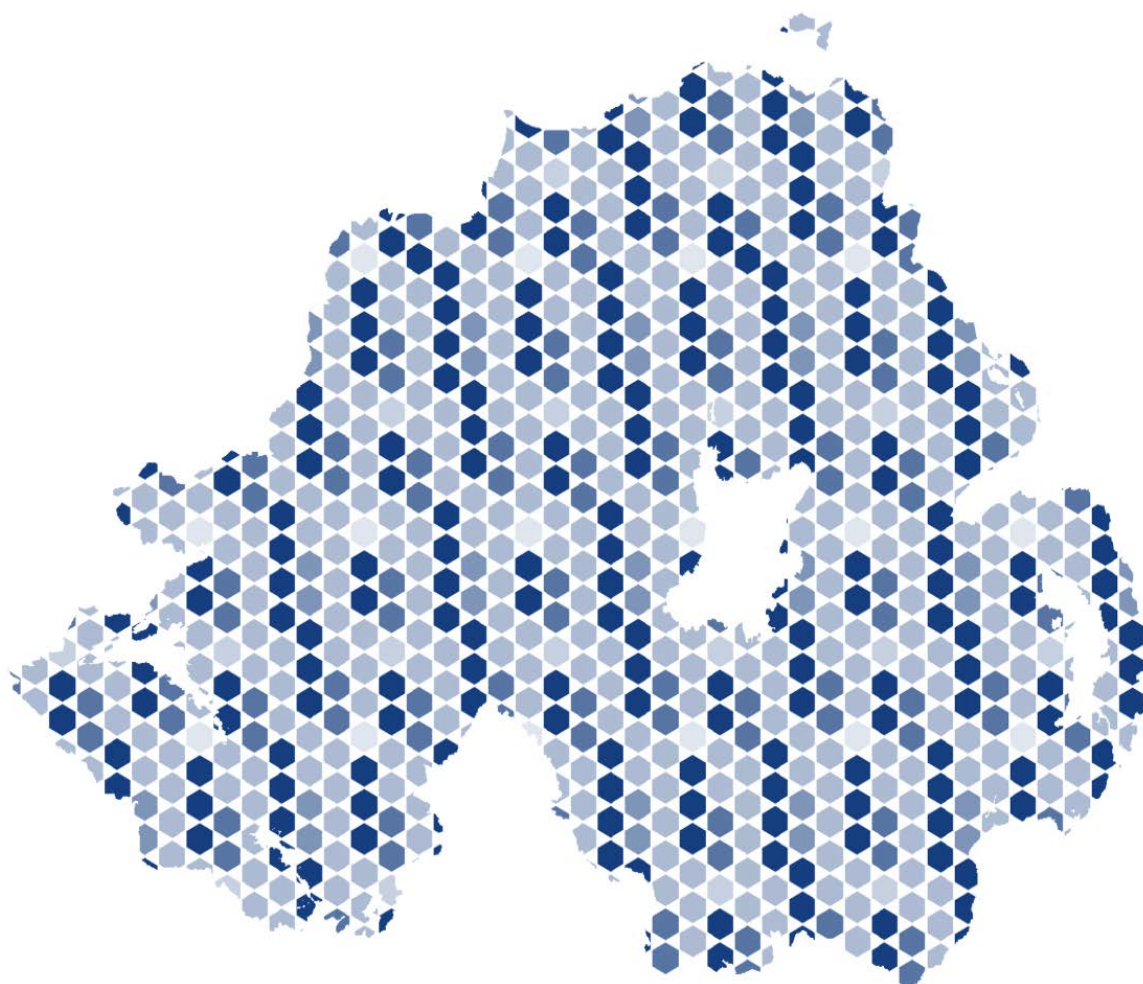


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ashfield Girls' High School,
Belfast

All girls, controlled, non-selective 11-18 school

Report of a Sustaining
Improvement 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



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Ashfield Girls' High School, County Antrim (121-0014)

Introduction

The previous inspection, in November 2013, evaluated the overall effectiveness of Ashfield Girls' High School as good¹. The senior leadership team has remained stable since that date. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 19 and 20 January 2017.

Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of enquiry during the SII were:

- to improve the quality of the provision for mathematics/numeracy and the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations; and
- to improve the standards attained by all of the pupils through the identification and dissemination of effective practice by leadership and management at all levels.

Key findings

- Good progress has been made by the school in improving the standards attained by the pupils in GCSE mathematics at grades A* to C, which have increased by ten percentage points since 2014 and are now in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. The action plan for the mathematics department is well-informed by the analysis of a range of qualitative and quantitative data; consequently, the planning for learning shows a greater awareness of the individual needs of the pupils and a greater range of teaching strategies to meet these needs. There is also a more cohesive whole-school approach to the development of the pupils' numeracy skills to allow for progression.
- Overall, there remains a need to raise further the outcomes attained by the pupils at GCSE level or equivalent. Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C has been on a downward trend and remains below the NI average for similar schools. The data supplied by the school shows that there is undue variation in the performance of individual subjects at GCSE level. The self-evaluation process across the school is not sufficiently robust to identify and address this decline in outcomes.
- The school is improving the consistency of the quality of the learning experiences of the pupils; the associated strategies are, however, very recent and are at too early a stage of development for the impact to be measured.

¹ From September 2015, a school previously evaluated as good has been reported as the school demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding now reflect² the guidance issued by the relevant Departments.

Conclusion

Ashfield Girls High School has not demonstrated sufficiently the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners; this will be reflected in the future arrangements for inspection of the school.

² From January 2017, arrangements previously evaluated as comprehensive are reported as **reflect** the guidance.

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