise's Comprehensive College full-time are included, the enrolment is 1556 pupils. The arrangements for the boys attending the school full-time are in liaison and agreement with the employing authority, the Education Authority and the Department of Education (DE) and are fully established within the area learning community.

An approved development proposal for the school, currently deferred to September 2019, will reduce the school's admission and enrolment numbers and the school will become co-educational with effect from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.

As a Vincentian College founded on service to the community, the school community takes great pride in the achievements, including the Investors in People Gold Award. The school is an active participant in the West Belfast Area Learning Community, engaging with a number of other post-primary schools. Important links have been made with the primary schools; it is a hub school for the delivery of a teaching and learning programme. It is also involved in a shared education programme with a controlled post-primary school in North Belfast.

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 the senior leaders would be co-operating with the inspectors. 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.

St. Louise's Comprehensive College	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Year 8 Intake	189	194	236	243
Enrolment ¹	1474	1420	1435	1477
% Attendance (NI Average)	93% (92%)	92.4% (93.5%)	91.9% (n/a)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ²	56.5	59.6	59.9	59.6
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	43.8% (647)	39.2% (558)	44.7% (642)	42.0% (620)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	32	34	38	43
No. of newcomers	6	6	16	15

Source: data as verified by the school.

N/A not available

¹ The enrolment figure for each year does not include the boys who attended the school full-time for post-16 provision.

² The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

2. Pupils, parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Sixty-eight percent (1061) of the pupils across the key stages completed an online questionnaire. Overall, almost all of the responses were positive about their experience of the school, with the pupils recognising how the school: cares for them and listens to their views, lets them know how to improve their work, and provides a range of subject choices to meet their needs and prepare them for the next stage of their learning. Forty-five percent of the pupils who responded provided written comments; they expressed their appreciation for the staff, the support they receive pastorally and academically, and the opportunities for them to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

A small number of parents (12) and staff (10) responded to the online questionnaires. The majority of the responses to the parental questionnaire were positive about the life and work of the school, highlighting, for example, the commitment of the staff and leadership and the strong pastoral and community ethos in the school. The very few staff who responded to the online questionnaire indicated good levels of satisfaction with the work of the school.

Issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and representatives of the governors.

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.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the provision and the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards;
- the quality of the provision in English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy; and
- the quality of the provision for the care, welfare and support of the pupils.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they have been reported in the body of the report.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of Provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils who met with inspectors were confident, articulate young people who have pride in their school. They engaged with the inspection team with high levels of courtesy and respect. The pupils who avail of a wide range of enrichment opportunities across the key stages develop well their leadership skills.
- The outcomes for pupils in public examinations are a significant strength.
- The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C has been significantly above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band over the last three years. Over the same period, the proportion of pupils (including those with FSME) attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics has been well above the corresponding NI average for similar schools.
- The GCSE outcomes attained by the pupils in one-half of the individual subjects at grades A* to C³ are more than ten percentage points above the corresponding NI subject averages.
- The proportion of pupils attaining A* to C in at least three A levels or equivalents has been significantly above the NI average (when benchmarked against schools in the same FSME band) for the past three years. Almost all subjects are within five percentage points or above the corresponding NI subject averages at A* to C⁴.
- While the post-16 staying on rates of year 12 and year 13 are above the corresponding NI averages, a high proportion (around one-fifth) of the pupils at this level have been deemed ineligible for inclusion in the school's headline performance statistics⁵ over the past three years. At post-16, application of the Department of Education's ineligibility criteria in each year, for the last three years, has identified permitted exclusions from the school's headline performance statistics because, for example, the pupils have: undertaken a level 2 (GCSE or equivalent course), were reported at Level 3 (GCE or equivalent) in the previous academic year, would be reported at Level 3 in the next academic year, were hosted elsewhere or left the school system.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy;
- the progression in the pupils' learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

³ In those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages.

⁴ In those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages.

⁵ Summary of Annual Examinations Results (SAER).

