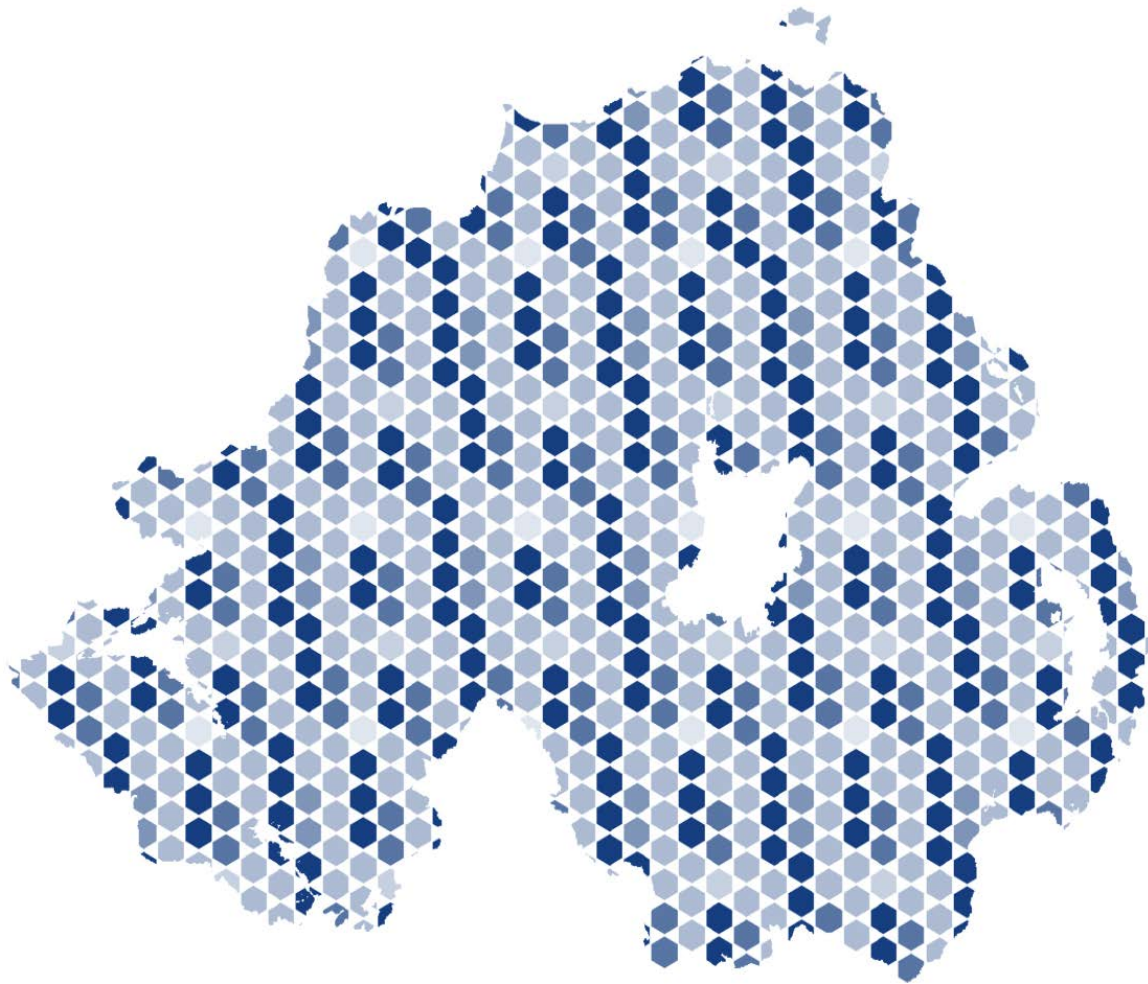


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Grosvenor Grammar School,  
Belfast

Controlled, selective, co-educational 11-18 school

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



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

Grosvenor Grammar School attracts its pupils from over 30 primary schools across greater Belfast and north County Down. The school is oversubscribed at entry to year 8 and sixth form enrolment is steady. Significant changes have taken place to the composition of the school's senior leadership team, with a new principal taking up post in January 2015 and a new vice-principal in March 2017.

The school has a prominent international dimension underpinned by its previous specialist schools status in modern languages and it has Confucius Classroom Hub status, where six teachers of mandarin work in Grosvenor along with a number of primary and post-primary partner schools. The school engages in the East Belfast area learning community (EBALC) with a number of other post-primary schools and it is also involved in a shared education programme. Around six percent of the pupils require additional support with aspects of their learning. Over the last four years, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased from five percent to just under ten percent. The school is proud of its academic traditions and its mission statement extols the importance of 'Relationships, Respect and Responsibility'.

