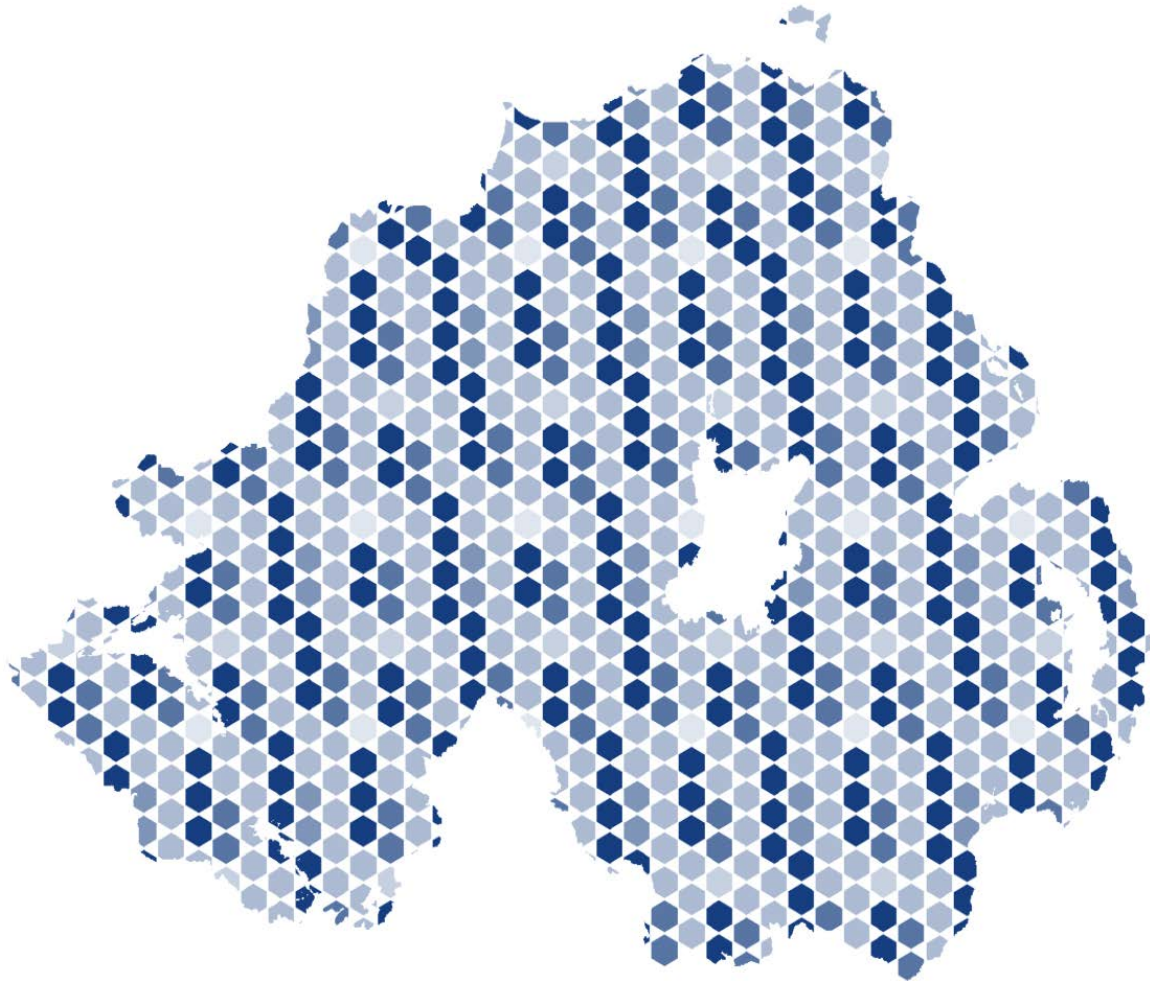


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Lagan College, Belfast

Integrated, co-educational, 11-18 all-ability school DE Ref No (426-0255)

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
February 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Lagan College draws its pupils from around fifty primary schools and is consistently oversubscribed. A bilateral admissions system operates, with around 35% of the pupils entering the school through academic selection. The approval of a development proposal in 2017 led to an increase in enrolment in the sixth form and there are currently 278 pupils studying a variety of courses at this stage. The school community benefits from a new school building, which opened in 2013. Lagan College is an active member of a number of partnerships including the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the east Belfast learning community. The school is engaged in shared education work with two other post-primary schools.

