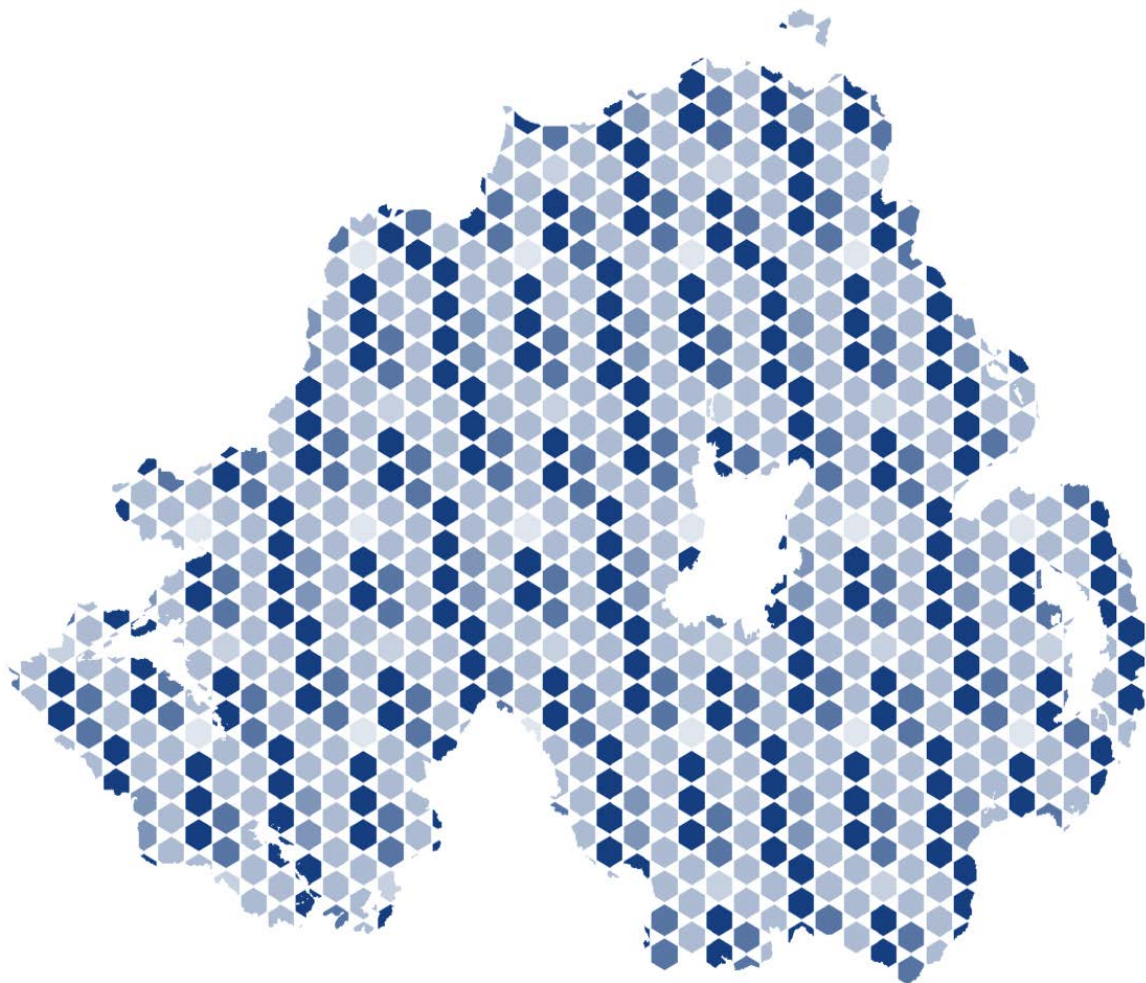


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Lismore Comprehensive School, Craigavon, County Armagh

11-18, comprehensive, co-educational DE Ref No (523-0213)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in May 2019



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 Lismore Comprehensive School, Craigavon, County Armagh (523-0213)

Introduction

The previous inspection in March 2016¹ evaluated the overall effectiveness of Lismore Comprehensive School as demonstrating the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

In the interim period, a development proposal for two Learning Support Centres, Key Stage (KS) 3 and KS4, and a KS3/4 Autistic Spectrum Disorder centre was approved in March 2018, with effect from September 2018. Additional modular accommodation is in the process of being placed on site.

There has been re-structuring and revision of job descriptions and roles, including at senior leadership, to support further the role and work of middle leaders. Appointments have included a number of key appointments at senior and middle leadership. Almost one-half of the middle leaders are newly appointed since the last inspection, with appointments to heads of department and heads of year roles. There is a restructured Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance team and the safeguarding team has been extended. Over one-third of the teaching staff are newly-appointed to the school since the last inspection.

A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted in May 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 the SLT would be co-operating with the inspection. 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.

Focus of the inspection

The purpose of the SII was to evaluate 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 inquiry during the SII were the school's actions to:

- develop further the capacity of the middle leaders in monitoring the impact of actions to promote school improvement; and
- develop further the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG).

Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking and impact of the identified actions associated with the lines of inquiry.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/post-primary-inspection-lismore-comprehensive-school-craigavon.pdf>

Key findings

- The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C, and including English and mathematics, is below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools². At post-16 the proportion of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C has increased from 31.7% in 2016 to 62.7% in 2018 and is now well above the NI average for similar schools.
- Since the last inspection, the school has prioritised the capacity building and professional development of middle leaders. Data analysis by heads of department and heads of years, working with the SLT, is focused on pupil progress, attainment and school improvement. Middle leaders have availed of bespoke staff development, including through accredited courses and in-school training, as well as a number of acting up opportunities.
- Key policies have been developed through consultation; namely Leadership for Learning, Learning and Teaching and Behaviour for Learning policies. The new school development plan is underpinned by wide consultation and robust self-evaluation of the provision to identify appropriate priorities for development. Importantly, the self-evaluation and action planning of middle leaders is aligned to these priorities. Appropriately, there is on-going, cyclical review of the curriculum offer to address the needs of specific cohorts of pupils, with consideration of the currency and career progression of the qualifications offered. The school's preventative curriculum is responsive to the needs of both individual pupils and the wider school community.
- Through the establishment of the restructured team, the provision for CEIAG has been evaluated and reviewed. As a consequence, there has been whole school CEIAG inset and the development of a specifically tailored CEIAG programme for each year group, along with tailored inset for teachers delivering the programme. Since the last inspection, the programme has been aligned better to the planning for curriculum. Pupils at post-16 have benefitted from a range of initiatives and industrial placements which inform well their understanding of the progression pathways available to them.
- During the inspection, the inspectors engaged in discussion with groups of pupils from across the key stages. The pupils expressed their enjoyment of school life and value the support and guidance they receive in relation to their well-being; they appreciate how the assemblies address contemporary issues. They spoke positively about the opportunities to develop interpersonal and leadership skills, such as through the peer mentor roles and the extra-curricular activities they benefit from. The KS 4 and post-16 pupils appreciate the use of a range of communication tools to provide awareness of available CEIAG opportunities. They reflected on the support of their teachers, careers guidance interviews and events, and a range of external speakers, including past pupils in making decisions about pathways.

² In the same free school meal band.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. There is an established rolling review of the child protection/safeguarding and pastoral policies. In discussion 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. Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of action short of strike being taken by almost all of the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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