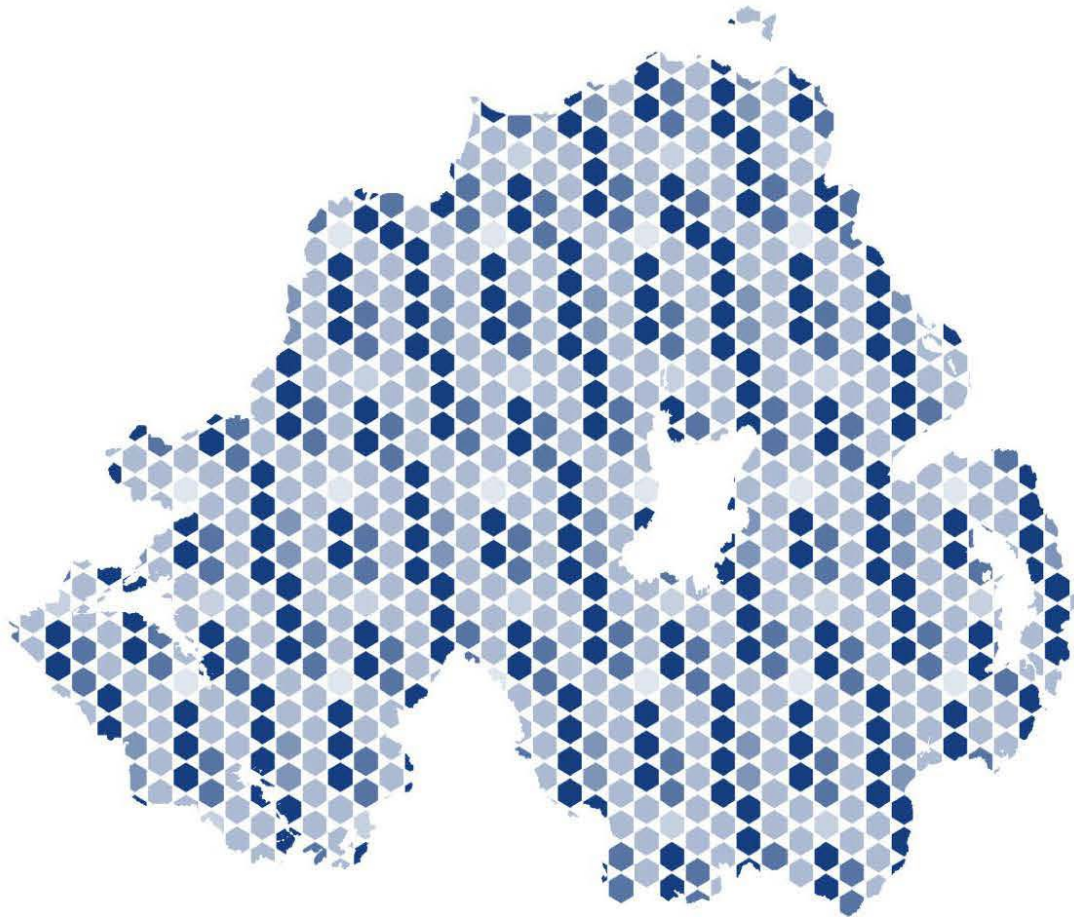


Education and Training Inspectorate POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Abbey Community College, Newtownabbey, County Antrim

Controlled, Co-educational 11-18 DE Ref No: 321-0313

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
December 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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1. Context

Abbey Community College attracts its pupils from Newtownabbey and surrounding area, as well as from a widening catchment area, including Greenisland, Carrickfergus, Belfast and Glengormley. The total enrolment has increased by almost one-fifth since the last inspection in 2017 and the school is now oversubscribed at entry to year 8; there were 75 pupils enrolled at post-16 in 2018/2019. The school is a member of the Newtownabbey Area Learning Community through which a cluster for careers co-ordinators has recently been established.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute and also workload and other management issues. The industrial action includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspection. The leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to safeguarding responsibilities and governance. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the standards of education and professional practice among teachers 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.

The school provided the following data but did not validate it:

Abbey Community College	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Year 8 Intake	-	-	127	-	153	-	154	-
Total Enrolment	580	-	591	-	644	-	689	-
Attendance (NI Average*)	-	90.0 (91.8)	-	91.0 (91.9)		90.6		N/A
Free School Meal Entitlement	290	50.00%	285	48.22%	298	46.27%	327	47.46%
Pupils on SEN Register	185	31.90%	192	32.49%	235	36.49%	237	34.40%
No of Pupils with Statements	26	-	31	-	44	-	61	-
No of Newcomer Pupils	0	-	0	-	*	-	9	-

* Northern Ireland Statistic & Research Agency: Attendance at grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools: Detailed Statistics - 2017/18, 2018/19

* Less than 5.

2. Pupils', parents' and staff questionnaire responses

As a result of the action short of strike, the online questionnaire information was not distributed to pupils, parents and staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of parents and staff.

Where it has been possible to report on the views of pupils through discussions with inspectors, these views have been reported in the body of the report.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the learners;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on technology and design in this inspection.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of the provision and the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy; mathematics and numeracy; and technology and design; and
- the quality and impact of the provision for care, welfare and support of the pupils.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they have been reported in the body of the report.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils who met with inspectors were confident and articulate. They engaged readily to express clearly their views and experiences of how they are progressing in school. The pupils recognise how they are developing leadership skills through their roles as prefects, anti-bullying ambassadors, peer mentors, and through their active involvement in the school council and eco-council.

