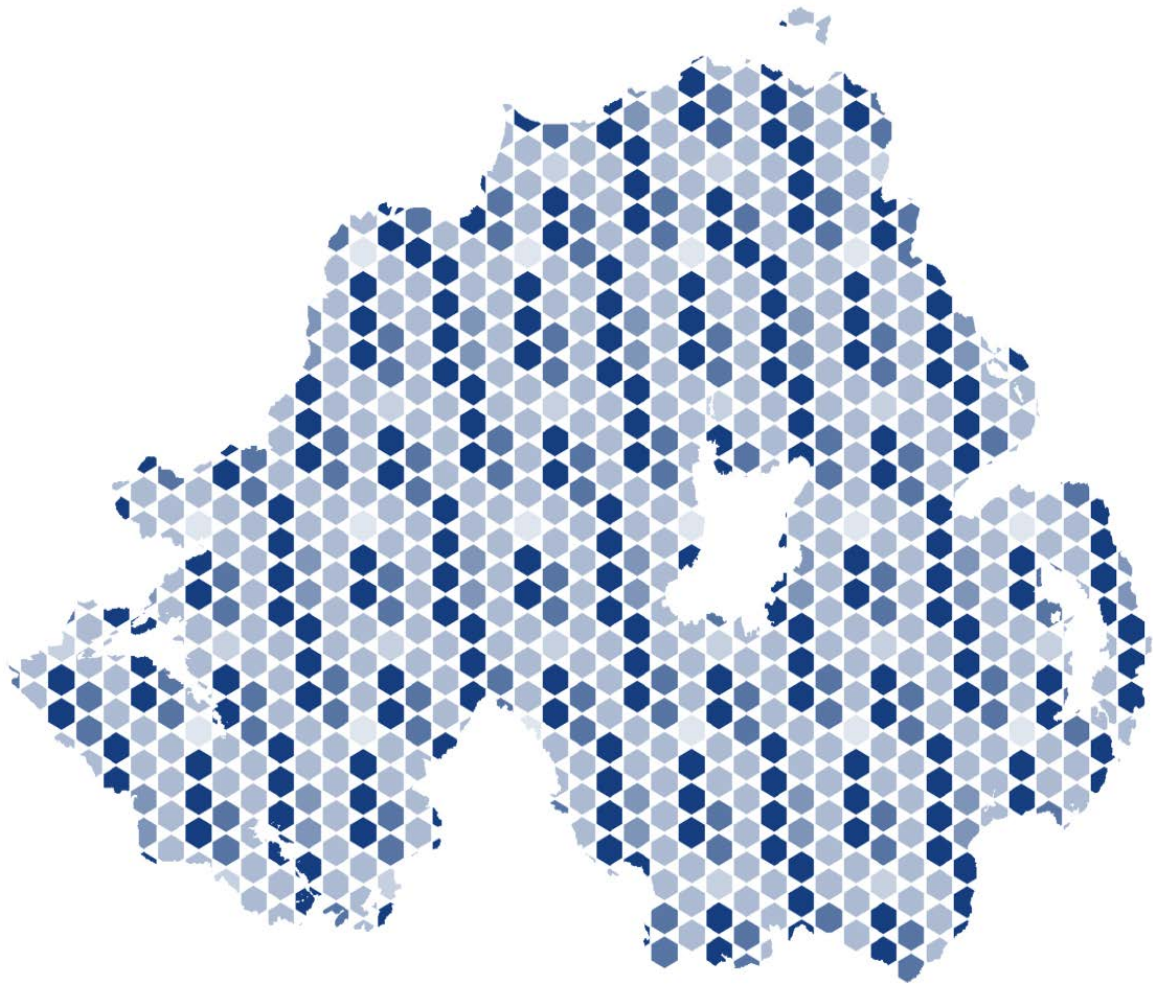


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Christian Brothers' Grammar
School, Omagh, County Tyrone

Voluntary grammar, boys', 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
December 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Christian Brothers' Grammar School is an Edmund Rice Trust School for boys situated in the town of Omagh. Approximately one-third of its pupils come from the town and the remainder from the local and wider rural areas. In recent years, the school has been oversubscribed for entry to year 8 and for two of the past three years, the Department of Education has temporarily varied the school's enrolment number. The principal was appointed in March 2016, having been in an acting capacity for the previous year; since then, there have been appointments to and restructuring of the senior leadership team, as well as a series of further appointments throughout the school. The school is preparing to: begin to move away from academic selection for entry to the school from September 2018; and, for its move to the Strule Shared Education Campus which is currently due to open in 2021.

