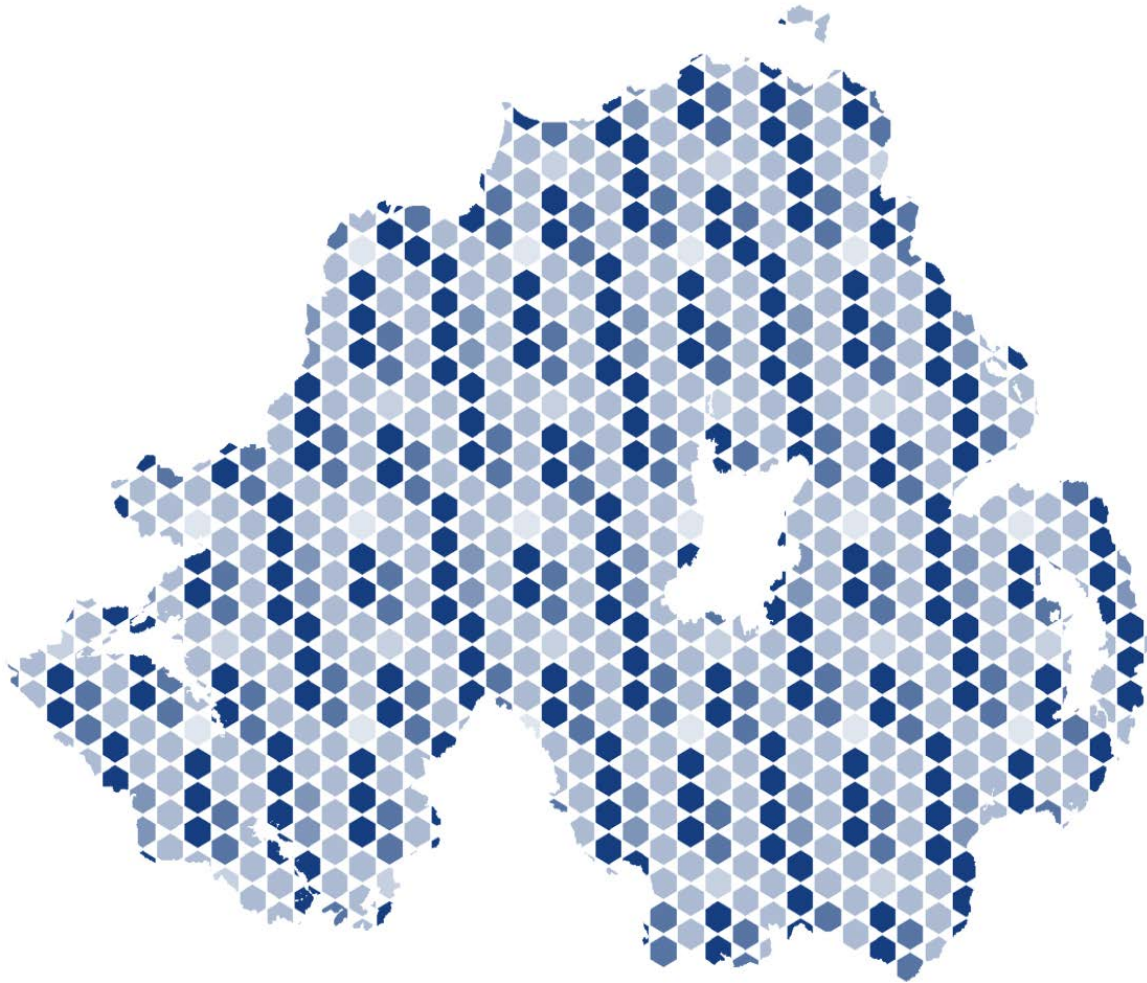


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Cambridge House Grammar School,
Ballymena, County Antrim

Controlled, co-educational selective 11 – 18 school

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
October 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Pupils' and parents' questionnaire responses	1
3. Focus of the inspection	2
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Outcomes for learners	3
6. Quality of provision	4
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Safeguarding	5
9. Overall effectiveness	5

Appendices

- A. Health and safety/accommodation
- B. Examination performance and other statistical data
- C. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- D. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Cambridge House Grammar School is a controlled co-educational selective school; it is situated on an expansive site just outside the town limits. The school has a stable enrolment trend from a wide catchment area encompassing both the town and surrounding rural areas; it is regularly over-subscribed at entry to year eight. A development proposal to reduce the school's overall enrolment to 900, aligning with the admissions number of 140, came into effect in 2016.

The school is an active member of the area learning community, Ballymena Learning Together. The school has also built up relationships with local primary schools through wide ranging events, involving staff and pupils.

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 some of the staff would be co-operating with the inspection. The ETI has 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.

Cambridge House Grammar School	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Year 8 Intake	140	143	141	142
Enrolment	904	904	903	896
Attendance (NI Average)	95% (95.5%)	95% (95.5%)	95% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage ¹	12%	14%	13%	12%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	5% (45)	5% (44)	4% (38)	4% (39)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	*	*	5	*
No. of newcomers	0	0	*	*

Source: data as verified by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

2. Pupils', parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Eleven percent (95) of the pupils across the key stages completed an online questionnaire. While there was a very small response rate from Key Stage (KS) 3 and KS4, there was a thirty percent response rate from KS5. Overall, most of the responses were positive about their experience of the school, with the pupils recognising how the school: cares for them and listens to their views; lets them know how to improve their work; and, when needed, get the help they require with their work.