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 the senior leadership team would be co-operating with the inspection. 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.

Lagan College	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Year 8 Intake	202	202	201	202
Enrolment	1265	1261	1293	1354
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.4 (92.0)	94.1 (91.8)	93.4 (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage ¹	24.7	26.6	26.7	26.9
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	30.9 (391)	29.0 (366)	32.1 (415)	30.6 (412)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	70	78	81	87
No. of newcomers	9	10	11	13

Source: data as verified by the school.
N/A not available

2. Pupils', parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Thirty-six percent (486) of the pupils across the key stages (KS) completed an online questionnaire. Overall, most of the pupils' responses were positive about their experiences of the school, with the pupils recognising how the school community: welcomes and respects diversity; listens to and values their views; and, enables the pupils to improve their work. One-quarter of the pupils responding provided written comments; these expressed appreciation of the staff and facilities, the range of extra-curricular activities and educational trips.

A small number of parents (80) and most of the staff (78) responded to the online questionnaires. Most of the responses were very positive, indicating high levels of satisfaction with, and support for, the life and work of the school. In the written comments, the parents acknowledged, in particular, the pastoral care which supports the pupils' learning and social and emotional well-being. They highlighted their children's progress and enjoyment of school and commented favourably on the leadership and management. The staff emphasised their commitment to school improvement and the positive working relationships.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and representatives of the governors.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary inspection is to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on physical education in this inspection.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the provision and the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and physical education; and
- the quality and impact of the provision for care, welfare and support of the pupils.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they have been reported in the body of the report.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils who met with inspectors were courteous, articulate and very positive about school life. They highlighted the importance of the integrated ethos and the school's core values and during the discussions, the pupils demonstrated high levels of respect for all and commitment to the service of others. The pupils acknowledged the very good opportunities to develop their leadership skills and the extensive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, which develop well their personal and social skills.

- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs, or equivalents, at grades A* to C, has improved from a low base to above the Northern Ireland (NI) average. When English and mathematics are included the pupils' outcomes have improved steadily, and are now above the corresponding average. In addition, the gap in the performance between girls and boys has reduced.
- The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been above the NI average in the most recent two of the last three years.
- Most of the individual subjects at GCSE grades A* to C are performing in line with, or above, the corresponding averages.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining three or more A levels or equivalents, at grades A* to C, has been in line with, or above, the average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band. However, there remains a gap in the performance of boys and girls at this level which needs to be addressed.
- The majority of the individual subjects² at A level are performing in line with, or above, the corresponding averages.
- The pupils perform well across a range of vocational subjects at KS 4 and post-16.
- The school tracks well the pupils' progress as they move through the school and can demonstrate that a variety of initiatives and interventions are impacting positively on the pupils' progression and outcomes.
- In 2017 a majority of the leavers in year 14 progressed to Level 4 at further education and higher education.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and physical education;
- the progression made by the pupils in their learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The curriculum at all key stages continues to be adapted with a focus on enabling pupils of all abilities to progress to appropriate pathways and achieve positive outcomes. A wider range of courses at KS 4 and post-16 have been introduced to meet more effectively the needs, interests and aspirations of the pupils. Pupils across the key stages benefit from involvement in a rich and varied programme of additional opportunities to extend their learning.

² In those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages.