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 most of the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspectors and that the principal and all of the senior leadership team would. 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 inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

Christian Brothers' Grammar School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Year 8 Intake	137	141	139	139
Enrolment	968	976	977	958
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.7 (95.6)	94.5 (93.5)	94.5 (n/a)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ¹	21.17	23.25	21.7	20.25
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	11.16 (108)	10.86 (106)	10.95 (107)	10.78 (104)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the school	17	19	21	20
No. of newcomers	*	0	0	0

Source: data as held by the school.

* Fewer than five pupils

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on information and communications technology (ICT) in this inspection.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

2. Views of parents and staff

Eight percent of parents (65) and 42% of staff (49) responded to the online questionnaires. Most of the responses to the parental questionnaires indicated satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The parents' written comments affirmed, in particular, the supportive learning environment provided for the pupils and the effective transition from primary school into year 8. A minority of parents raised concerns, in the written responses, in relation to specific individual issues. Most of the responses to the staff questionnaires were positive, stressing the positive learning environment enabling pupils to progress, well prepared for the future. The written comments from staff highlighted, in particular, the school's collegial working environment and the staff's pride in supporting pupils to achieve their potential. A small number of specific individual concerns were also raised. The issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and governors.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary inspection is to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- 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.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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, mathematics and ICT; and
- the quality and impact of the provision for care, welfare and support of the pupils, including special educational needs.

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

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- Throughout the school, at the time of inspection, there was a clear sense of order and calm, with the pupils displaying high levels of self-discipline. The pupils who met with inspectors were articulate and confident; they have positive dispositions to their school and spoke respectfully about their teachers and the help they receive with their learning. There are significant levels of participation and achievement in a wide range of sporting and charitable activities. Through a range of leadership roles, for example, peer mentoring and external awards, the senior pupils are being encouraged to: develop empathy for others and in particular, a social conscience; develop further their wider skills and dispositions; and, make a positive contribution to their school, the local community and beyond.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE qualifications at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for selective schools in the same free school meals band.
- The outcomes attained by the pupils in most of the individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A* to B are in line with or above the corresponding NI subject averages over the past three years.
- Over the same period, at GCE A level or equivalent the percentage of pupils attaining at grades A* to C in at least three subjects, is in line with the NI average. Over four-fifths of the subjects are in line with or above the respective three-year subject average at grades A* to C.
- In two of the last three years the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has been in line with the NI average for selective schools and last year was above. Those pupils who have additional needs in aspects of their learning are also achieving well.
- In the last academic year, almost all of the year 12 pupils progressed to post-16 provision in the school. There is a robust tracking of all leavers' destinations; the proportion of pupils progressing to higher education courses in 2016 is five percentage points above the NI average for selective schools.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English, mathematics and ICT;
- the progression in the pupils' learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of Provision

- The curriculum is broad and well balanced across the key stages, allowing pupils to progress appropriately. At key stage 4 and post-16, there is an extensive offer of vocational and academic subjects. The school is developing further its use of a range of data, both academic and pastoral, to support its focus on meeting individual pupils' needs, interests and aspirations. Where necessary, this is beginning to inform better the provision of learning pathways which are more appropriate for individual pupils, to secure outcomes and progression.
- Throughout the year there is a programme of guest speakers, careers information seminars and events that are age and stage appropriate. The pupils with whom inspectors met report that they value the current programme for work experience delivered in year 13, which is augmented by further, optional opportunities in year 14.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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, learning and assessment in promoting successful 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 ICT across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- On taking up post the principal, in consultation with governors and staff, reviewed appropriately the whole-school priorities for development which resulted in: a new management structure, with associated roles and responsibilities; and, a well-conceived interim school improvement plan which is guiding the necessary improvement work. There is a commitment to developing further the pupils' learning experiences and outcomes achieved.
- The continuing professional development of staff is afforded a high priority and is aligned closely to the whole-school priorities for improvement. Currently, two-fifths of teaching staff are engaging in professional development in leadership and management.
- There has been a clear focus on disseminating and sharing good practice at all levels in the school, including through meaningful and purposeful implementation of current and research-based practice in technology assisted learning to actively engage and empower pupils as learners. It will be important to keep under review and monitor the impact of all improvement actions in relation to the provision for pupils, as they progress through the school and in particular, in the key transition years.

- The governors are highly supportive of the school; they have worked proactively to manage and address the budgetary challenges that faced the school. They are very clearly focused on developing further the pupils' learning experiences and the outcomes they achieve. The governors have a wide skills set which is supporting effectively the work of the various sub-committees in addressing the necessary priorities, including preparation for moving away from academic selection for entry to the school and the move to the shared campus. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- 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. The suite of child protection and pastoral policies are being appropriately reviewed and necessary training is being undertaken by identified staff. 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. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe and are aware of 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. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and Safety/Accommodation

- There is an urgent need to review the security of the outlying technology block.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2014-15 to 2016-17

Based on data held by the school in SIMS² and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Christian Brothers' Grammar School achieving seven or more GCSE examinations and equivalent at grades A* to C and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals band³.

