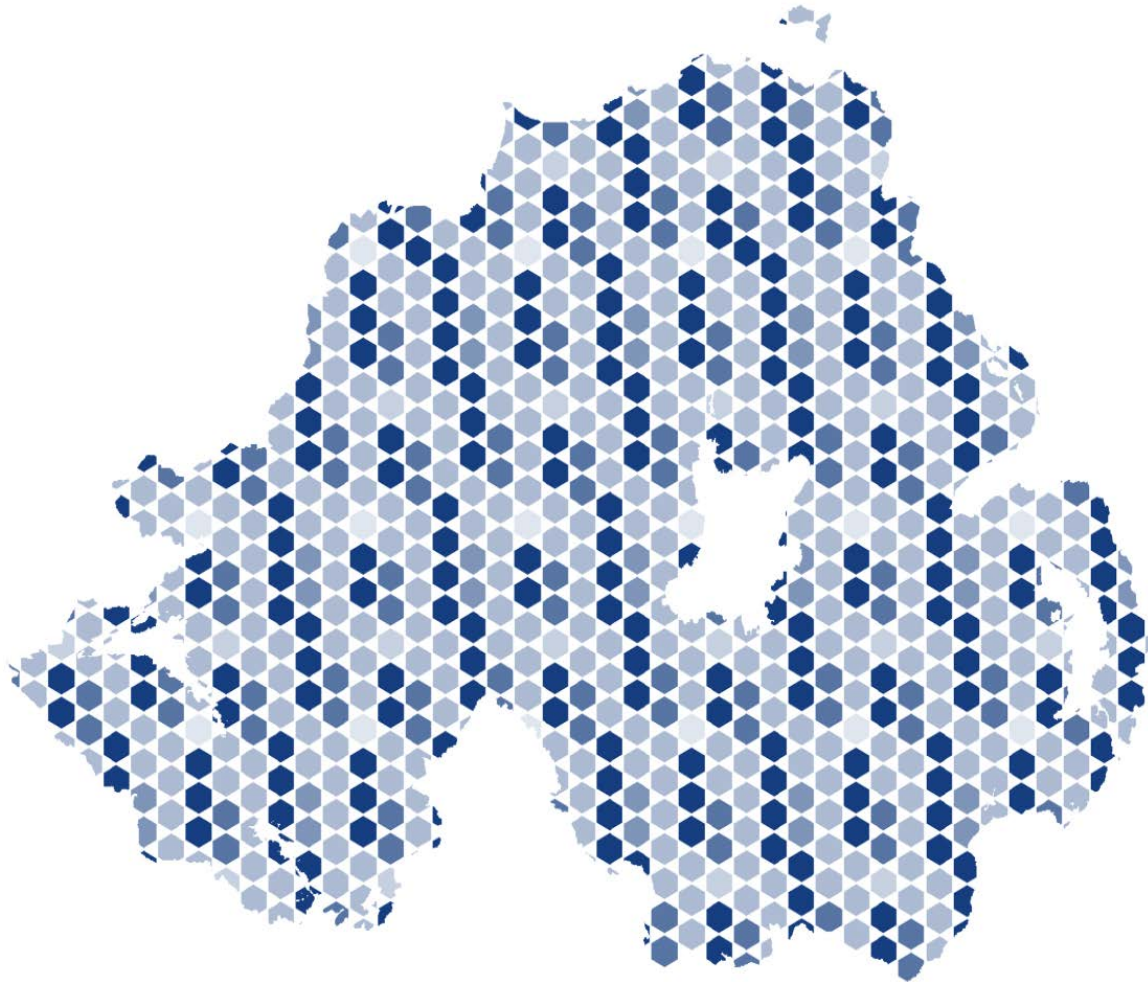


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Dundonald High School,
Belfast

Controlled, co-educational, non-selective 11-16 school

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
(Involving Action Short of Strike) in
December 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF DUNDONALD HIGH SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT16 0DD (421-0262)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Dundonald High School in January 2017¹ which concluded that the school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

The main areas identified for improvement were the need to:

- improve the quality of the planning, learning, teaching and assessment across the school;
- improve the provision in English, mathematics, the moderate learning difficulties (MLD) unit and for those pupils identified with additional educational needs;
- raise the standards attained for all the pupils, including in public examinations; and
- build the strategic capacity, at all levels, of the senior and middle leadership.

