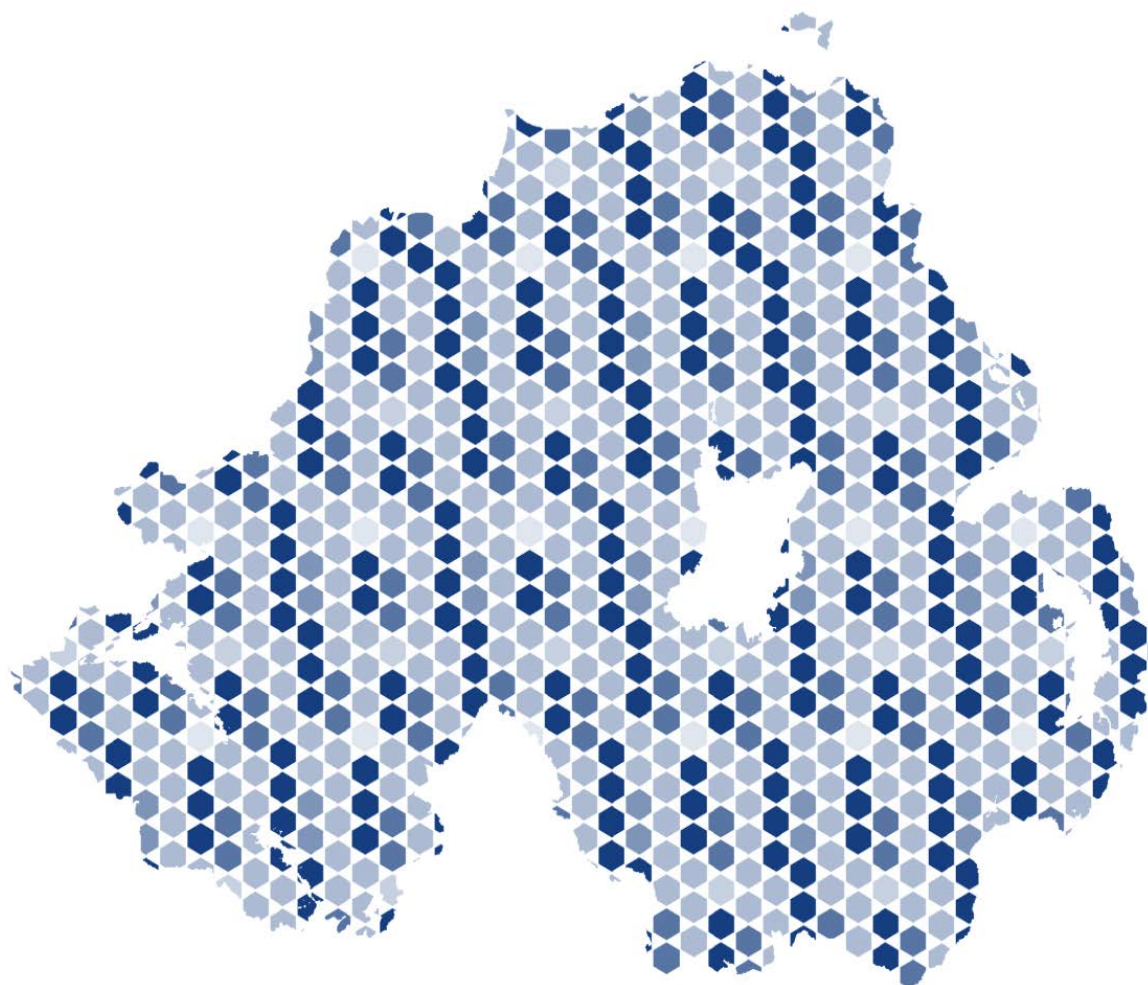


Education and Training Inspectorate POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Mary's Limavady, County Derry

11-18, non-selective, co-educational maintained college DE Ref No (223-0077)

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Mary's Limavady, County Derry (223-0077)

Introduction

St Mary's Limavady took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII) in January 2016. In the interim, there have been significant changes in the senior leadership of the school, including the review of the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team (SLT) which are now clearly aligned to the school development plan priorities. A SII was conducted in March 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 only members of 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 the curriculum to meet the needs of and improve outcomes for all learners; and
- improve learning and teaching experiences in the classroom.

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.

Key findings

- Priority has been given, in consultation with pupils, parents and staff to the development of the curriculum at key stage 4 and post-16. Appropriately, the school keeps under review the curriculum offer, with consideration of the currency and career progression of the qualifications offered. As a consequence the proportion of pupils undertaking a level 2 (GCSE or equivalent) one year bridging course at post-16 has reduced from one-third of the year thirteen cohort in 2017 to one-sixth in the current academic year.
- Over the last three years, the outcomes for pupils at both GCSE and post-16 have increased and are well above the corresponding Northern Ireland (NI) averages for similar schools.
- The school's actions to improve learning and teaching experiences in the classroom has been prioritised through a staff development programme, with opportunities to share good practice and engage in peer observations. As a result a toolkit for learning and teaching has been developed with agreed principles of effective learning and teaching to guide and support staff.

- The pupil voice has become more prevalent in the decision making of the school through: focused learning discussion groups; and, student council meetings. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils discussed maturely the learning strategies employed in their lessons which they reported were fun and engaging. They spoke about the mutual respect and trust between teachers and pupils and expressed their appreciation, in particular, for the help and support the teachers provide. The pupils value the leadership opportunities available to them as peer mentors and through participation in social justice activities. They also spoke about the benefits of being shared education ambassadors with pupils from a local controlled post-primary school.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The pupils, with whom the inspectors met, reported that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. 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.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by most of 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.

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