- The discrete careers provision is complemented well by an extensive programme which includes guest speakers, links to industry and mock interviews. The pupils in years 11 and 13 undertake work experience, which informs their decisions in relation to future careers. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they are supported well by the staff to make informed subject choices.
- In discussion with the inspectors, the pupils acknowledged the high level of learning and pastoral support provided by the staff. There are extensive and flexible programmes available to those who require additional help with aspects of their learning; this provision is underpinned by a range of tailored interventions and regular, detailed communication between key pastoral and learning support staff.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the impact of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and physical education across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior leadership team (SLT) communicates a clear vision, shared by the pupils, parents, staff and governors, for the ethos and direction of the school; this is aligned closely to the school's founding principles and core values.
- The recent restructuring of the SLT has resulted in clearly defined roles and responsibilities and a fusion of the school's academic and pastoral work focused on the holistic development and well-being of the pupils.
- The school development plan is comprehensive and is informed by wide consultation with all stakeholders and the rigorous analysis of data. Importantly, the pupils are empowered to identify and lead on aspects of school improvement such as changes to the school uniform and the focus placed on mental health.
- The governors expressed their loyalty to, and pride in, the school. They set themselves high expectations and reflect critically on the effectiveness of their work. The governors take responsibility for widening their own knowledge and developing their skills and make creative use of their expertise and range of experience in order to contribute more effectively to school improvement. Based on the evidence presented at the time of the inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness and impact of senior leadership;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school.

CONCLUSION

9. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, and the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS³ and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Lagan College achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent at grades A* to C and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band⁴.

The table also includes the percentage of year 12 pupils in Lagan College achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent, including English and mathematics at grades A* to E. In this instance, there is no NI average available.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	99.51	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	60.1	67.69	89.07
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band ⁵	75.8	81.8	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	48.77	57.44	65.03
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band	56.6	61.4	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	95.07	98.46	99.45
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	35.42	47.17	46.81

³ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁴ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁵ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

GCE A level and equivalent examination results at grades A* to C from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Lagan College achieving three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C, compared with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	96.97	97.54	97.45
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	67.68	61.86	65.38
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band ⁶	56.1	61.9	N/A

⁶ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

**Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level or equivalent
(The three year average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)
Grades A* - C**

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	203	195	183

GCSE Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries	School A* to C %	Northern Ireland A* to C%
Art and Design	190	70	75.8
Biology	79	81	68
Business Communications Systems	*	62.5	N/A
Business Communications Systems	*	50	N/A
Business Communications Systems	15	40	62.8
Business Studies	115	68.7	60.7
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness	25	100	N/A
Chemistry	45	77.8	71.9
Child Development	86	67.4	70
Computer Studies	29	93.1	N/A
Contemporary Craft	40	60	N/A
Double Award Science	51	93.1	83.4
Drama	46	100	78.1
English Language	540	70.6	67.4
English Literature	175	78.9	84.5
French	69	68.1	74.9
Further Mathematics	74	87.8	84.8
Geography	149	59.7	64.8
German	*	100	64.9
Home Economics	80	72.5	67.7
Health and Social Care	100	66	66.8
History	253	73.5	65
Information and Communications Technology	187	71.1	71.5
Irish	16	93.8	95.5
Learning for Life and Work	109	83.5	74.1
Mathematics	581	74.5	52.7
Media Studies	58	77.6	65.4
Moving Image Arts	46	73.9	N/A
Music	16	93.8	81.3
Motor Vehicle and Road User Studies	47	44.7	52.3
Occupational Studies: Business & Services	44	93.2	N/A
Occupational Studies: Design & Creativity	39	66.7	N/A
Occupational Studies: Environment & Society	*	100	N/A
Occupational Studies Technology & Innovation	22	40.9	N/A
Personal Effectiveness & Wellbeing	21	100	N/A
Physical Education	90	62.2	70.1
Physical Education (Double Award)	*	88.9	N/A
Physics	48	77.1	85.5
Polish	15	100	N/A
Preparation for Adult Life	88	100	N/A
Prince's Trust	116	100	N/A
Religious Studies	459	80.4	65.1
Science (Additional)	78	79.5	76.5
Science (Core)	215	40.5	39
Science (Single Award)	36	88.9	70
Sociology	40	60	69.2
Spanish	143	77.6	79.4
Technology and Design	175	75.4	70.5

* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

N/A not available

**Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level or equivalent
(The three year average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)
Grades A* - C**

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	98	97	78

GCE A Level Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries	School A* to C %	Northern Ireland A* to C%
Art	35	91.4	94.7
Applied Business SA	88	92.0	86.9
Applied Business DA	*	83.3	N/A
Biology	23	69.6	82.7
Chemistry	20	75	88.5
Computing	14	85.7	81.2
Drama	19	100	88.6
English Literature	26	88.5	84.6
Fine Art	19	89.5	N/A
French	13	84.6	90.8
Geography	18	61.1	87.4
German	*	100	N/A
Health and Social Care	39	84.6	86.8
History	65	78.5	84.4
ICT (2016 Spec)	11	100	77.1
ICT (Vocational)	24	95.8	86.5
Irish	*	100	95.3
Software Systems Development	*	87.5	N/A
Maths	30	80	88.6
Media Studies	26	76.9	84.8
Moving Image Arts	21	100	N/A
Music	15	93.3	87.7
Physics	12	66.7	81.9
Polish	*	100	N/A
Politics	52	78.8	88.4
Psychology	*	33.3	70.0
Religious Studies	70	88.6	88.8
Sociology	67	77.6	75.9
Spanish	29	89.7	92.6
Sport Studies & Active Leisure Industry	13	53.8	77.8
Sport Science & Active Leisure Industry	*	100	N/A
Technology and Design	29	82.8	N/A

* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years
N/A not available

STAYING ON RATE⁷ 2017/18

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at school compared with the NI average for all schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	49.5	64.2
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	74.2	75.0

Leavers' Destinations⁸ 2016/17

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from this school who leave school to enter employment, further education, higher education, and training or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-grammar schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI No. (%)	School No. (%)	NI Yr12 (%)	School Yr12 (%)	NI Yr13 (%)	School Yr13 (%)	NI Yr14 (%)	School Yr14 (%)	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	12256	196		76 (38.3%)		18 (9.2%)		102 (52%)			
Employment	1497 (12.2%)	12 (6.1%)	6.7%	*	21.9%	*	12.2%	#			
Institute of Further Education	5512 (45.0%)	101 (51.5%)	60.9%	85.5%	49.2%	#	45.0%	19.6%	31	65	5
Institute of Higher Education ⁹	2652 (21.6%)	68 (34.7%)	*	0%	*	0%	21.6%	66.7%	0	0	68
Training ¹⁰	1924 (15.7%)	#	28.0%	*	17.9%	0%	15.7%	*			
Unemployment	448 (3.7%)	*	2.7%	*	6.4%	*	3.7%	0%			
Others	223 (1.8%)	7 (3.6%)	#	5.3%	#	0%	1.8%	*			

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2016/17 - NON-GRAMMAR SCHOOLS¹¹

- *fewer than 5 cases
- # figures suppressed

⁷ The percentage of pupils who stay on at school compared with the Northern Ireland average for all schools, this rate is calculated in terms of pupils who progress their level of study, whether at their original or a new school. Pupils that move schools between years are counted as 'staying on' at their original school as they are progressing their study within the school system.

⁸ Destination is defined by Institution. Institutions may provide courses at both Further and Higher Education levels.

⁹ Includes universities and teacher training colleges.

¹⁰ Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for the Economy. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

¹¹ Excludes special and independent schools.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication, which is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary>.

The arrangements for this inspection included: a meeting with representatives from the governors; formal discussions with some pupils (in groups), and the senior leadership team in relation to their leadership and safeguarding responsibilities; review of documentation and data; and the opportunity for all pupils, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)

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%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management¹²:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹² And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

<p>The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.</p>
<p>The school 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.</p>
<p>The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.</p>
<p>The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.</p>

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