The table also includes the percentage of year 12 pupils in Christian Brothers' Grammar School achieving seven or more GCSE examinations and equivalent, including English and mathematics at grades A*-B. In this instance, there is no NI average available.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	100	99.27	99.28
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	93.62	93.43	89.86
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁴</i>	<i>94.1</i>	<i>90.0</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	91.49	90.51	89.13
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>87.5</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades B or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	57.45	58.39	60.87
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	96.45	97.08	94.93
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	87.5	85.29	90.6

² SIMS: School Information Management System

³ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁴ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

GCE A level examination results at grades A* to C from 2014-15 to 2016-17

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Christian Brothers' Grammar School achieving three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C, compared with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals band.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	98.35	95.04	95.93
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	74.38	66.94	74.80
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁵</i>	<i>75.8</i>	<i>70.9</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level (over the past three years) Grades A* - B

	2014	2015	2016
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	141	137	137

GCSE Subject or equivalent	Number of entries	School A* - B %	NI A* - B %
English Language	415	78.80%	73%
Mathematics	415	76.10%	72%
English Literature	411	71.50%	75%
Religious Studies	411	60.80%	66%
Preparation For Work / PSE	409	62.80%	67%
Science Double Award	403	65.90%	64%
Spanish	235	53.20%	62%
Information Technology	187	82.90%	79%
Geography	134	79.90%	67%
History	130	80.80%	75%
Sports Studies BTEC Level 2	85	94.10%	
Business Studies	58	81.00%	66%
Engineering	55	54.50%	59%
Irish	53	86.80%	75%
Computer Studies	52	94.20%	74%
Mathematics Further	50	100.00%	83%
Design and Technology	47	97.90%	72%
Construction	40	82.50%	85%
Art & Design	30	80.00%	69%
Manufacturing*	25	68.5%	
Agriculture*	19	94.7%	
Hospitality*	16	75%	
Biology*	11	27.30%	78%
Music*	10	100.00%	81%

* indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

⁵ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

**Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level (over the past three years)
Grades A* - C**

	2014	2015	2016
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	121	120	124

GCE Subject or equivalent	Number of entries	School A* - C %	NI A* - C %
Mathematics	133	91.00%	90.60%
Information Technology	86	73.60%	77.50%
History	77	98.70%	91.90%
Information Technology (Vocational)	69	95.70%	93.80%
Biology	67	82.10%	86.50%
Geography	62	88.70%	85.70%
English Literature	57	78.90%	86.90%
Business Studies (Vocational)	54	90.70%	93.60%
Building BTEC	51	98.00%	
Physics	49	81.60%	83.40%
Mathematics Further	47	91.50%	94.20%
Sports Studies BTEC	35	100.00%	
Chemistry	34	94.10%	87.30%
Religious Studies	32	93.80%	92.30%
Design and Technology*	28	89.30%	90.00%
Business Studies*	25	96.00%	92.20%
Computer Studies/Computing*	25	96.00%	78.20%
Sport/Physical Education Studies*	25	60.00%	70.70%
Media Film and TV Studies*	23	87.00%	93.30%
Sports Studies BTEC (double award)*	22	100.00%	
Journalism*	21	100.00%	
Spanish*	17	76.50%	91.00%
Performing Arts*	13	92.30%	
Accounting/Finance*	18	66.70%	
Engineering* BTEC	10	100.00%	
Construction Technology* BTEC	14	100.00%	
Art & Design*	7	100.00%	96.00%
Music*	8	100.00%	87.30%

* indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

Staying on rate

Based on data held in SIMS by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at Christian Brothers' Grammar School, from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average for selective schools, based upon information from school census returns to the Department of Education for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	86.3	92.7
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	87.2	88.4

Leavers' destinations

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from Christian Brothers' Grammar School who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for selective schools.

	School	NI	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	135	9750			
Employment	0.7%	509 (5.2%)			
Further Education	21.5%	2083 (21.4%)	0	13	16
Higher Education	74.1%	6706 (68.8%)	0	0	100
Work-based Learning (Training)	3.0%	221 (2.3%)			
Unemployed	0.0%	95 (1.0%)			
Unknown	0.7%	136 (1.4%)			

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary>.

Inspectors scrutinised documentation, data and held formal discussions with some pupils (in groups), and some staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

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

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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