

EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
INSPECTORATE

## POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION

De La Salle College, Belfast

DE Ref No 123-0182

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in May 2024



Providing Inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



# Follow-up to the inspection of De La Salle College, Belfast, BT11 8LT (123-0182)

## Introduction

De La Salle College is an 11-18 all-boys maintained non-selective post-primary school in West Belfast. As a Lasallian school it is committed to the five core principles of faith, respect, concern for others, quality education and inclusive community.

This follow-up inspection was carried out in May 2024 and provided the school with the opportunity to demonstrate its progress in addressing the areas for action from the time of the last inspection in May 2022. In the time period since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils with a statement of educational need has increased from 11.2% (86) to 15.9% (123) due in the main to the school's expansion of its Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools (SPiMS) from three to seven classes. The number of newcomer pupils has increased from 29 to 41. There have been significant staffing changes: currently, just over one-quarter of the middle and senior leaders are in temporary and acting up positions. There is now a full complement of governors, including the most recent appointment of an Education Authority (EA) governor representative and a teacher governor.

## Views of parents, staff and pupils

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) issued online confidential questionnaires to pupils, parents and staff in advance of the follow-up inspection.

One-quarter of pupils (191) in the school responded to the questionnaire, with 54 pupils providing additional written responses. Inspectors also met and spoke with pupils across years 8 to 13 in focus groups, and in lunchtime and after school extra-curricular activities. Almost all of the pupils who completed the questionnaire indicated that the school is welcoming and inclusive and helps them to understand and respect others. A significant minority would welcome opportunities to engage and learn with pupils from other schools. In the written comments, the majority of pupils highlighted that they enjoy school and appreciate the support and respect they receive from their teachers.

Six per cent of parents (41) responded to the questionnaire. Most of the parents indicated that the school provides an appropriate range of learning activities. A small number of parents (23) provided additional written responses. Just under one-half of the parents (10) who provided written comments were positive about the life and work of the school. A small number of parents expressed concerns regarding aspects of learning and teaching.

A minority (49) of all staff responded to the questionnaire. Almost all of the staff report that pupils are provided with opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others. A majority (29) of the staff who responded also provided written comments, with most recognising that staff are: working hard to support the wide range of academic and pastoral needs of the pupils; and responsive to, and welcoming of, the diverse needs and abilities of the pupils.

Four-fifths of the staff who provided additional written comments, raised concerns around aspects of: curricular provision; staffing matters; behaviour management; communication; and leadership and management. The issues raised in the parent and staff questionnaires were discussed with the principal, chair of governors, the EA and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

## Key actions

Key actions which affect the work of the school are set out below.

- The school received external support provided by the EA in relation to action planning, senior and middle leadership, curriculum review and careers provision. The CCMS has also provided support for the continued development of strategic leadership and management, including for members of the board of governors.
- The provision of an extensive range of staff professional learning opportunities, focusing on behaviour support, raising achievement through the sharing good practice and differentiated teaching to meet the wide range of learning needs of the pupils.
- The implementation of a whole-school positive behaviour strategy, including managing pupil attendance and embedding behaviour management approaches.
- A re-focus on the Lasallian five core values through for example, the establishment of a new parents' forum, and enhancing sporting and other extra-curricular provision across the school.

## Key findings

- In discussion with the inspectors, pupils from across the year groups report they are happy and feel safe in school, value the positive relationships they have with their teachers and enjoy a range of practical learning opportunities. The pupils were mature and respectful in articulating their views on how to make their school even better. They know how well they are progressing and value the support they receive from their teachers.
- The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is now effective. There is now greater cohesion in supporting pupils and their parents to make informed choices at key transition points and better use of pupils' and parents' views to inform curriculum development. In discussions with the pupils, they reported that they were able to apply their learning from CEIAG classes to inform their decisions on subjects to study at key transition points. The pupils report that the Year 13 enrichment programme is preparing them well for life beyond school. Additionally, almost all pupils in Years 12 and 13 access work experience matched to their career aspirations.

- There is an improved use of academic and pastoral data to inform effectively departments' planning and to identify and inform a range of supports for pupils' learning at Key Stage (KS) 4 and post-16 who are at risk of disengaging and/or of underachieving. The teachers' provision of the range of supports is impacting positively on pupils' attitudes to learning, their motivation to study and their outcomes.
- Curriculum planning takes account of the pupils' wide range of abilities, interests and aspirations, and there is effective monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum offer. In going forward, the school has identified appropriately, and is planning for, appropriate pathways at both KS 4 and post-16 for pupils who attend the SPiMS. A continued focus on developing further the curriculum offer will be required to meet the changing needs, aspirations and abilities of all the pupils.
- The outcomes for the pupils have improved across the school; at KS 4 the pupils are performing in line with the school's internal data. The school is focused on raising further the improving outcomes at post-16, including, through a new retention policy and a review of the Year 13 entry policy.
- In almost all of the classes observed, the pupils engage well with their learning and show good levels of interest and enjoyment. Most of the pupils are respectful, well behaved, and work well with each other.
- The improved provision for mathematics is effective and, in almost all the lessons observed: the pupils' oracy skills were developed well through effective questioning; and an appropriate blend of independent and paired work was used to progress the pupils' learning.
- The opportunities for staff professional learning are impacting positively on provision; for example, through the school's focus on restorative practice. The school continues to focus on fostering positive pupil behaviours for learning as a priority to raise further the outcomes and to reflect better the change in pupil profile and need. The school has highlighted behaviour for learning as an area for action to support pupils in managing their own learning and personal development.
- The senior and middle leaders have developed well their understanding of self-evaluation processes. They are using data more confidently to set challenging targets for the school, departments and pupils, as well as adapting their learning and teaching to meet the needs of all the pupils. These changes have led to tangible improvements in the pupils' learning experiences and the outcomes they attain. To build further on this work and ensure sustained improvement in outcomes, the middle and senior leaders have identified the need to include a wider range of first-hand learning and teaching evidence to inform fully their evaluations.

- Governors continue to be pro-active in the life and work of the school, including through the work of the standards sub-committee. Link governors are providing an appropriate support and challenge function to improve outcomes and are sharing their expertise across a range of areas, such as in child and adult protection, which is impacting positively on the life and work of the school.

## Child Protection

At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the school demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance.

The school is aware of changes in arrangements for adult protection and has planned associated training for staff in June 2024.

## Going Forward

The school's improvement work is underpinned by the Lasallian five core principles. The staff are highly committed to working and supporting the pupils and families of De La Salle College to ensure that pupils of all abilities are encouraged to grow to excellence in everything they do in school and in preparing them for their future.

The ETI, through the engagement of the district inspector, will continue to work with the school to take forward the areas for action set out in the report.

No further follow-up inspection is required.

## Appendix 1: 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%

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2024

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the [ETI website](#)

Follow us on  [@ETI\\_news](#)

 [@ETInews](#)

 InsPIRE

 Empowering  
Improvement  
Stepping Forward Together