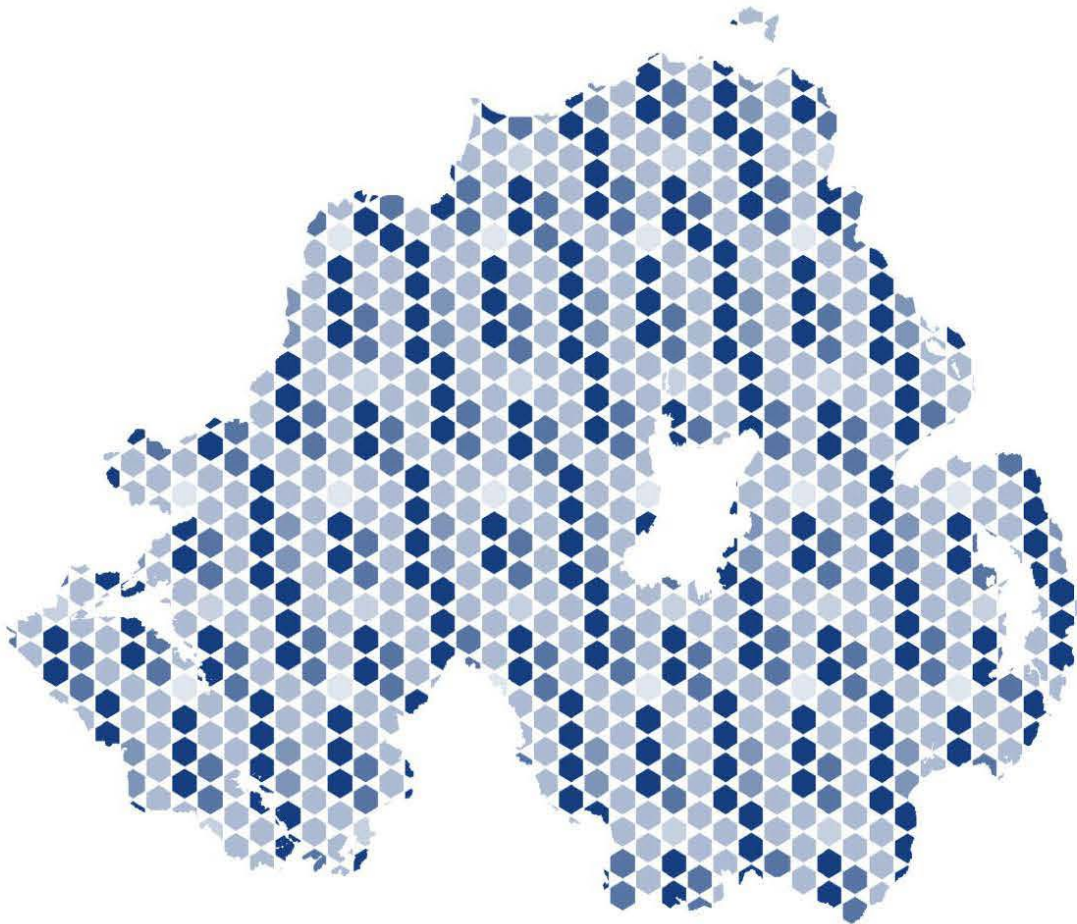


# Education and Training Inspectorate POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



## Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry, County Down

All girls' 11-18 voluntary grammar school DE Ref No: 542-0076

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in  
February 2020

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## 1. Context

Sacred Heart Grammar School draws its pupils from the city of Newry and wider geographical area. The school operates under the Trusteeship of the Sisters of St Clare. The school is regularly oversubscribed at year 8. The school is an active member of the Newry and Mourne Area Learning Community.

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 senior leadership and representatives of the board of governors co-operated with the inspection in relation to leadership and safeguarding responsibilities. 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.

