

Report of a Post-primary Inspection
Integrated College Dungannon

November 2024



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1. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Integrated College Dungannon is a grant-maintained integrated, 11-18 co-educational, non-selective post-primary school situated on the outskirts of Dungannon. The school attracts pupils from across the Dungannon, Mid-Ulster and Armagh districts. The school has grown steadily from its initial intake of 60 pupils and ten staff in 1995 to 755 pupils and 136 staff currently. Twenty-three percent of the pupils have free school meals entitlement. A similar proportion of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN), 63 of whom have a statement of educational need.

For many years, the school has welcomed pupils from a wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, resulting in a diverse school population, where 19 different languages are spoken. Just over one-fifth of the pupils have designated newcomer status.

The school holds the Welcoming Schools Award from the Education Authority and the International Fund for Ireland, and the Excellence in Integrated Education Award from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)

B. VIEWS OF PUPILS, PARENTS AND STAFF

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

Thirty-eight percent (290) of the pupils across all year groups responded to the questionnaire and their responses were, in the main, positive. Almost all of the pupils indicated that the teachers and other adults in their school treat them with care and respect, they are provided with regular opportunities to exercise and are given good quality resources and helpful feedback to support their learning. A small number of pupils provided written comments, and a small number highlighted individual concerns.

Seventeen percent (35) of parents/carers responded to the questionnaire and almost one-third of them provided written comments. Nearly all the parents/carers indicated that they know about the school's vision, their child is happy at school and making good progress in their learning, and that they are content with the subjects their child can access. In the written comments, the parents/carers expressed their appreciation for how the staff understand and meet the needs of their child and support them in their learning and development, and they highlighted the work of the parent council. A small number of parents/carers made suggestions for how aspects of the provision could be improved further and a small number reported individual concerns.

Seventy-one percent of the teaching staff (41) and 59% (43) of the support staff responded to the questionnaire and their responses were highly positive. A minority of the staff who responded also provided additional written comments which highlighted their enjoyment of working in the school, the focus on health and wellbeing for all, and their support for one another in meeting the wide range of needs of the pupils. A small number of staff raised concerns in relation to workload, accommodation and resources.

A summary of the questionnaire responses, including suggestions for improvement and individual concerns, were shared with the principal and three governors.

C. THE PROCESS OF INSPECTION

The ETI worked alongside Integrated College Dungannon to consider how well the school:

- has identified and articulates its vision;
- prioritises actions to achieve the vision;
- overcomes the main challenges it faces;
- monitors and reviews progression to identify, celebrate and embed success; and
- grows and develops an inclusive community of learning.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The school is successful in achieving its vision through '**learning together**'; collaboration, communication and continuous learning are valued and promoted in an ethos of mutual respect.
- The pupils are friendly and welcoming; they are respectful of each other and engage maturely with adults.
- The pupils are empowered to make a meaningful contribution to the life and work of the school, which develops well their confidence and leadership skills.
- The planning, teaching and assessment for successful learning is mostly effective, with pupils developing their knowledge and understanding through active learning and an appropriate level of challenge.
- The curriculum is flexible, responsive to the pupils' needs and abilities; most of the pupils achieve well and progress to the next stage of their education, training or employment.

- The well-structured programme of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) supports pupils appropriately in making informed decisions about an extensive and appropriate range of progression pathways.
- The staff are proactive and respond timely and sensitively to help pupils overcome barriers to their learning.
- Diversity is respected and highly valued across the school community, where the pupils appreciate learning with, from and about one another.
- The creative and innovative staff professional learning, based on coaching, research and cross departmental working, builds the capacity of staff and impacts positively on the pupils' learning and outcomes.
- Self-evaluation is robust, and developing the pupils' digital skills has been identified by the school as an appropriate priority going forward.
- At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the school demonstrates that the arrangements for child and adult protection align to the current statutory guidance.

Area for action:

- to develop further the pupils' digital skills.

3. MAIN REPORT

A. SETTING THE VISION

'Learning Together,' the whole school community achieves the vision of **'educating students in a safe, happy and inclusive environment.'** The pupils are empowered to take an active role in school life and play their part in **'embracing all cultures and traditions.'** The vision reflects the rich diversity within the school community and is underpinned by an ethos of mutual respect.

The school development plan is informed well by the careful analysis of a wide range of information and sets out clearly key priorities which align appropriately to the school's vision. The arrangements for monitoring progress of the key priorities and the impact of the actions taken to bring about improvement are straightforward, manageable and effective, and they include a supportive approach to gathering first-hand evaluations of learning and teaching.

The governors are well informed about, and highly committed to, the school and the community it serves. They value **'learning together'** with the staff and pupils through purposeful and creative collaboration. As a result, the governors make a significant contribution by working alongside staff who lead aspects of school improvement.

B. IMPLEMENTING AND IMPROVING TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

The planning, teaching and assessment for successful learning is mostly effective. The pupils are motivated and engage actively in the learning, developing their thinking, communication, problem solving and negotiation skills. The teachers use well-directed questions to challenge and build on the pupils' responses and develop their ideas. While the staff make good use of digital technology to enhance the pupils' learning, the school has identified appropriately the development of pupils' digital skills as a priority going forward. In a small number of the lessons, the teaching was over directed and lacked pace and challenge.

The school's achievement of the [AWARE NI Investors in Mental Health Gold Standard Award](#) and its involvement in the Education Authority's [Being well, Doing Well Programme](#) reflects the whole-school approach and high priority given to the emotional health and wellbeing of all. The well-conceived preventative curriculum, including the provision for Relationships and Sexuality Education, helps the pupils understand and manage their emotions, encourages them to embrace healthy lifestyles and develops their social responsibility. The programme is responsive to the pupils' needs, providing them with the knowledge, understanding and skills to develop as responsible citizens and to make a positive contribution to society.