6. Quality of Provision

- The pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum across the key stages. The school has made recently the strategic decision to introduce mixed-ability classes at Key Stage 3; this important work has been informed by research-based enquiry, student voice and supported by appropriate staff development.
- Over the past three years, permitted exclusions from the school's headline performance statistics at post-16 have included: a minority (23%) who accessed level 2 provision and did not progress to level 3 within the school; and a minority (15%) of pupils who were reported on previously. Just over one-quarter of pupils undertaking a bridging course left before completing these level 2 studies, while just over one-half progressed to level 3 within the school. In 2018/19 the very few pupils undertaking a 'bridging' course are repeating or studying new level 2 courses along with a level 3 offer.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on aligning pastoral and curricular information through: the introduction of a 'reaching out' team to support transitions; a review of the pastoral programme focused on developing pupils' perceptions of themselves and their learning; and the introduction of 'home groups' to support the pupils' learning and personal and social development. There are therapeutic interventions in the school through music, art therapy and the introduction of a sensory room. A part-time occupational therapist is also employed to develop pupils' resilience and emotional well-being in support of their learning. In addition, the school has reviewed its positive behaviour management policy with a particular focus on reducing the number of pupil suspensions.
- In discussions with the pupils, they reported that they have access to a wide range of curriculum and careers resources and events which inform their decision making.
- The arrangements for admitting pupils to post-16 study need to be kept under review.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the impact of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the careers education, information, advice and guidance;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- The school development planning process is informed by rigorous self-evaluation, a purposeful use of qualitative and quantitative data, and meaningful and extensive consultation which embraces all stakeholders including pupils and parents. The numerous school improvement initiatives converge into a coherent, strategic vision for the school.
- The senior leadership team work collegially and strategically in their clearly defined roles and responsibilities; there is an effective integration of the pastoral and academic priorities for the pupils. The school has identified the need to review the special educational needs (SEN) register and monitor more robustly the SEN provision across the school and the effectiveness of associated interventions. The school's distributed model of leadership extends to middle leaders and post-holders and includes a focus on enquiry-based research on aspects of pedagogy and a clear promotion of teacher professional learning at all levels.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors have detailed knowledge of the life and work of the school extending to individual pupil level. They combine a wide set of complementary skills which are applied well to challenge and support the strategic direction of the school.

8. Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the DE. 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. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

9. Overall effectiveness

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.

Health and safety/accommodation

There is shortage of toilet and changing facilities for male staff and students; this needs addressed as a matter of urgency.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS⁶ and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in St Louise's Comprehensive College achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent at grades A* to C and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band⁷.

The table also includes the percentage of year 12 pupils in St Louise's Comprehensive College achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent, including English and mathematics at grades A* to E. In this instance, there is no NI average available.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	93.4	96.4	97.7
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band⁸</i>	<i>72.2</i>	<i>68.4</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	50.8	52.6	56.9
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band</i>	<i>38.1</i>	<i>38.8</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	98.2	100	100
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	47	43.1	47.8

GCE A level examination results at grades A* to C from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in St. Louise's Comprehensive College achieving three or more GCE A levels, or equivalent, at grades A* to C, compared with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	95.2	96.6	95.4
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	59.9	83.0	75.5
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band</i>	<i>41.0</i>	<i>46.2</i>	<i>N/A</i>

⁶ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁷ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁸ 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 or equivalent

(The three year average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)

Grades A* - C

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	169	169	179

GCSE Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries	School A* to C%	NI A* to C%
Art & Design	71	97.2	80.9
Applied Science (NQF)	33	100	N/A
ASDAN Personal and Social Development	102	100	N/A
Beauty Services (NQF)	21	100	N/A
BTEC First Award in Information and Communication Technology	20	100	N/A
BTEC First Award in Travel and Tourism	26	100	N/A
BTEC First Certificate in Performing Arts Dance	32	90.6	N/A
BTEC Science (General/Combined)	34	100	N/A
Business and Communication Systems	74	90.5	69.9
Dance	9	100	N/A
Design & Technology: Resistant Materials	52	96.2	80.0
Drama	150	100	82.1
Drama (Occupational Studies)	58	100	N/A
English Language	517	84.5	77
English Literature	215	95.8	89.1
French	20	95	78.8
Further Mathematics	45	93.3	85.8
Geography	97	92.8	71.2
History	176	62.5	71.7
Home Economics	31	64.5	74.1
Irish	15	100	97.2
Information and Communication Technology (NQF)	45	100	N/A
Information Technology	101	83.2	76.8
Learning for Life and Work	344	96.5	83.3
Mathematics	516	54.4	52.8
Media Studies	121	99.2	74.5
Music	32	90.6	85.0
Occupational Studies: Business and Services	153	99.3	N/A
Occupational Studies: Design and Creativity	130	100	N/A
OCN NI Certificate in Personal Success and Well Being (NQF)	23	100	N/A
OCN Certificate in Religious Studies (NQF)	54	100	N/A
OCR Cambridge National Certificate in Sports Science	24	100	N/A
Princes Trust Certificate in Personal Development And Employability Skills (NQF)	49	100	N/A
Performing Arts (BTNG)	8	100	N/A
Performing Arts (NQF)	7	100	N/A
Practical Craft (NQF)	22	100	N/A
Religious Studies	376	82.4	74.4
Science (Additional) ⁹	107	92.8	78.6
Science (Core) ¹⁰	109	95.5	45.6
Science General/Combined (NQF)	42	97.6	N/A
Science (Double Award) ¹¹	47	90.4	86.7
Science (Single Award) ¹²	240	77.9	73.6
Sociology	54	77.8	74.7
Spanish	17	94.1	80.6

