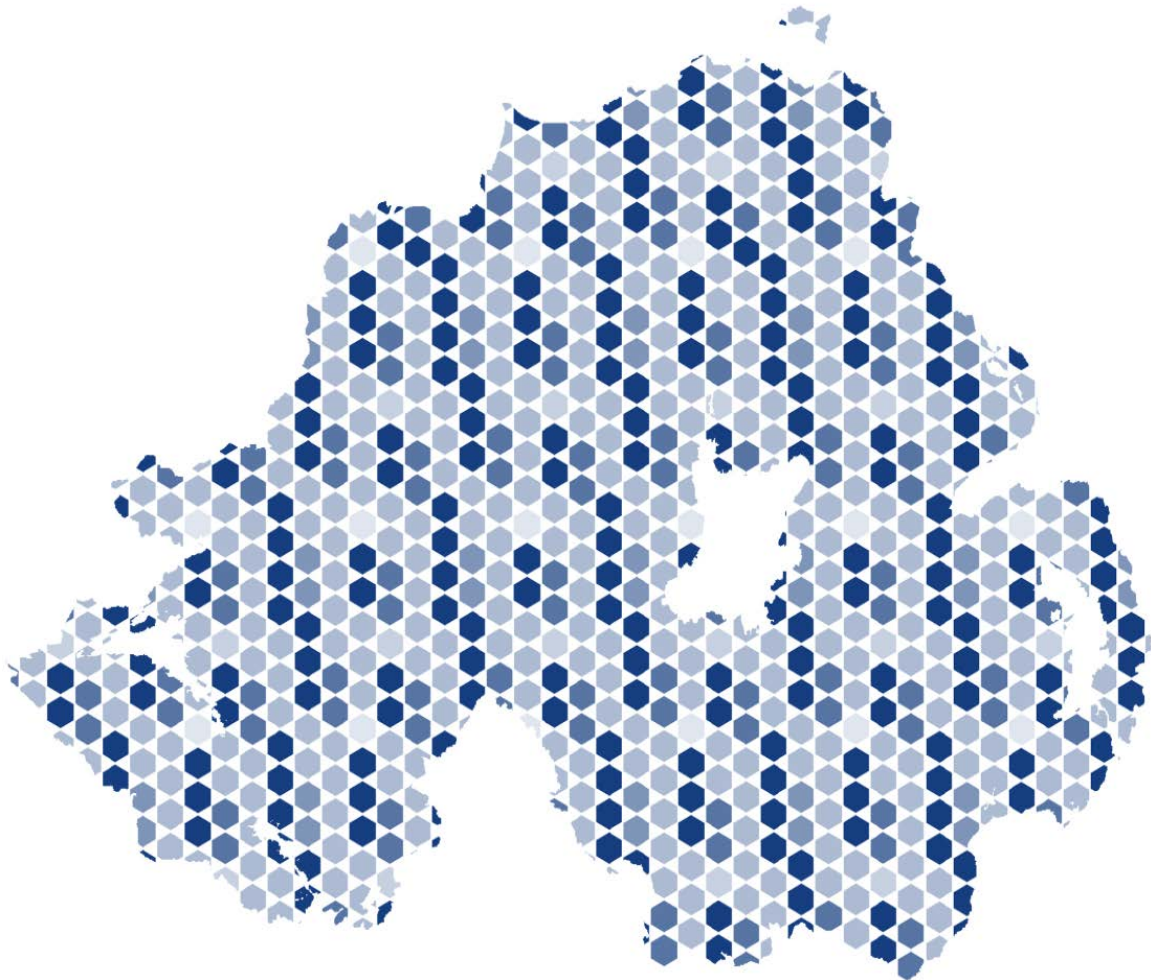


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Strangford Integrated College,
Carrowdore, County Down

Co-educational Grant Maintained Integrated school

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in October 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF STRANGFORD INTEGRATED COLLEGE, CARROWDORE, COUNTY DOWN, BT22 2GB (426-0295)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection of Strangford Integrated College in June 2016¹ which concluded that the school needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement identified in the follow-up inspection were the need to:

- continue to improve the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations;
- improve further the quality of planning, learning, teaching and assessment;
- further improve the quality and effectiveness of the care and support provided to the pupils; and
- to develop further the curriculum provision to ensure pupils have access to appropriate subjects and effective careers education, information, advice and guidance to enable them to pursue their chosen careers.