The analysis that follows is based on the data provided by the school. The school did not validate the data; the ETI were unable to consider and discuss the school's evaluations of outcomes for learners or discuss the context and background to the performance of the pupils.

- Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to C has risen from 57% in 2017 to 96% in 2019.
- Over the same period, the proportion of pupils, including those pupils entitled to free school meals attaining five or more GCSE qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to C and including English and mathematics, has fluctuated.
- The proportion of pupils attaining three or more GCE A level qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A* to C has been consistently well above the Northern Ireland average (for schools in the same free school (FSM) meal band).

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English and literacy; mathematics and numeracy; and technology and design;
- the progression in the pupils' learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they enjoy their learning and value the pastoral and academic support provided by the staff. The senior pupils expressed their appreciation of the work experience opportunities and enrichment programmes available to them.
- At post-16, the curriculum offer does not meet the entitlement framework.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the impact of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision;

- the quality of provision in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy and technology and design across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- The governors are committed to, and have a detailed knowledge of, the work and life of the school, particularly in the areas of safeguarding, pastoral care and staffing. They are well informed about the outcomes for the pupils and they report that they have identified the need to raise further the standards at GCSE. It will be important to monitor closely the outcomes for pupils at this level.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff continue to plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the post-16 provision in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the effectiveness and impact of the senior leadership of the school;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school. The pupils report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

9. Overall effectiveness

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. The school is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

APPENDIX A

Examination performance and other statistical data

The school provided the following data but did not validate it; the ETI was unable to consider and discuss the school's evaluations of outcomes for learners or discuss the context and background to the performance of the pupils.

Data Year 12 performance

GCSE and GCSE Equivalent Subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE and Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	57.39	67.07	96.05
<i>The NI average for non-grammar schools in the same FSM band*</i>	68.4	79.5	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	39.13	23.17	38.16
<i>The NI average for non-grammar schools in the same FSM band*</i>	38.6	52.5	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	83.48	91.46	98.68
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to FSM achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A - C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	32.14	8.11	35.9

* Median for each year from the Department of Education benchmarking Quartiles for non-grammar schools in the same FSM band.

[BENCHMARKING DATA GCSE & Level 3 Post-primary Schools 2016/17](#)

[BENCHMARKING DATA GCSE & Level 3 Post-primary Schools 2017/18](#)

Data Year 14 performance

GCE A Level or equivalent	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Percentage of Year 14 taking A levels and Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	90	99	95.35
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A levels	62.5	63.41	67.44
<i>The NI average for non-grammar schools in the same FSM band*</i>	46.2	54.2	N/A
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A levels	97.5	100	100

* Median for each year from the Department of Education benchmarking Quartiles for non-grammar schools in the same FSM band.

Report Tables will be reported by ETI within the body of their report.

Source: Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks.

Staying on rate 2018/19

% Yr12 staying on to Yr13	27.1	NI Av. Year 13	48.7
% Yr13 staying on to Yr14	83.0	NI Av. Year 14	74.2

Leavers' Destinations 2017/18

	NI No & %	School No & %	NI Yr12 No & %	School Yr12 No & %	NI Yr13 No & %	School Yr13 No & %	NI Yr14 No & %	School Yr14 No & %	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 and above (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	11802 100%	118 100%	5547 100%	67 100%	1275 100%	8 100%	4980 100%	43 100%			
Employment	1562 13.2%	23 19.5%	391 7%	7 10.4%	322 25.3%	3 37.5%	849 17%	13 30.2%			
Institute of Further Education	5159 43.7%	54 45.8%	3417 61.6%	50 74.6%	588 46.1%	0 0%	1154 23.2%	4 9.3%	1	49	4
Institute of Higher Education**	2622 22.2%	17 14.4%	* *	0 0%	* *	0 0%	# #	17 39.5%		0	17
Training***	1823 15.4%	5 4.2%	1445 26.1%	1 1.5%	209 16.4%	2 25%	169 3.4%	2 4.7%			
Unemployment	391 3.3%	5 4.2%	156 2.8%	2 3%	90 7.1%	0 0%	145 2.9%	3 7%			
Others	245 2.1%	14 11.9%	138 2.5%	7 10.4%	# #	3 37.5%	# #	4 9.3%			

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2017/18 NON-GRAMMAR SCHOOLS (excludes special and independent schools).

* Fewer than 5 cases.

Figures suppressed.

** Includes universities and teacher training colleges.

*** Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for the Economy. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication is available on the [ETI website: http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary](http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary).

The arrangements for this inspection included: meetings with leadership, including representatives from the governors; formal discussions with some pupils (in groups), review of safeguarding documentation and data provided but not validated by the school; and the opportunity for all pupils, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number returned
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Pupil	*
Parents	*
Teacher	*
Support staff	*

* As a result of the action short of strike, the online questionnaire information was not distributed to pupils, parents and staff.

The tabulated SIMS information has not been verified by the school.

GCSE Grading 2019

The Department of Education has indicated there are no plans to change school performance measures at A*-C with the introduction of the new C* grade. For GCSEs graded 9-1 this performance measure will be 9-4. For the ETI, data on performance in public examinations continues to be only one of the measures that contributes to the evaluation of outcomes for learners.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management (and the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable):

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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