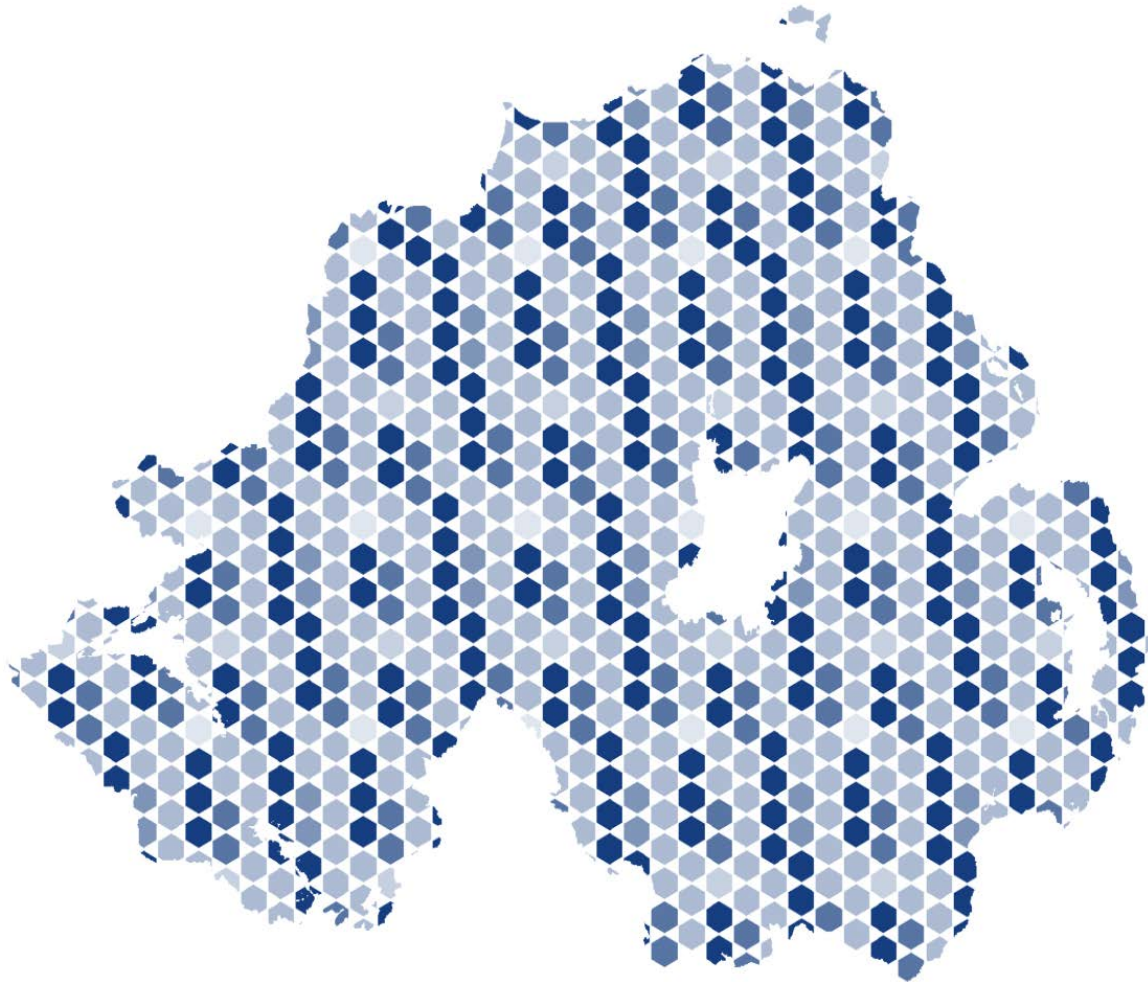


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Lurgan Junior High School

Controlled 11-14 all-ability school

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
(Involving Action Short of Strike)
in November 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LURGAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, COUNTY ARMAGH, BT66 8SU (521-0271)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Lurgan Junior High School in May 2016¹ which concluded that the school needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement identified in the inspection included the need to:

- improve the quality of planning, teaching and assessment in order to promote more successful learning; and
- increase accountability at all levels, through establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities and monitoring and evaluating more systematically the quality of the provision and outcomes.

The school's action plans identified key actions to promote improvement and were adjusted appropriately in light of feedback given by the ETI. The progress made in the areas for improvement was discussed with the school during the interim follow-up inspection visit carried out by the ETI in May 2017. The school reports that they received good support in a range of areas, including training from the Education Authority.

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 limited co-operation with the inspectors. The ETI have 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.

In the interval since the initial inspection, changes and actions which affect the work of the school include:

- the enrolment of the school has increased from 618 to 714 pupils and the school is currently oversubscribed in Year 8;
- the permanent appointments of a vice-principal with responsibility for the curriculum and two senior leaders, resulting in the restructuring of the School Improvement and Leadership Team (SILT) and revision of its roles and responsibilities;
- a new line management structure has been put in place and furthermore, there have been personnel changes at middle management level; and
- the school has reviewed, through appropriate risk assessments and external support, the multiple unsecured access points to the school. Main access points have been secured and perimeter fencing is being progressed.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/post-primary-inspection-lurgan-junior-high-school.pdf>

Views of parents and staff

One percent of parents (7) and 16% of staff (10) responded to the re-issued online questionnaire. Nearly all of the parental responses expressed satisfaction with their child's experiences in the school; in particular, they valued the use of technology in allowing them to actively support their child's learning and monitor their progress. The responses from the staff questionnaires were almost wholly positive and highlighted the high priority given to staff development. The issues raised in the questionnaire returns were discussed with the principal and the representatives of the board of governors.

Key Findings

A Charter for School Improvement, focused on promoting a culture of 'Dare to Dream', has been established with research-based actions informing the school's work to address the areas for improvement identified during the initial inspection. A more dynamic community of learning involving pupil, parent and school is increasingly being fostered through meaningful use of technology.

Roles and responsibilities, at all levels, are more clearly defined with an improved line management structure supporting greater levels of accountability. High priority has been given to aligning well continuing professional development with the areas for improvement identified. The focus is now on facilitating effective learning and teaching with appropriate levels of challenge and progression.

The SILT has mapped planning across the curriculum, focusing on skills development. Importantly, this has been supported by the development of the tracking and reporting systems used to monitor individual pupil progression. Meaningful use of data includes for example, the identification of the need to develop extended writing opportunities for particular groups of pupils and across the curriculum.

There is a recognition that there needs to be robust monitoring of the performance and pastoral data at all levels to evaluate the impact of improvement actions on the provision for learning and progression of all pupils, year on year.

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

- improve the quality of planning, teaching and assessment in order to promote more successful learning; and
- increase accountability at all levels, through establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities and monitoring and evaluating more systematically the quality of the provision and outcomes.

Consequently, there remains a need for Lurgan Junior High to continue to address these important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the 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 being provided for the children/pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

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