The school's action plans were of a good quality and identified key actions to promote improvement. The school reports that they received support in a range of areas from the Education Authority (EA).

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in January 2016 and a second follow-up inspection in October 2017.

Three percent of parents (19) and 23% of staff (26) responded to the re-issued online questionnaire. Most of the parental responses expressed high levels of satisfaction with their child's experiences in the school. The responses from almost all of the staff were very positive and highlighted in particular the good working relationships and the strong school community identity. The small number of issues raised in the questionnaire returns were discussed with the principal and governors.

In the interval since the first follow-up inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- the pupil enrolment has further increased, from 573 to 675 pupils;
- the number of pupils in the sixth-form has increased, from 106 to 136 pupils;
- a new principal designate was appointed in June 2017 and will take up the post of principal in November 2017;
- the number of full-time equivalent teachers has increased to 42;
- the staffing and leadership of the mathematics department, including the appointment of a new head of department and two teachers, who have all taken up post recently;

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/>

- the establishment of an intensive support team to meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils; and
- the appointment of two new senior leaders with responsibilities for the care and support of the pupils, the welfare of staff and the further development of the college ethos.

Key Findings

The pupils speak with pride and loyalty about their school; they emphasised the inclusive ethos, strong school community, good relationships with their teachers and one another, and the support they receive to progress in their learning.

The school has worked hard and with success to broaden the curricular offer. The curriculum planning process is pupil-centred, flexible, responsive to the pupils' needs and informed well by up-to-date labour market information. The school is an active member of the area learning community and collaborative arrangements are used well by the school to meet the pupils' progression needs. As a result of the actions to improve the curriculum offer, a higher proportion of the year 12 pupils are progressing to sixth form, and the progression of pupils to further and higher education is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools.

The quality of the learning and teaching was effective in promoting the pupils' learning in most (80%) of the lessons observed. Improvements were noted in the quality of the teachers' planning and how they engaged to good effect to progress the pupils' learning across a wide range of abilities.

The care and support of the pupils has been a priority for the school with clear evidence of improvement. Through a number of effective initiatives, underpinned by appropriate staffing, there is evidence of improved pastoral indicators such as higher levels of attendance and behaviour and effective support programmes leading to better outcomes attained by those pupils who require additional support.

The provision for mathematics requires further improvement. The school has taken decisive action to enhance the learning experiences for the pupils and to provide support for the recently appointed head of department.

The senior leadership team has been committed to the school improvement process to good effect. They provide a wide range of professional development opportunities for staff, which are aligned well with the school's priorities and associated actions for improvement. Through the sharing of good practice and the 'learning ideas' initiative they have created a climate of self-reflection and improvement across the school with a strong focus on quality learning and teaching. They are developing staff in their use of a range of assessment and pastoral data and information, which informs well decisions around the planning for individual needs, including strategies for intervention.

The overall outcomes attained by the pupils have improved since the first follow-up inspection. While the proportion of the pupils attaining GCSE English has improved to 69%, the outcomes attained by them in mathematics requires improvement. Consequently, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, remains overly low at 31%. More work is necessary to improve the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent, including English and mathematics.

The percentage of pupils attaining any five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C, is sustaining an upward trend and sits now at 97%; this is now well above the NI average for similar schools. In addition, there is notably less variation in the outcomes attained by the pupils across the subjects at this level.

The outcomes for pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C has increased to 61.9% and is now well above the NI average.

Conclusion

Strangford Integrated College demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The follow-up inspection has identified the following area for improvement:

- to improve the quality of provision and the outcomes attained by the pupils in mathematics.

The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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