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 almost all of the teachers would not be co-operating 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 inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

<b>Grosvenor Grammar School</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
Year 8 Intake	156	157	156	160
Enrolment	1090	1087	1086	1083
% Attendance (NI Average)	97.1 (95.6)	96.5 (95.6)	95.5 (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	6.4	8.3	9.5	10.6
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	6.5 (71)	6.7 (73 )	5.3 (58)	5.6 (61)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	15	13	11	15

**Source:** data as held by the school.  
N/A not available

### 2. Views of parents and staff

Just over 8% of parents (76) and 23% of all staff (17 teaching and 7 non-teaching) responded to the online questionnaires. Most of the responses to the parental questionnaires indicated good levels of satisfaction with the school's provision. The parents' written comments affirmed the care provided for the pupils by the school, and the professionalism of staff. However, a small number of individualised concerns were raised around some operational matters. The responses to the relatively small number of staff

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

questionnaires returned were mixed, with most staff expressing positivity around aspects of the school's provision and the staff's high expectations for the pupils. However, a small number raised concerns around communication and aspects of leadership in the written comments received. These issues were discussed with the principal and governors, whilst maintaining the anonymity of the respondents.

### 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 science; 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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	Unable to assure the quality of education
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	No performance level available
<b>Provision for learning</b>	No performance level available
<b>Leadership and management</b>	No performance level available

## KEY FINDINGS

### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils, who met with inspectors, were articulate and confident; they had positive and loyal dispositions to their school, 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 cultural activities provided by the school. As they progress, the pupils are able to take on various leadership roles and they benefit from opportunities to mentor and support the younger pupils.

- In discussion with inspectors, a group of pupils who are participating in the shared education programme spoke highly about their experiences and stated that they benefit from frequent, meaningful contact with two other post-primary schools. The pupils have resilience, respect for those of different cultures and beliefs and effective inter-personal skills.
- Over the last three years, the percentage of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has fluctuated, with a dip in 2017. Over the same period, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving seven or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A\* to B, including English and mathematics, which has risen from 66% to 76%. The outcomes attained by the pupils in most of the individual subjects at grades A\* to B are in line with, or above, the corresponding Northern Ireland (NI) subject averages. Sustaining the upturn in outcomes at grades A\* to B at GCSE level, along with an improvement at grades A\* to C, must continue to be prioritised by the school to reflect appropriately high outcomes for a selective school with a good calibre of intake. This will underpin the school's identified target to improve further the GCE AS and A level outcomes.
- The examination outcomes attained by the pupils entitled to free schools meals in five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, fluctuates and remains an area for further improvement, which the school has already identified.
- Most of the pupils who have additional needs in aspects of their learning attain seven or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.
- Over the last three years, the performance of girls at GCSE level or equivalent at grades A\* to B has been significantly better than the performance of boys. Appropriate remedial action over this time period has had a very positive impact and the gender attainment gap at grades A\* to B at GCSE level has been reduced from 30 percentage points to just under eight percentage points difference.
- Over the last three years, around three-quarters of pupils have attained three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A\* to C. At GCE A level, most of the individual subjects are in line with or above their corresponding NI subject averages. The school has targeted the need for improved outcomes for pupils at post-16 and this remains an appropriate priority.
- The proportion of pupils progressing to higher education courses in 2016 is ten percentage points below the NI average, while the percentage progressing to further education is around eight percentage points above the NI average. There is a small, but significant, number of pupils not progressing to the next academic level and the school is working to address this issue through improving aspects of its pastoral provision and reviewing its curriculum offer. Over the last two years, most of the year 12 pupils progressed to post-16 provision in the school and most stay on from year 13 to year 14, which is in line with the NI average.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

## **6. Quality of provision**

- Pupils have access to a broad, largely academic curriculum offer at all key stages. The school has reviewed appropriately the number of courses studied by the pupils at key stage 4 and post-16, and has introduced a small number of applied courses at post-16. Collaboration arrangements are in place within EBALC to provide greater breadth and choice for pupils, but uptake is very low and opportunities to collaborate more fully within EBALC and further education are under-exploited.
- The school provides pupils with excellent opportunities to benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are valued highly by pupils. This extensive and appealing aspect of provision contributes significantly to their wider educational experiences and is complemented with opportunities to benefit from international educational visits.
- An appropriate timetabled programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is in place for pupils at all key stages. In discussions, the pupils had a good knowledge of the career pathways open to them and reported that they are supported by their teachers in order to make informed subject and career choices.