Sacred Heart Grammar School	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Year 8 Intake	123	-	123	-	121	-	125	-
Total Enrolment	852	-	843	-	844	-	847	-
Attendance (NI Average*)	-	96.5 (95.5)	-	96.2 (95)	-	95.5 -	-	N/A -
Free School Meal Entitlement	130	15.26	131	15.54	122	14.45	111	13.11
Pupils on SEN Register	31	3.64	28	3.32	26	3.08	16	1.89
No of Pupils with Statements	7	-	6	-	6	-	*	-

\* Northern Ireland Statistic & Research Agency: Attendance at grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools: Detailed Statistics - 2016/17, 2017/18

N/A: not available

\*Less than 5

## 2. Pupils', parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Nearly sixty percent of the pupils completed a confidential on-line questionnaire. Almost all reported that the school helps them to understand and respect all people. Overall, most of the pupils agreed that they have extra-curricular opportunities and are treated fairly in school. A significant minority of the pupils indicated that they do not have enough opportunities to link their learning to real life situations.

Nearly thirty percent of the responses included written comments, highlighting what they enjoy in their learning experiences and in the wider aspects of school life. They articulated maturely what improvements would benefit further their school experiences. The key stage (KS) 4 and post-16 pupils stated that they would welcome better consistency in some aspects of classroom provision and having a greater input into school rules and managing their workload.

Twenty-one percent of parents responded to the online questionnaire. The majority of responses to the parental questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with the life and work of the school. The written comments affirmed, in particular, the care, welfare and support provided by the school and the well-managed transition from primary school into year 8. A significantly minority of the written comments raised concerns in relation to communication and some inconsistencies in the learning experiences provided for their children.

Fifty percent of staff responded to the online questionnaire. The responses to the staff questionnaires were wholly positive, highlighting: the respectful working environment; their pride of working in the school; and, the opportunities available to the staff for continuous professional development.

The concerns raised through the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and the representatives from the board of governors.

### **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 modern languages in this inspection.

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 and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and modern languages; 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

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

#### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils are courteous, articulate and respectful of each other demonstrating the school's founding Franciscan values of dignity, respect and inclusion for all. The pupils' sense of social responsibility is notable through their support for numerous local and international charities. The senior pupils develop leadership skills through, for example, membership of the senior school council, prefect team and leading mentoring programmes. The school has a strong tradition in music, sport and drama as reflected in the high levels of pupil participation and high achievement in an extensive range of sporting and cultural activities.
- A key strength of the work of the school is the achievement of the pupils in public examinations.
- Over the past three years, almost all of the pupils, including those pupils with free school meals entitlement, attain seven or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.
- During the same period, most of the individual subjects at GCSE at grades A\* to B are in line with or above the corresponding Northern Ireland (NI) subject averages (in those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages) for 2017 and 2018.
- Over the past three years, while the proportion of pupils attaining three or more GCE A level qualifications (including equivalents) at grades A\*-C has decreased, it has remained consistently above the NI average.
- Most of the subjects at A level are in line with, or above, the corresponding NI subject averages (in those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages) over the past three years, with one-fifth being well above.
- In five subjects across GCSE and A level, there was a top performing candidate.
- The pupils who require additional help with their learning have achieved highly.
- The school leavers' destinations data indicates that almost all year 14 pupils in 2018 progressed to higher education study.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

## **6. Quality of provision**

- The pupils who met with inspectors are very loyal to their school and were able to offer their views of and suggestions for school improvement in a measured and mature manner. They highlighted: the positive relationships and the academic and pastoral support they receive from their teachers; and, their appreciation and enjoyment of the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that help to develop further their personal and social skills.
- The curriculum at all key stages is broad and balanced and is kept under review; the subject offer at KS 4 and post-16 meets the entitlement framework. The school collaborates with a local post-primary school at post-16 to deliver a wider curriculum to a number of pupils; currently one-fifth of pupils at post-16 are availing of this collaboration.
- The provision for careers is delivered through the employability strand of Learning for Life and Work at KS 3 and year 11, and through discrete periods of careers in year 12 and post-16. In discussions with the pupils they spoke positively about their opportunities in class to research and investigate a range of career progression pathways, the support from their teachers to help inform subject choices, and the planned programme of events which included careers events, mock interviews and visiting speakers. There were a small number of comments in relation to providing more information on career pathways beyond science, technology, engineering and mathematics related subjects and courses.