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

Nearly one-fifth of the pupils responding provided written comments. While they expressed their appreciation for the staff and opportunities for them to participate in extra-curricular activities, they raised some concerns which were discussed with the principal and the representatives of the governors.

Almost four percent (27) of the parents also completed a confidential online questionnaire and were very positive about the life and work of the school. Just over one-half of these responses included written comments; the parents reported that the staff are supportive and encouraging, and parents are kept well informed about the progress of their child. The issues raised by the parents in the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and representatives of the governors.

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

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest 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.

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on history 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 history;
- 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 courteous, friendly and very loyal to the school. As the pupils progress through the school, they become increasingly confident and articulate; the older pupils highlighted how they had benefitted from participation in external events such as the EU Mock Council and Local Youth Council events.
- Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils attaining seven or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics has been consistently in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools². However there is undue variation in the outcomes of individual subjects at A* to B.
- The school uses a wide range of internal and external data to baseline pupils, set targets and monitor progress across the curriculum; however, the targets set for A* to B are considerably lower than NI subject averages for similar selective schools.
- The gender gap at seven or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to B, including English and mathematics remains too wide; currently the girls are out-performing the boys by more than twenty-seven percentage points; the scope and pace of work to address this differential needs to intensify.
- Most of the pupils who have additional needs with aspects of their learning secured seven or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics; the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining five or more A* to C grades at this level, including English and mathematics, is consistently above the NI average.
- The senior leadership team has identified the need to increase the pace of curricular change at KS 4 which has not been sufficient to address the inconsistencies in standards attained across the subjects.
- For two of the past three years, at post-16, the proportion of pupils attaining grades A* to C in at least three A levels or equivalents has been well below the corresponding NI average. In 2018, this figure improved significantly to above the NI average for similar schools.
- The proportion of pupils staying on from year 12 to year 13 is more than ten percentage points below the corresponding NI average. In 2017 most of the pupils in Year 14 progressed to further and higher education.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

² In the same free school meal (FSM) band

6. Quality of provision

- The curriculum at KS3 is generally broad and balanced. While the programme for Learning for Life and Work is delivered through the subjects, assemblies and special events, the senior leaders need to ensure that the provision for this area meets the statements of minimum requirement for KS3.
- The ongoing review of the curriculum at post-16 is informed by the pupils' views, up-to-date labour market information and communication with universities and colleges. As a result of this review, the school has introduced a wider range of applied and vocational A-level and Level 3 subjects which are well-matched to the pupils' needs and career aspirations. The pupils in years 13 and 14 also benefit from courses offered by the college of further education and other schools within the Ballymena Learning Together partnership.
- Across the key stages, the pupils who met with inspectors spoke very positively about: the working relationships they have with the staff; the support given to meet their individual pastoral needs; the extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them; and, their appreciation of the information they receive through assemblies, external speakers and events. The senior pupils expressed their appreciation for the opportunities they have to develop their personal and social skills through, for example, mentoring younger pupils, being proactive in relation to local issues and fundraising for local charities. The pupils spoke positively about the programme for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) and in particular, the guidance they received when making subject choices in years 10 and 12.

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

7. Leadership and management

- The school development plan identifies priorities such as: literacy across the curriculum, raising further the standards for all pupils; improving the quality of learning and teaching; developing the use of new technologies; and, reviewing the curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of all the pupils. As the school nears a new school development planning process, the leadership has recognised the need for wider consultation with all stakeholders.

- While the self-evaluation process within the school is underpinned by an extensive range of internal and external data, this needs to be analysed more rigorously and used to inform learning and teaching. The whole-school action planning process has been reviewed, however, targets set at individual subject level need to take greater cognisance of pupils' ability and NI benchmarks to allow for robust monitoring of the impact of the actions taken.
- There has been a review of roles and responsibilities at senior leadership level leading to an ongoing focus on securing greater accountability at whole-school level of pupil outcomes and provision. While there is a range of staff development opportunities, including sharing of good practice and a research working group, it will be important to formalise this process and monitor its impact.
- During the inspection, a small number of concerns were raised about aspects of governance in respect to the quality of working relationships and communication and these were shared with the principal and governors. The governors are well-informed about the life and work of the school. They have overseen successfully: the management and reduction of the sizeable financial deficit; curricular change at post-16; and, the further development of the provision for the pupils. Therefore, 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. Going forward, the governors need to support and challenge the senior leadership in increasing the pace of change at KS4 in order to improve outcomes.

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. Appropriately, the school continues to review and update its pastoral policies. 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 well-being.

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

- The school's accommodation and health and safety issues outlined in a previous minor works applications need to be addressed.
- The risk assessment procedures need to be reviewed to ensure they contain risk reduction measures to address identified areas.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE examination results from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS³ and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Cambridge House 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 band⁴.

