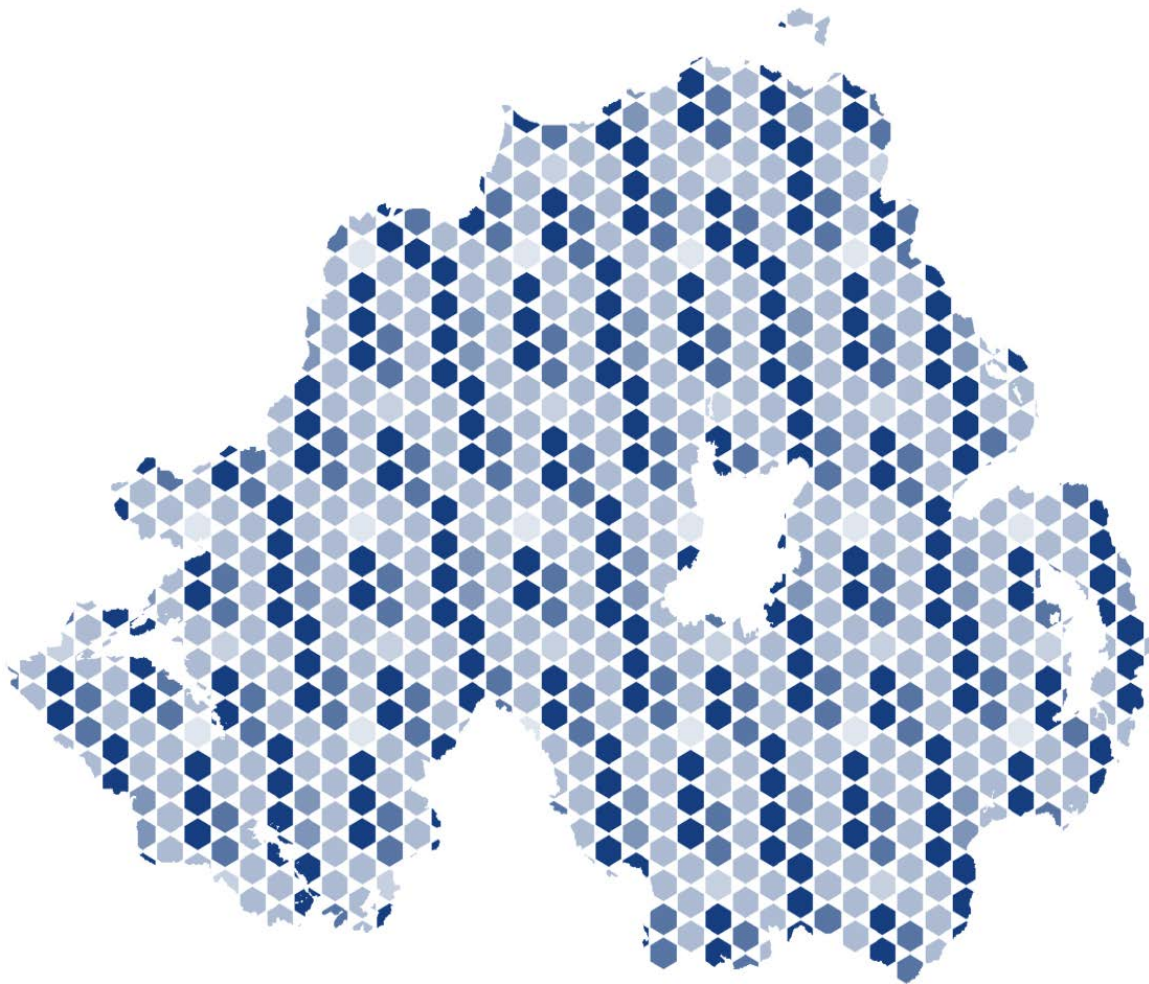


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Academy, Lisburn
County Antrim

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection (Involving Action Short of
Strike) in December 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



Sustaining Improvement Inspection of St Patrick's Academy, Lisburn, County Antrim (423-0165)

Introduction

The previous inspection in November 2014 evaluated the overall effectiveness of St Patrick's Academy as very good¹. A sustaining improvement inspection (SII) was conducted on 7 December 2017.

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 only the senior leadership team would be co-operating with the inspectors. 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.

Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on evaluating the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were to:

- develop further the effective use of performance data to inform practice and to modify pedagogy; and
- raise standards at key stage 4 and post-16.

Key findings

- The data manager has collated and analysed a wide range of internal and external data, including attitudinal and diagnostic information to: baseline and track the pupils' progress; identify and monitor the impact of intervention strategies to support teaching and learning; and, quality assure departmental target setting at key stage 4 and post-16.
- Currently the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C has fluctuated and is below the NI average for similar schools. At post-16 the proportion of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C has fluctuated and is below the NI average for similar schools.
- The pupils who met with the inspectors spoke supportively of their teachers and the intervention strategies used in class to progress their learning; a minority of pupils indicated they would like more individual support in class to assist them with those topics or units of work that they found difficult.

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school evaluated previously as outstanding or very good has been reported as a school demonstrating a high level of capacity for sustained improvement.

Owing to action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the impact of the school's improvement work on classroom practice, and the standard of work in the pupils' books.

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. The pupils reported that they feel safe, secure and happy in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

Conclusion

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 children. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school's provision, in particular, at post-16 level, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

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