A culture of keeping safe is evident in the school. The safeguarding team is known, and easily recognised, by the pupils through the wearing of yellow staff lanyard badges.

Curriculum planning reflects well the pupils' wide range of abilities, interests and aspirations. At key stage 4 and post-16 the curriculum offer meets the requirements of the Entitlement Framework and is delivered through collaboration with other schools in the area learning community and with South West College. The curriculum at post-16 enables almost all (93%) of the year 14 pupils to make appropriate progression to employment, training or level 4 courses in further and higher education. The pupils told us that they enjoy the practical nature of the applied qualifications and are happy with the choices they have made.

The CEIAG programme is effective and provides work experience opportunities for pupils in years 11 and 13. The pupils have varied and well-informed opportunities to learn about a range of employment opportunities and progression pathways, enabling them to make informed choices for the future.

C. BUILDING EQUITY

The profoundly inclusive ethos and purposeful '**Learning Together**' mean that diversity is respected and valued across the school community. The pupils appreciate learning with, from and about one another. They told us that everyone in their school is made to feel welcome and equal, and explained why it is important that they develop their understanding of others. The pupils across all year groups access a wide range of sports, events and trips that celebrate the rich cultural diversity in the school and fosters mutual respect.

The staff are highly committed to supporting all pupils to be ready to learn. The pupils enjoy positive relationships with the staff, which include restorative conversations when needed, and they benefit from strong links between school and home. The staff are proactive and respond in a timely and sensitive manner to support the pupils and their families who require additional help. The staff create a secure network around those pupils who face barriers to learning and understand well how to help pupils overcome barriers.

The pupils with SEN benefit from individualised learning and teaching strategies, a range of effective intervention programmes and a strategic joined up approach for career pathway planning. The staff monitor thoroughly the pupils' progress and achievement; the school's data indicates that the pupils on the SEN register make good progress from their individual starting points. In 2024, all of the year 12 pupils with a statement of SEN progressed to further education or training.

Those pupils for whom English is an additional language are integrated well into the school community. Tailored, flexible support meets their needs and is impacting positively on their learning experiences, progress across the curriculum and outcomes.

D. EMBEDDING SUCCESS

The pupils are friendly and welcoming, respectful of each other and engage maturely with adults. They explained enthusiastically the learning strategies and activities that they enjoy. Through working together, sharing ideas and helping each other, they develop their confidence and communication skills. In class we observed the senior pupils discussing complex issues with high levels of respect and compassion. The pupils engage in purposeful self and peer assessment and are sensitive in their discussions on the key aspects of learning and how to improve their work and that of others. They regularly praise and encourage their peers in their learning and share one another's successes. The pupils are asked to reflect on the teaching within the lessons, which, in turn, informs the teachers' planning. Success is recognised and celebrated throughout the school and through online media. The achievements of former pupils are used well to inspire and enthuse current pupils.

The school's data shows that most (89%) pupils attain five GCSE (or equivalent) qualifications at grades A* to C, which is in line with the school's expectations and the pupils' abilities. The school has put in place a number of strategies and interventions for pupils who are at risk of not achieving both GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics at grade C or above. This includes the appointment of year 13 pupils as English and mathematics ambassadors who share their enthusiasm and knowledge in these subjects to support and encourage younger pupils. In 2024, 54% of the pupils attained five GCSE (or equivalent) qualifications at grades A* to C including English and mathematics.

The majority of year 14 pupils (63%) attain 3 A level or equivalent qualifications at grades A* to C, which is slightly below the school's expectations and the pupils' abilities. The school continues to focus on improving the proportion of pupils at post-16 attaining three or more A level (or equivalent) qualifications at grades A* to C through on-going curriculum review, targeted subject-specific support for pupils and collaboration with parents/carers.

E. GROWING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

Lifelong learning is valued and modelled successfully by the staff through their own engagement in professional learning. The innovative 'Teaching for Learning Cycle' promotes inclusivity among teaching staff, fosters positive working relationships and enhances interdepartmental working. The 'Teaching for Learning Cycle' provides an appropriate focus on evidence-informed practice and research and discussion of contemporary pedagogy to inform the evaluation of teaching for learning. The staff meet to discuss their research to support the development of teaching for successful learning and to disseminate good practice.

The pupils participate actively and meaningfully in many ways including, acting as subject and pastoral ambassadors, initiating links with the local community and through the school council influencing the development of policies. The views of the pupils are sought and valued by the board of governors, with two student governors attending the meetings and engaging in discussions to share the pupils' ideas for school improvement. The pupils articulated how, through carrying out roles and responsibilities, they are developing confidence and essential leadership skills, preparing them for life beyond school.

The school has developed effective links and partnerships with others, including schools, businesses, sporting, cultural and community organisations, which impact positively on the pupils' learning experiences. We met with representatives from business, and other education and training organisations who explained how they support the school in achieving its vision and highlighted the mutual benefits of collaboration. A group of pupils from other schools who access aspects of their curriculum in Integrated College Dungannon told us that they feel welcome and at ease in the school, enjoy learning together and have made friends.

F. CHILD PROTECTION

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

4. GOING FORWARD

The pupils of Integrated College Dungannon are learning and progressing in a **safe, happy and inclusive environment**, where different cultures and traditions are respected and valued. **Learning together**, the staff embrace new and different ways of working to meet the diverse needs of the pupils.

The ETI will continue to work with Integrated College Dungannon, including to share examples of highly effective practice from which others may learn. The aspect of practice which should be shared more widely is:

- the very successful creative and innovative approaches to staff professional learning.

The school is well placed to take forward the area for action detailed in this report.

5. APPENDIX

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%

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