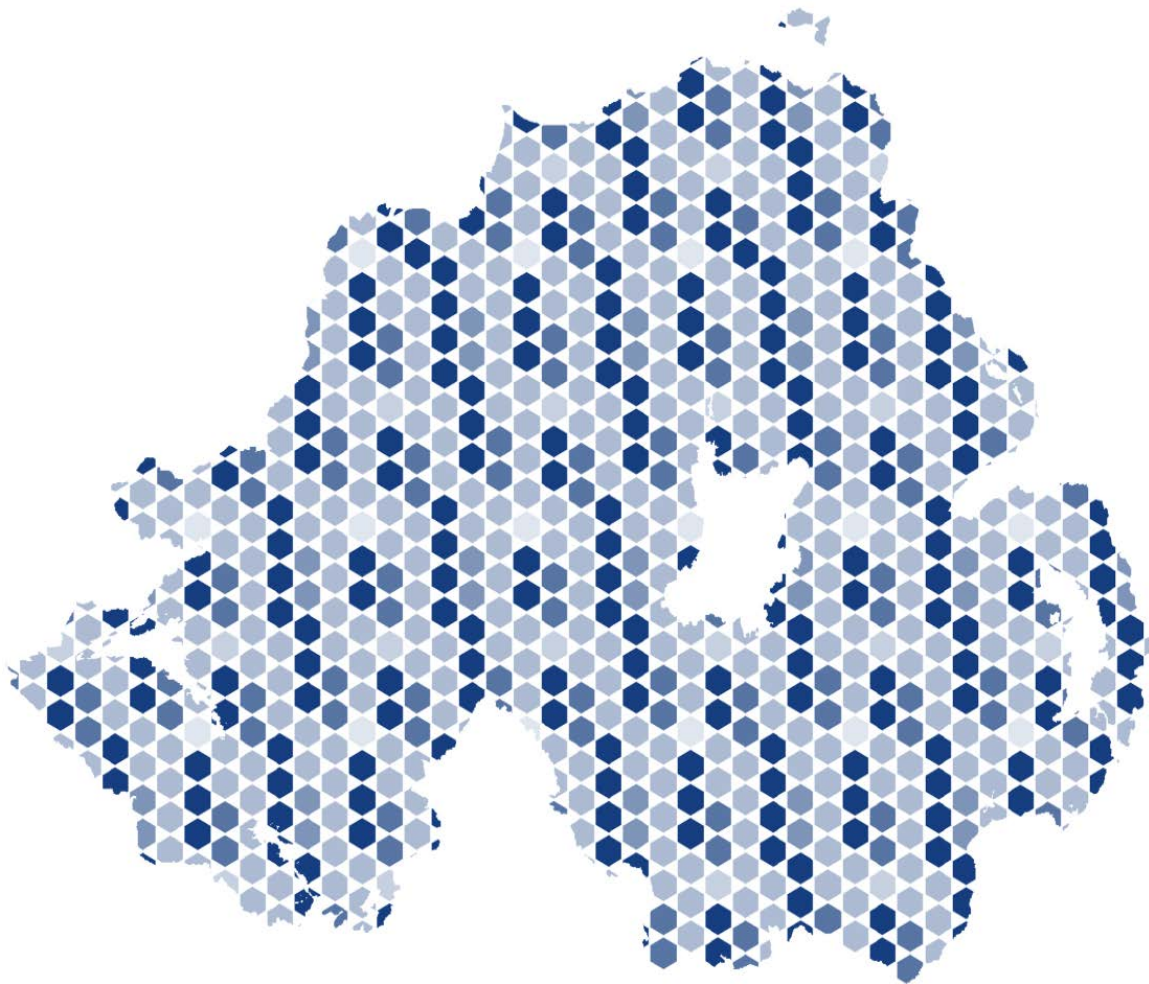


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Saintfield High School,
Saintfield, County Down

Controlled, co-educational 11-16 non-selective

Report of a Sustaining Improvement
Inspection in June 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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Sustaining Improvement Inspection of Saintfield High School, County Down (421-0063)

Introduction

Saintfield High School took part in the pilot of the sustaining improvement inspection (SII) in June 2015. In the interim period the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has risen from 13% in 2015 to 22% in 2017. There have been significant changes in the management structure of the school with the appointment of a new principal, a vice-principal, senior teachers and a head of mathematics. A SII was conducted on 13 and 14 June 2018.

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:

- enhance pastorally the pupils' resilience and well-being; and
- raise further the quality of the pupils' learning experience and the standards achieved.

Key findings

- The school has worked purposefully on streamlining the effective delivery of pastoral care provision with the academic needs of the children, reflected in the strategic appointment of a 'Study for Success Co-ordinator', the creation of 'Pupil Well-being Teams' and a review of the curriculum.
- A wide selection of pupils spoke enthusiastically and positively about the benefits of the mental health and well-being programmes and how these programmes assist with their learning and academic progress through the school. It is notable that, for the past four years, the school's rate of attendance has been consistently above the NI average. The pupils were also appreciative of the tracking and target-setting 'Pupil Alert System' which helps them identify areas in their learning where they require support and guidance. In discussion with a selection of parents, they indicated their approval of the school's systems for identifying and addressing underachievement and the high priority given to the pupils' emotional well-being. The school recognises the need to monitor and evaluate in particular the most recently introduced initiatives to assess the full impact on raising the standards achieved by all of the pupils.
- The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, has improved from 25% in 2015 to 43% in 2017 which is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools in the same free school meals band. Over the past three years the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C including English and mathematics has been above the NI average for similar schools; however attainment at this level fell below the NI average in 2017. The improvement in the standards achieved by pupils in mathematics was a particular focus for the school, with the proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-C in mathematics increasing from 51% in 2016 to 62% in 2017.

Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect the guidance from the Department of Education.

Conclusion

Saintfield High School continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity¹ to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the pupils. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as outstanding or very good has been reported as a school demonstrating a high level of capacity.

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