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 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 modern languages across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The senior leadership team have a clear understanding of and shared vision for school improvement, focused on the holistic development of the pupils and a commitment to their well-being. The school development plan (SDP) is informed by meaningful consultation with all stakeholders. Clear priorities informed by the identified needs of the school guide clearly the improvement agenda. The action plans link well to the priorities in the SDP. However, there is variation in the quality of action planning and setting of measurable targets.
- Distributed leadership and capacity building have been central to progressing school development; as a consequence, there have been significant changes in senior leadership. The restructuring of roles and responsibilities are aligned with the priorities in the SDP, including in relation to learning and teaching and connecting the curricular and pastoral leadership. The school has prioritised a focus on the quality of learning experiences; it will be important to monitor the impact of this work on the consistency of the learning experiences of the pupils.
- The governors are highly committed and have a very good range of complementary skills and expertise. They have a clear understanding of the work and context of the school and provide appropriate support and challenge to the senior leaders. 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. 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.



## Examination performance and other statistical data

### Data Year 12 performance

<b>GCSE and GCSE Equivalent Subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE and Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	97.6	97.48	97.48
<i>The NI average for grammar schools in the same FSM band*</i>	93.7	92.9	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	97.6	97.48	97.48
<i>The NI average for grammar schools in the same FSM band*</i>	93.4	92.8	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	98.4	98.32	100
*Percentage of Year 12 entitled to FSM achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* - C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	94.74	94.4	100

\* 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](#)

### Year 12 GCSE (including equivalent) examination outcomes

	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	125	119	119

(The average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of Entries over two years (2017/2018)</b>	<b>School Two-year average A* to B</b>	<b>Northern Ireland Two-year average A* to B</b>	<b>Number of Entries in 2019</b>	<b>School 2019 A* to B^</b>
Art & Design (GCSE/FC_3510)	38	71.1	80.5	14	92.9
Biology (GCSE/FC_1010)	113	89.4	86.9	66	80.3
Business Studies (GCSE/FC_3210)	77	79.2	76.7	40	77.5
Chemistry (GCSE/FC_1110)	94	95.7	88.9	52	80.8
D&T Systems & Control (GCSE/FC_9060)	15	46.7	N/A	17	64.7
Drama (GCSE/FC_5210)	73	95.9	87.0	24	100.0
Economics (GCSE/FC_4410)	14	92.9	N/A	21	76.2
English Language (GCSE/FC_5030)	244	96.3	89.7	119	92.4
English Literature (GCSE/FC_5110)	243	95.9	87.2	119	95.8
French (GCSE/FC_5650)	157	65.6	72.8	47	78.7
Geography (GCSE/FC_3910)	101	91.1	81.5	39	89.7
History (GCSE/FC_4010)	71	71.8	83.0	36	63.9
Home Economics (GCSE/FC_3310)	51	94.1	88.3	37	91.9
Information Technology (GCSE/FC_2650)	90	93.3	88.8	39	89.7
Irish (GCSE/FC_5550)	73	93.2	87.7	28	96.4
Mathematics (GCSE/FC_2210)	244	88.1	77.5	119	96.6
Mathematics Further (GCSE/FC_2330)	52	100.0	91.1	39	94.9
Music (GCSE/FC_7010)	24	95.8	90.9	15	100.0
Physics (GCSE/FC_1210)	88	92.0	89.2	45	86.7
Religious Studies (GCSE/FC_4610)	242	95.0	88.2	119	96.6
Science Double Award (GCSE/DA_1370)	109	80.7	80.0	39	75.6
Spanish (GCSE/FC_5750)	35	68.6	78.4	28	67.9
Sport/PE Studies (GCSE/FC_7210)	46	93.5	83.6	20	85.0

^ With the 2019 changes to GCSE grading, the outcomes at grades A\* to B cannot be compared with previous years.

