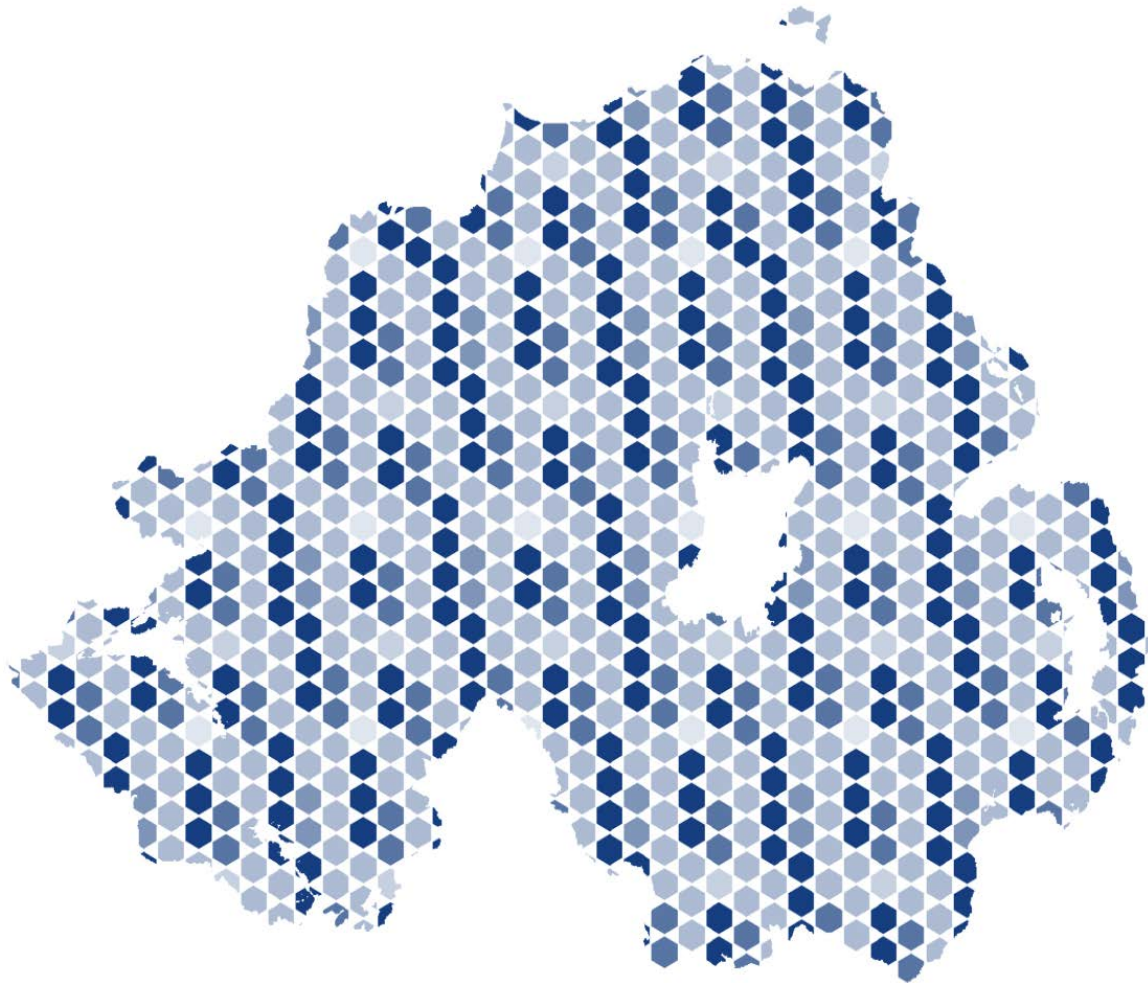


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena, County Antrim

11-18 co-educational voluntary grammar school DE Ref No (342-0010)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection in February 2019

Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena, County Antrim (342-0010)

Introduction

The previous inspection in February 2016¹ evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Louis Grammar School as having a high level of capacity for sustained improvement. Currently, work is ongoing to transform the former convent house into a creative and expressive centre, providing bespoke teaching spaces for art, music, drama and moving image arts. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted in February 2019.

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. As part of the inspection, the school also provided evidence of the provision for safeguarding.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were the school's actions to:

- develop further the effectiveness of learning and teaching; and
- build the capacity of teachers at all levels to lead internal staff development.

Key findings

- In the period since the last inspection, the very high standards attained by the pupils have been sustained at both GCSE and A level; all of the subjects are performing in line with, or above, the respective Northern Ireland subject averages. It is notable that, in 2018, boys and girls attained similarly high grades at GCSE and A level.
- The evidence presented during the SII indicates that learning, teaching and developing learning leaders are integral to school improvement. The school's rationale for developing further the effectiveness of learning and teaching is founded on rigorous self-evaluation. The associated action plan is purposeful and there is regular, extensive monitoring of its implementation across the departments. The specific targets, including maximising the impact of collaborative working and enhancing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and teaching, are relevant and have very practical applications in classroom practice.
- All the lessons observed during the SII were very good. Detailed planning underpins well-structured lessons in which: the teachers review concisely the previous learning and use a wide range of resources, including ICT, to present the pupils with fresh challenges; the pupils work well independently or, when appropriate, collaborate effectively with their peers; and, by applying their knowledge in a variety of tasks, the pupils demonstrate their understanding of new concepts.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/post-primary-inspection-st-louis-grammar-school-ballymena.pdf>

All staff have benefited from focused staff development and consequently teachers, from a wide range of subject departments, now lead in-school staff development. A key strength of these sessions is that they are internally led by staff who have a close knowledge of their colleagues' strengths and professional aspirations, and focus sharply on improving the pupils' learning experiences and their achievements.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect the guidance from the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe and secure in school; they know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being. The pupils value highly the support provided by their teachers.

Conclusion

St Louis Grammar School continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the pupils. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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