

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION

Fivemiletown College, Fivemiletown,
County Tyrone

Controlled, Co-educational 11-18 school, DE Ref No (521-0097)

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in May 2022



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Follow-up to the inspection of Fivemiletown College, Fivemiletown, BT75 0SB (521-0097)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a third follow-up inspection of Fivemiletown College in [October 2019](#). Owing to action short of strike by the teaching unions, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact of actions taken and the extent to which the important areas for improvement had been addressed, namely to:

- develop further the action planning process, especially at middle leadership level, to effect improvement;
- ensure pupils are better informed around career progression pathways and to further broaden the curriculum offer, particularly at post-16;
- further improve the learning and teaching, including more effective questioning and increased opportunities for the pupils to develop their personal confidence and oracy skills.

The report identified also that it would 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 and budget for the school's sixth form provision in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

Consequently, there remained a need for Fivemiletown College to address the important areas for improvement. The Department of Education made the decision that the school remained within the Formal Intervention Process under the Every School a Good School policy.

The school received external support in the action planning process from the Education Authority; the school's action plans were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI.

The ETI carried out a monitoring visit in June 2021 and a fourth follow-up inspection in May 2022.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the school has received external support provided by the Education Authority in relation to: improvement in action planning at middle leadership level; facilitation of an external teacher professional learning programme; and, COVID-19 matters.

Over the same period, the key actions or changes which affect the work of the school include:

- The school is oversubscribed currently; the enrolment has increased from 376 in 2019 to 382 in 2021.
- There are 54 pupils in the sixth form and the post-16 curriculum offer meets the Entitlement Framework.

- Teachers have engaged in a programme of professional learning to improve further the pupils' learning experiences and their wider skills.
- The curricular offer at both key stage 4 and post-16 has been extended through the continued collaboration with another post-primary school and by the addition of new subjects delivered in school.
- The school has put in place a range of initiatives to support the pupils' emotional health and well-being, including the appointment of a pastoral support worker and, specialist intervention for English and maths.

As a consequence of the external support and the key changes and actions taken within the school, there have been improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

Key findings

Five percent of parents (17) responded to the confidential online questionnaire (as part of the follow-up inspection, there was an opportunity for parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire) and there were eight written comments. Overall, the parents expressed satisfaction with how the school is led and managed and almost all agreed that their child enjoys learning at school. Seventy-three percent (43) of the staff responded to the confidential online questionnaire and they provided a small number of written comments. The responses were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the school. Any issues raised in the parent and staff questionnaire responses were discussed with the principal and a representative of the governors.

The outcomes for learners remain as good.

The pupils are well settled, have positive dispositions for learning and they work well collaboratively and in pairs. Through well-conceived, structured opportunities, the pupils develop effective oral communication skills and can engage purposefully and appropriately with their peers and adults in a range of formal and informal contexts. The pupils articulated clearly their understanding of the school's target setting process and how they set personal targets.

The quality of provision has improved and is now good.

All of the lessons observed were effective in progressing the pupils' learning. In the best practice: information and communication technology was used well by the teachers to stimulate critical thinking and meaningful discussion; there was a wide range of active learning strategies; and, the pupils were empowered to develop creative skills. There is a more cohesive careers curriculum and strategy in the school and the pupils across all of the key stages are much better informed about the career progression pathways available to them.

In discussion with inspectors, the pupils from all key stages spoke positively and confidently about the support and guidance they receive. They mentioned in particular: how the pastoral support programme is reducing the adverse impact of COVID 19; and, the benefits of the recent careers fair and the reinstated opportunity for work-related learning.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement have improved and are now very good.

There is stability at strategic leadership level and the sustained collegial focus on school improvement during the operational challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic has addressed successfully the areas for improvement from the follow-up inspection of 2019. The school's interim COVID-19 recovery plan for this year is of very good quality; the baseline is well informed by self-evaluation and the targets are realistic and child-centred. The action planning process is well embedded at middle leadership level and the effective departmental links with senior leadership and governors have improved the consistency in the quality of the action planning process, with a particular focus on raising the standards attained by relevant target groups, including boys and pupils with Free School Meal Entitlement. There are effective systems in place to monitor and track pupils' progress and as a result, underachievement is identified earlier to ensure more timely, impactful support is in place.

It continues to be important that the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school's provision and budget for the sixth form provision in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

Overall effectiveness

Fivemiletown College now 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 in:

- continuing to monitor and evaluate the impact of the interventions that support the pupils' emotional health and well-being and target under-achievement.

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