

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION

Larne High School and Learning Support
Centre, Larne, County Antrim

Controlled, co-educational, 11-18, non-selective secondary school
DE Ref No 321-0038

Report of a Follow-up Inspection (Involving Action
Short of Strike) in February 2023



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



Fourth follow-up inspection to Larne High School and Learning Support Centre, Larne, County Antrim, BT40 1NT (321-0038)

Introduction

The [original inspection](#) of Larne High School and Learning Support Centre was carried out in October 2011 when the school's education provision was evaluated as satisfactory and important areas for improvement were identified.

A [follow-up inspection](#) took place in December 2013, and a [second follow-up inspection](#) in October 2015 where the areas for improvement were amended. [A third follow-up inspection](#), which was impacted by industrial action short of strike, took place in September 2017.

Inspectors were unable to evaluate the extent to which the important areas for improvement left at the last inspection had been addressed, namely to:

- raise further the standards achieved by the pupils, in particular the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics;
- address the standards attained by those pupils entitled to free school meals; and
- review and improve the curriculum followed by the pupils, to ensure they have access to a broad and balanced range of subjects with appropriate opportunities for progression.

Consequently, Larne High School remained in the follow-up process.

Following the periods of lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a Monitoring Visit in November 2021 to help the school reflect on its provision, with a view to being well prepared for the fourth follow-up inspection.

A fourth follow-up inspection was carried out in February 2023 which was also impacted by the action short of strike.

Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that, due to industrial action short of strike by the teaching unions, members of the senior leadership team and representation from the board of governors would be engaging with the inspection in relation to the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

As a result of the industrial action the school was unable to provide a complete inspection evidence base to demonstrate the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. The ETI has a [statutory duty](#) to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education being provided for children and young people. The follow-up inspection proceeded on a partial basis as outlined above and the key findings are based on evidence made available at the time of the inspection visit.

Key actions and changes

In the interim period since the previous follow-up inspection in March 2017, the school received external support provided by the Education Authority (EA) in relation to:

- school governance;
- strategic leadership and management, including action-planning and self-evaluation;
- subject co-ordination, particularly in English and mathematics; and
- curriculum development and planning.

Views of pupils, parents/carers and staff

As a result of the industrial action short of strike, the online questionnaires were not distributed to the pupils, parents/carers and staff. Therefore, it is not possible to report on the views of the pupils, parents/carers and staff. The ETI will re-issue the questionnaires at the time of the next inspection visit to complete this follow-up inspection.

Key findings in relation to Safeguarding

Inspectors were unable to evaluate the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. The following findings are based on the evidence available at the time of the follow-up inspection as set out above.

Due to the partial nature of the evidence base, the ETI is unable to evaluate the arrangements for safeguarding pupils. The pupils' views are acknowledged and listened to through direct discussions with members of the school leadership team. In discussion with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. They spoke positively about the range of extra-curricular and leadership opportunities available to them through, for example: the house system; or through participation in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and groups.

Conclusion

The school's fourth follow-up inspection is incomplete due to the action short of strike of the teaching unions. The ETI has not been able to evaluate the school's progress in effecting the required improvements in the quality of its education provision for a period of over seven years since the second follow-up inspection.

As the school did not provide sufficient evidence to evaluate the arrangements for safeguarding pupils, the Department of Education will write to the Education Authority and the Board of Governors to seek assurance on the efficacy of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

The areas for improvement remain as the need to:

- raise further the standards achieved by the pupils, in particular the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics;
- address the standards attained by those pupils entitled to free school meals; and
- review and improve the curriculum followed by the pupils, to ensure they have access to a broad and balanced range of subjects with appropriate opportunities for progression.

The District Inspector will continue to monitor the school's progress, and the follow-up inspection may be completed at the request of the school up to and including June 2023. Subsequently, the inspection will be completed without further notice.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2023

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