During the original inspection, over one-half (52%) of the lessons observed had important areas for improvement or required significant improvement; the provision for the large proportion of pupils in the mainstream school identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning required urgent improvement; the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) across the school had significant areas for improvement; and the school's approach to the care and welfare of the pupils did not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes. The quality of the provision in the MLD Unit was evaluated as requiring urgent improvement; the quality of the provision in English was evaluated as requiring significant improvement and the quality of provision in mathematics was evaluated as having important areas of improvement.

The Department of Education entered the school into the Formal Intervention Process under the Every School a Good School² policy on 28 February 2017.

The school's post-inspection action plans identified a number of key actions and targets to progress the improvement work and raise standards.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in February 2018; this was impacted by action short of strike. The progress being made in the areas for improvement were discussed with the senior leadership team (SLT). A follow-up inspection was carried out in December 2018.

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 ETI. Prior to the follow-up inspection, the school informed the ETI that there would be co-operation by the SLT. 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 follow-up inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/follow-up-inspection-dundonald-high-school-421-0262.PDF>

² <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/every-school-good-school-policy-school-improvement>

In the interval since the initial inspection, the school received external support from the Education Authority in relation to the provision in the English and mathematics departments; and the SLT has undertaken training in a programme of professional development.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- the appointment of a new vice-principal has coincided with the restructuring of the SLT;
- the enrolment has increased significantly from 276 in 2016 to 479 pupils in 2018;
- the number of teaching staff has increased from 27 to 34 teachers;
- the school is phasing in mixed-ability classes in KS3; and
- the school is implementing a new planning format and schemes of work designed to promote consistency in learning and teaching across the school, and deliver appropriate progression.

Views of parents and staff

A small number of parents (19) responded to the online questionnaire. The majority of these responses were positive about the life and work of the school, highlighting, for example, the commitment of the staff and leadership and the pastoral support provided by the school. The few issues raised in the questionnaire responses were discussed with the principal and the chair of the governors.

The online questionnaire information was not distributed to staff. Therefore it is not possible to report on the views of staff.

Key findings

- While the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalents at grades A* to C has increased from 58.1% in 2016 to 67.5% in 2018 and is in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools, when English and mathematics are included attainment at this measure remains well below the NI average for similar schools.
- The attainment of the pupils entitled to free school meals also remains well below the average for similar schools.
- The outcomes for learners in English and Mathematics remain areas requiring significant improvement. It is encouraging that more pupils are achieving at GCSE grades A*-C in GCSE English, however the outcomes for pupils in 2018 remain significantly below the NI average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-C in GCSE mathematics has fluctuated but remains below the NI average for similar schools.
- The school data indicates that, over the past three years, there is a decrease in the rate of suspensions. However the rate of attendance has been consistently below the NI average.

- A pupil assessment-tracking system has been developed to monitor the progress of the pupils in the MLD Unit; the individual educational plan format has been reviewed; and, a standard template is now in use across the school. The school has identified the need to develop further the resources within the MLD unit to include appropriate reading books and opportunities for pupils to use Information and Communication Technology.
- The school is focusing on using better the quantitative and qualitative data to target underachievement and implement intervention strategies in order to improve the standards achieved by all of the pupils.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact of actions taken and the extent to which the significant areas for improvement have been addressed, namely to:

- improve the quality of the planning, learning, teaching and assessment across the school;
- improve the provision in English, mathematics, the MLD unit and for those pupils identified with additional educational needs;
- raise the standards attained for all the pupils, including in public examinations; and
- build the strategic capacity, at all levels, of the senior and middle leadership.

Consequently, there remains a need for Dundonald High School to address urgently the significant areas for improvement³.

CONCLUSION

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.

³ The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Education Authority and employing authority that they are working with the school in relation to the inspection report.

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