[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	99.17	100	99.13
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A levels	87.6	84.21	79.31
<i>The NI average for grammar schools in the same FSM band*</i>	80	74.5	N/A

\* Median for each year from the Department of Education benchmarking Quartiles for 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

## Year 14 A-level (including equivalent) examination outcomes

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	121	114	116

(The average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)

Subject	Number of Entries over three years	School Three-year average A* to C	NI Three-year average A* to C
Accounting/Finance (GCE/A_7410)	13	92.3	N/A
Art & Design (GCE/A_3510)	13	69.2	93.7
Biology (GCE/A_1010)	105	87.6	83.1
Building (BTEC/SD3_TG1)	*	100.0	N/A
Business Studies (GCE/A_3210)	88	94.3	90.5
Chemistry (GCE/A_1110)	62	88.7	90.0
Design & Technology (GCE/A_8900)	*	83.3	N/A
Drama (GCE/A_5210)	55	100.0	93.8
Economics (GCE/A_4410)	16	93.8	N/A
English Literature (GCE/A_5110)	68	97.1	87.5
French (GCE/A_5650)	40	95.0	93.4
Geography (GCE/A_3910)	76	96.1	90.1
Health & Social Care (GCE/A_0003)	40	97.5	90.0
Home Economics (GCE/A_3310)	28	100.0	N/A
History (GCE/A_4010)	27	96.3	85.8
Information Technology (GCE/A_2650)	41	97.6	75.8
Irish (GCE/A_5550)	24	100.0	95.7
Mathematics (GCE/A_2210)	103	95.1	90.9
Mathematics Further (GCE/A_2330)	*	100.0	N/A
Moving Image (GCE/A_8210)	12	100.0	N/A
Music (GCE/A_7010)	*	55.6	85.0

Physics (GCE/A_1210)	61	78.7	79.3
Politics (GCE/A_4830)	25	96.0	88.4
Psychology (GCE/A_4850)	13	53.8	73.8
Religious Studies (GCE/A_4610)	98	100.0	89.1
Sociology (GCE/A_4890)	45	93.3	73.1
Spanish (GCE/A_5750)	*	100.0	95.3
Sport/PE Studies (GCE/A_7210)	10	80.0	N/A

\* Indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years.

### Staying on rate 2018/19

% Yr12 staying on to Yr13	95.0	NI Av. Year 13	84.7
% Yr13 staying on to Yr14	95.9	NI Av. Year 14	86.9

## 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	9760 100%	122 100%	1287 100%	* 100%	640 100%	* 100%	7833 100%	16 100%			
Employment	530 5.4%	* 2.5%	74 5.7%		77 12%	* 25%	379 4.8%	* 1.7%			
Institute of Further Education	2066 21.2%	10 8.2%	988 76.8%	* 100%	467 73%	* 75%	611 7.8%	5 4.3%		10	
Institute of Higher Education**	6661 68.2%	109 89.3%	* *		* *		# #	109 94%			109
Training***	320 3.3%		173 13.4%		44 6.9%		103 1.3%				
Unemployment	59 0.6%		11 0.9%		8 1.3%		40 0.5%				
Others	124 1.3%		41 3.2%		# #		# #				

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.

## APPENDIX B

### 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: a meeting with representatives from the governors; formal discussions with some pupils (in groups), meetings with the senior leadership; review of documentation and data; and the opportunity for all pupils, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments	Percentage with comments
Pupil	507	59.9	142	28.0
Parent/Guardian	179	21.1	88	49.2
Teacher	19	38.0	≠	≠
Support staff	34	59.6	*	*

\*fewer than 5 returns

The tabulated SIMS information and the tables for Year 12 and Year 14 examination outcomes in individual subjects have 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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