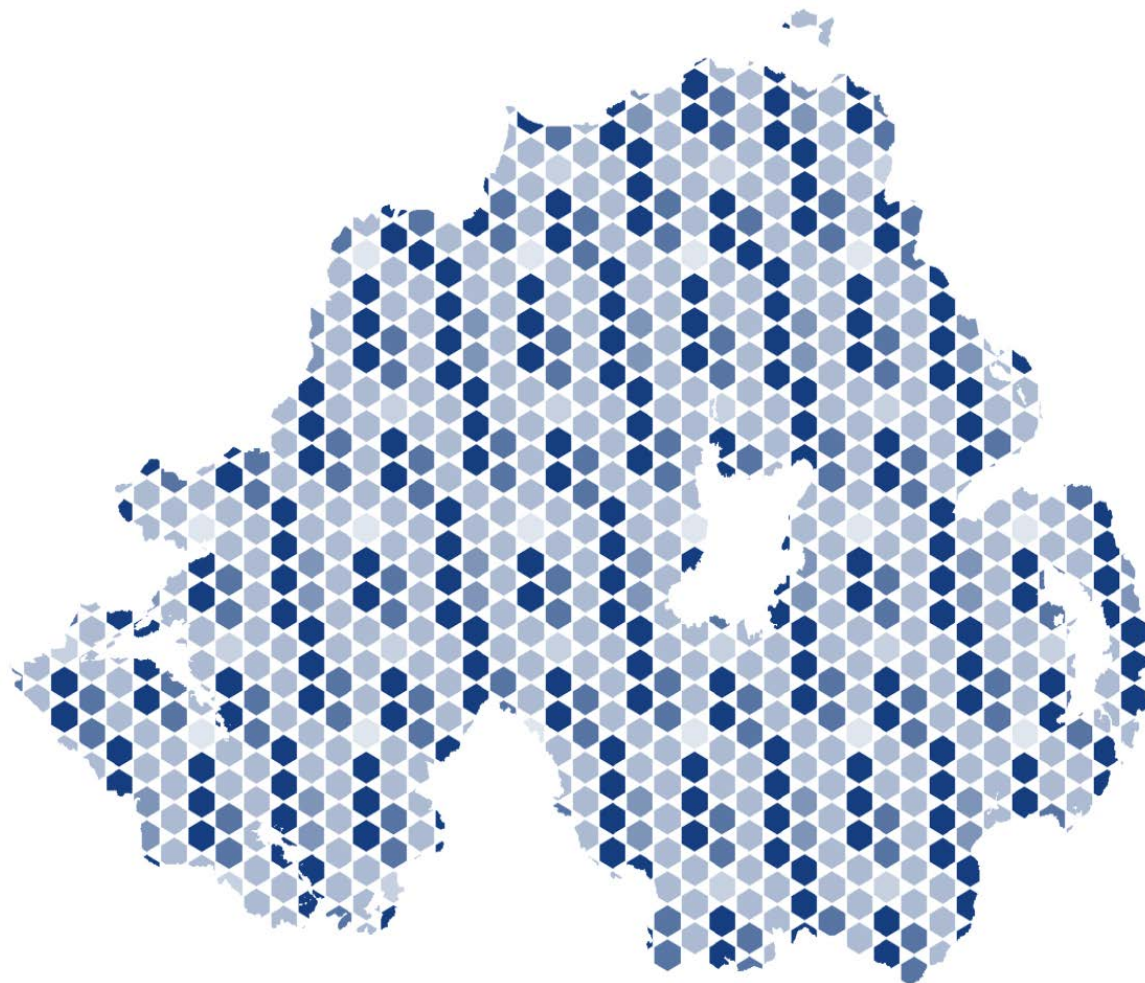


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Omagh High School, Omagh, County Tyrone

Controlled, co-educational, 11-18, non-selective school De ref no (221-0125)

Report of a Sustaining Improvement Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in May 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Omagh High School (221-0125)

Introduction

Omagh High School took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII) in October 2015.

In the interim, there have been appointments at senior and middle leadership level.

A SII was conducted in May 2019.

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 and a number of middle leaders 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.

Focus of the inspection

The purpose of the SII was to evaluate the extent to which the school is capable of demonstrating its capacity to effect improvement through self-evaluation and effective school development planning. The school also provided evidence of provision for safeguarding as part of the inspection.

The lines of inquiry during the SII were the school's actions to:

- use data to inform provision for the pupils; and
- meet the pupils' individual needs through the on-going review of the curriculum.

Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking and impact of the identified actions associated with the lines of inquiry.

Key findings

- A wide range of internal and external data has been collated and analysed in order to: baseline and track the progression of pupils; inform strategies for learning, teaching, intervention and support; and set individual pupil and whole school targets. There has been a focus on collaborative staff development with another maintained post-primary school, in relation to data analysis and use. All staff are involved collectively in the annual cycle of evaluating outcomes in public examinations.
- In two of the last three years, the outcomes for pupils at GCSE have been above the corresponding Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools¹. While outcomes at post-16 remain in line with the corresponding NI average for similar schools, these have been declining over the three years. Over the past two years a small number of pupils have undertaken 'bridging' courses at post-16, accessing level 2 (GCSE or equivalent) courses or level 2 courses along with a level 3 (GCE or equivalent) offer. A notable number of subjects at post-16 have uptake by small numbers of pupils.

¹ In the same free school meal band.

- Appropriately, the school is focused on being responsive to the needs, abilities and interests of the pupils through holistically addressing the barriers to learning and attainment with which they present. As a consequence, the school keeps under review the curriculum offer and this has led to a number of modifications at Key Stage 4 and post-16. It will be important to consider the curricular breadth and balance, as well as the currency and duplication of the qualifications offered.
- The pupils who met with inspectors are respectful of each other and positive about their experiences in school. They expressed their appreciation, in particular, for the help and support the teachers and classroom assistants provide and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. The pupils value the leadership opportunities available to them as members of the student council.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and the school budget, in order to assess the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflects broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. As part of the ongoing review of key policies and procedures, the school's safeguarding team has identified the need to update the anti-bullying policy and the positive behaviour policy. In discussion 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. However, 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

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

Health and safety

Controlled access to the school's main entrance door needs to be reviewed.

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