The table also includes the percentage of year 12 pupils in Cambridge House 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.

GCSE - *following permitted exclusions	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 7 subjects</i>	100	97.7	99.3
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects</i>	95.3	90.9	90.7
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band⁵</i>	95.3	93.7	N/A
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	94.6	90.2	90.0
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band</i>	93.0	93.4	N/A
<i>Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades B or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	35.8	33.3	40.0
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects</i>	97.8	94.7	95.7
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* - C or equivalent including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	100	80.0	94.7

³ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁴ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

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.

GCE A level and equivalent examination results at grades A* to C from 2015-16 to 2017-18

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 Cambridge House 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	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	96.8	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 subjects	54.3	61.1	87
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band⁶</i>	76.1	80.0	N/A

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

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

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	148	132	140

GCSE

GCSE Subject	Number of Entries	School A* to B%	NI A* to B%
Art & Design	82	67.1	78.2
Business Studies	90	74.4	69.2
Child Development	84	77.4	74.8
Construction	60	80.0	70.8
D&T: Electronic Products	173	75.1	80.4
Drama	60	73.3	81.8
English Language	420	50.2	80.3
English Literature	112	81.3	80.0
French	47	87.2	65.2
Further Mathematics	81	77.8	86.0
Geography	91	64.8	73.5
History	103	60.2	77.4
Home Economics	49	85.7	84.1
Information Technology	199	77.9	82.4
Mathematics	420	66.9	73.2
Media Studies	299	42.5	60.7
Music	19	78.9	88.0
Performing Arts	60	83.3	N/A
Physical Education	51	42.8	73.9
Science (Double Award)	361	81.2	72.3
Science (Single Award)	58	63.8	66.6
Sociology	51	68.6	N/A
Spanish	113	91.2	72.7
Statistics	276	36.2	56.5

⁶ 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 or equivalent (over the past three years) Grades A* - C

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

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	94	90	92

GCE A Level Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries	School A* to C%	NI A* to C%
Art & Design	28	100	92.8
Biology	65	75.4	83.1
BTEC Construction	*	100	N/A
BTEC Engineering	15	86.7	N/A
BTEC Sport (SD)	19	100	N/A
BTEC Sport (DI)	*	100	N/A
Business Studies	71	91.5	91.5
Chemistry	22	81.8	88.7
CTECH Information Technology	12	100	N/A
Digital Technology	51	78.4	77.5
Drama	35	77.1	89.0
English Literature	23	78.3	85.1
French	*	100%	91.0
Geography	18	94.4	87.8
Health & Social Care	84	96.4	86.8
History	29	69	85.0
Life & Health Sciences	*	100	N/A
Mathematics	69	82.6	88.9
Media Studies	87	77.0	84.1
Music	*	100	87.8
Nutrition & Food Science	19	89.5	90.0
Physics	58	84.5	82.6
Religious Studies	*	100	88.9
Sociology	29	82.8	76.8
Spanish	14	92.9	91.3
Technology & Design	44	95.5	88.7

* Less than 10 entries over three years

Staying on rate⁷ 2017/18

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at school compared with the NI average for all schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	85.3	74.6
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	88.0	85.2

LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS⁸ 2016/17

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from this school who leave school to enter employment, further education, higher education, and training or are seeking employment compared with the average for grammar schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI No.(%)	School No.(%)	NI Yr12 (%)	School Yr12 (%)	NI Yr13 (%)	School Yr13 (%)	NI Yr14 (%)	School Yr14 (%)	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	9727	146		45		11		90			
Employment	445 (4.6%)	11.0%	4.8%	8.9%	10.7%	9.1%	4.1%	12.2%			
Institute of Further Education	1967 (20.2%)	29.5%	81.5%	48.9%	76.3%	63.6%	7.2%	15.6%	2	30	11
Institute of Higher Education ⁹	6870 (70.6%)	39.7%	*	-	*	-	86.0%	64.4%			58
Training ¹⁰	237 (2.4%)	4.1%	9.9%	6.7%	5.6%	9.1%	1.1%	2.2%			
Unemployment	104 (1.1%)	5.5%	1.2%	4.4%	2.6%	9.1%	1.0%	5.6%			
Others	104 (1.1%)	10.3%	#	31.1%	#	9.1%	0.7%	-			

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2016/17 - GRAMMAR SCHOOLS¹¹

- fewer than 5
- # figures suppressed

⁷ The percentage of pupils who stay on at school compared with the Northern Ireland average for all schools, this rate is calculated in terms of pupils who progress their level of study, whether at their original or a new school. Pupils that move schools between years are counted as 'staying on' at their original school as they are progressing their study within the school system.

⁸ Destination is defined by Institution. Institutions may provide courses at both Further and Higher Education levels.

⁹ Includes universities and teacher training colleges.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Excludes special and independent schools.

APPENDIX C

Inspection methodology and evidence base

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

Inspectors reviewed 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; formal discussions with some pupils (in groups), and some staff with specific responsibilities; review of documentation and data; and the opportunity for all pupils, 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 management¹²:

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

¹² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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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