⁹ In 2 out of the last 3 years

¹⁰ In 2 out of the last 3 years

¹¹ In 1 out of the last 3 years

¹² In 1 out of the last 3 years

Sport/PE Studies	25	100	74.7
Technology & Design	52	96.2	80.0
Travel and Tourism (NQF)	40	100	N/A

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level or equivalent

(The three year average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)

Grades A* to C

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	207	177	151

GCE A level Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries ¹³	School A* to C %	NI A* to C %
Arabic	*	100	N/A
Applied Business Double Award	28	92.9	N/A
Applied Business Single Award	106	84.0	86.9
Applied Information and Communication Technology	116	88.8	N/A
Applied Science	20	80.0	N/A
Art & Design	34	97.1	94.7
Biology	27	85.2	82.7
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Creative I-media Production	55	94.6	N/A
BTEC Diploma in Hospitality	15	93.3	N/A
BTEC Diploma in Performing Arts Acting Qualification	*	100	N/A
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Performing Arts Acting Qualification	19	94.7	N/A
BTEC Diploma in Performing Arts Dance Qualification	26	100	N/A
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Performing Arts Dance Qualification	16	93.8	N/A
BTEC Diploma in Travel and Tourism	*	85.7	N/A
BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Travel and Tourism	27	96.3	N/A
Cambridge Technical Diploma in Business	*	100	N/A
Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma in Business	20	100	N/A
Cambridge Technical Diploma in Sport	27	100	N/A
Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma in Sport	11	100	N/A
Chemistry	13	100	88.5
Dance	15	100	N/A
Design & Technology	15	73.3	67.8
Drama	97	92.8	88.6
Economics	32	84.4	86.5
English Literature	23	100	84.6
French	*	100	90.8
Geography	21	71.4	87.4
Government & Politics	52	90.4	88.4
Health & Social Care Double Award	47	89.4	78.4
Health & Social Care Single Award	77	96.1	86.8
History	59	83.1	84.4
Irish	21	100	95.3
Mathematics	14	64.3	88.6
Media Film and TV Studies	164	89.6	84.8
Moving Image Arts	18	94.4	N/A
Music	12	75.0	87.7
Performing Arts	15	100	86.1
Photography	27	92.6	N/A
Physics	*	100	81.9
Polish	*	75.0	N/A
Religious Studies	66	89.4	88.8
Sociology	41	68.3	75.9
Software Systems Development	11	90.9	N/A
Spanish	*	40	92.6

* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

¹³ Includes boys.

Staying On Rate¹⁴ 2017/18

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	49.5	72.2
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	74.2	88.2

Leavers' destinations¹⁵ 2016/17

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from St Louise's Comprehensive College who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

	NI No.(%)	School No.(%)	NI Yr12 (%)	School Yr12 (%)	NI Yr13 (%)	School Yr13 (%)	NI Yr14 (%)	School Yr14 (%)	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	12256	245		8		26		226			
Employment	1497 (12.2%)	68 (27.8)	6.7%	12.5 %	21.9%	30.7%	12.2%	26.5%			
Institute of Further Education	5512 (45.0%)	42 (17.1)	60.9%	62.5 %	49.2%	34.6%	45.0%	11.9%	17	10	10
Institute of Higher Education ¹⁶	2652 (21.6%)	127 (51.8)	*	0	*	0	21.6%	56.1%	0	0	127
Training ¹⁷	1924 (15.7%)	*	28.0%	0	17.9%	0	15.7%	*			
Unemployment	448 (3.7%)	#	#	0	6.4%	11.5%	3.7%	#			
Others	223 (1.8%)	9 (3.7)	#	25%	#	23.07%	1.8%	#			

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2016/17 - NON-GRAMMAR SCHOOLS¹⁸

- *fewer than 5 cases
- # figures suppressed

¹⁴ The percentage of pupils who stay on at school compared with the Northern Ireland average for all schools, this rate is calculated in terms of pupils who progress their level of study, whether at their original or a new school. Pupils that move schools between years are counted as 'staying on' at their original school as they are progressing their study within the school system.

¹⁵ Destination is defined by Institution. Institutions may provide courses at both Further and Higher Education levels.

¹⁶ Includes universities and teacher training colleges.

¹⁷ Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for the Economy. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

¹⁸ Excludes special and independent schools.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

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

The arrangements for this inspection included: meetings with the senior leadership team and representatives from the governors; formal discussions with some pupils (in groups); review of documentation and data; 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 management¹⁹:

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

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹⁹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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.

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