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

## **7. Leadership and management**

- Appropriate consultation processes, evidence from self-evaluation, including the use of performance data, and the Department of Education guidelines inform well the school development planning process. The school development plan itself contains a range of appropriate priorities for school improvement. Good work has been undertaken to improve the quality of the associated action plans and middle management development plans, although these would benefit further from a sharper focus on making baseline positions and success criteria more quantifiable and pupil-focused. The professional development of staff is afforded appropriate importance and is contributing well to building their capacity in order to meet better the more demanding academic and pastoral needs of all pupils.
- The members of the senior leadership team have clearly defined strategic roles and appropriate levels of capacity to carry out their individual responsibilities. The team is characterised by a collegial ethos and a clear strategic vision for school improvement; where the curricular and pastoral responsibilities are fused within individual roles, which are distributed well across the team. An evolving culture of robust self-evaluation is leading to appropriate actions for improvement; however, the quality and impact of embedding the outcomes of departmental self-evaluation into classroom practice, as noted in the planning documentation, has variation and better consistency in addressing more fully the findings of self-evaluation, including what is learned from the performance data analysis, will benefit the pupils.
- 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 governors have clear and effective oversight of the work of the school and are ambitious for the school's continued success. They have a suitably wide skills-set which they apply to their roles. They provide sufficient support and challenge to all members of staff, whose commitment and industry they value: a sentiment that was also articulated by the senior leaders.

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. 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 spoke positively about their learning experiences and the support they receive from all of the adults in the school. They reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **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.



## 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 SIMS<sup>2</sup> and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Grosvenor 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 band<sup>3</sup>.

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

<b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE &amp; Equivalents in at least 7 subjects</i>	100.0	99.4	99.4
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects</i>	94.81	97.50	92.5
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	95.0	96.4	N/A
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	93.51	95.63	91.25
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category<sup>4</sup></i>	94.6	96.0	N/A
<i>Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades B or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	65.63	73.13	75.63
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects</i>	98.7	99.38	96.88
<i>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)</i>	83.33	92.31	75.00

<sup>2</sup> SIMS: School Information Management System

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

<sup>4</sup> 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 Grosvenor 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.

<b>GCE A Level or equivalent</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	100.0	99.3	99.23
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	72.34	71.11	75.57
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	76.8	77.7	N/A

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

	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	154	160	160

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Entries</b>	<b>School Three-year average at A* to B %</b>	<b>Northern Ireland Three-year average at A* to B %</b>
Art & Design	100	77.6	79
Biology	363	87.6	81
Business Studies	144	68.1	71
Chemistry	429	77.9	84
Computer Studies	49	65.3	74
D&T Product Design	82	77.6	75
Drama	22	90.9	82
English Language	474	80.8	81
English Literature	404	80.9	82
French	196	73.5	67
Geography	142	73.2	76
German	219	61.6	65
History	216	73.1	79
Home Economics	109	74.3	84
Information Technology	57	77.2	84
LLW	473	86.9	74
Mathematics	473	88.6	75
Mathematics Further	211	84.9	86
Media Studies	87	67.8	71
Music	31	80.6	87
PE	149	78.4	76
Physics	280	87.1	83
RE	25	83.3	78
Single Award Science	40	80.0	70
Spanish	212	77.8	72

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

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	141	135	131

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No of entries over three years</b>	<b>School three-year average at A* to C %</b>	<b>Northern Ireland three-year average at A* to C %</b>
Art & Design	29	100	98
Biology	113	86	88
Business Studies	80	91	93
Chemistry	95	78	88
Computer Studies	9	56	77
D&T: systems & control	7	100	91
Design and Technology	17	94	92
Drama	11	100	95
Economics	21	95	86
English Literature	45	91	91
French	33	91	91
Geography	96	85	90
German	26	96	91
Health and Social Care	33	100	95
History	96	86	93
Home Economics	14	86	93
Information Technology	20	100	81
IT Development	16	88	87
Mathematics	113	88	92
Mathematics Further	19	95	96
Media, Film and TV studies	41	100	95
Music	6	100	91
Physics	63	84	84
Politics	45	93	94
Psychology	82	74	76
Religious Studies	23	91	95
Spanish	58	91	94
Sport/ PE studies	46	98	79
Sports Science	61	95	77

## 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 Grosvenor Grammar School, from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average for selective schools from school census returns to the Department of Education for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Year 12 staying on to Year 13	86.3	85.5
% Year 13 staying on to Year 14	87.2	87.5

## 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 Grosvenor Grammar School who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for selective schools.

	NI	School	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	9750	178			
Employment	509 (5.2%)	14 (7.9%)			
Institute of Further Education	2083 (21.4%)	52 (29.2%)		44	
Institute of Higher Education	6706 (68.8%)	104 (58.4%)			132
Work-based Learning (Training)	221 (2.3%)	8 (4.5%)			
Unemployed	95 (1.0%)	0			
Unknown	136 (1.4%)	0			

\* One pupil in Year 13, three pupils in Year 12 and two pupils in Year 9 went to another school for education.

**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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management<sup>5</sup>:

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.

<sup>5</sup> And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable

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