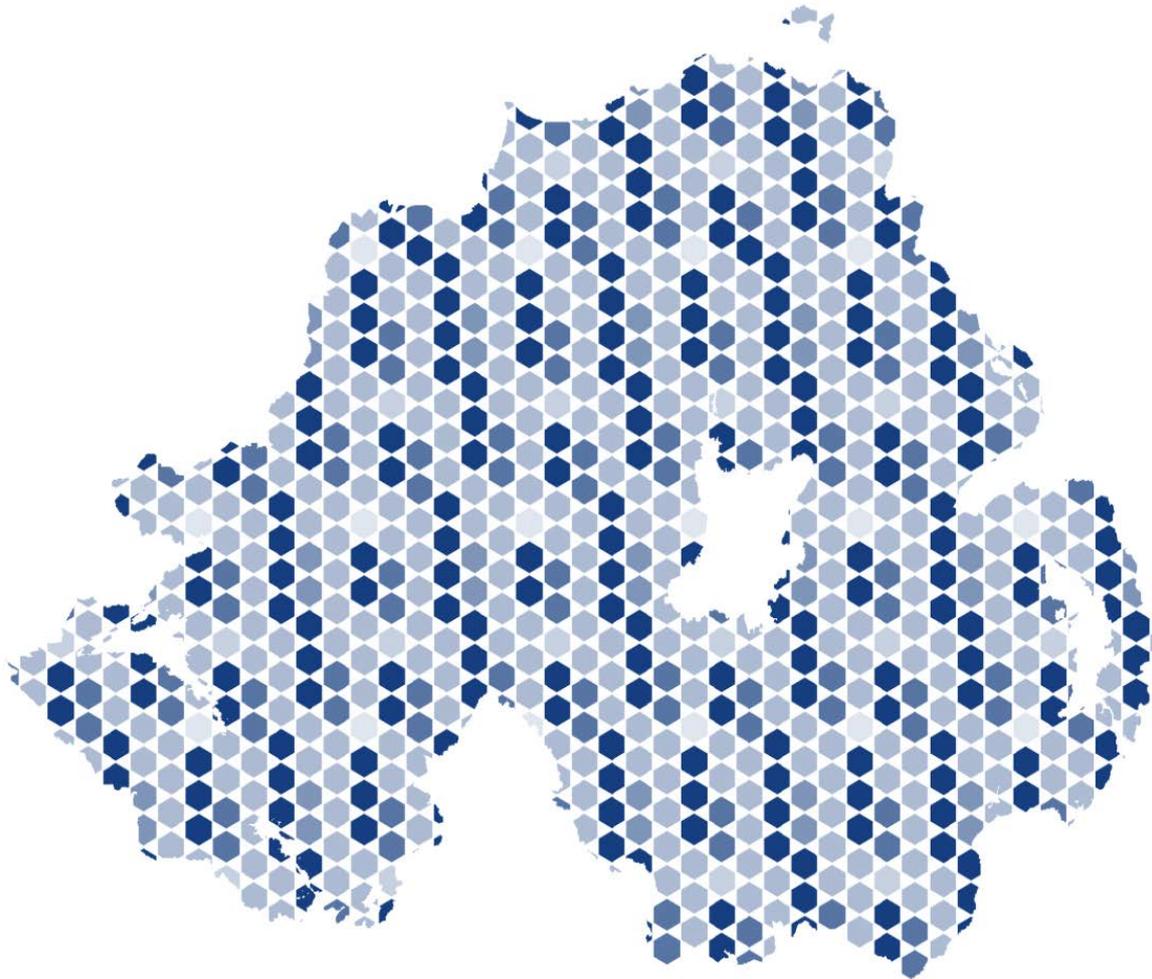


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Belfast Boys' Model School

All-Boys' Controlled School

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2015

*eti*

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



## Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

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

## Overall effectiveness

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

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.
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.
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.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all 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.

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## **1. Inspection method and evidence base**

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of post-primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed learning and teaching, scrutinised documentation, data and the pupils' written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils (individually and in groups), teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

A few parents (1%) and 61% of the staff (43) responded to the online questionnaire. All the staff who responded affirmed the work of the school and a small number who provided additional comment reported positively on how the leadership's focus on providing high quality staff development and support was developing their capacity as teachers and leaders. A majority of the parents who responded affirmed the work of the school and a small number who provided comment said their sons were happy in school. A small number of issues raised in the parents' questionnaire were reported to the principal and governors.

## **2. Focus of inspection**

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, 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 occupational studies in this inspection.

## **3. Context**

Belfast Boys' Model School draws its pupils from a wide catchment area across north and west Belfast. It is oversubscribed at entry into year 8, where the proportion of pupils who have achieved at, or above, the expected levels in literacy and numeracy is notably low. The school is growing the number of pupils who are enrolled at year 14.

Just under one-third of the pupils require additional support with aspects of their learning; a significant number of pupils (85) have statements of educational need. Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has risen to 56%. The school prides itself on strong statutory and community links and it has been designated a full service extended school since 2006<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The ETI inspected the school in 2013 as part of a full service extended school and full service community network survey and it is suggested that this report be read in conjunction with the survey report, which can be accessed at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/an-evaluation-of-full-service-extended-schools-and-full-service-community-network>

<b>Belfast Boys' Model School</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
Year 8 Intake	146	165	152	170
Enrolment	930	943	969	968
% Attendance (NI Average)	91% (91.3%)	91.8% (92%)	91.3% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage <sup>2</sup>	42%	40%	54%	56%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	28.6% (266)	45.1% (426)	49.4% (496)	31.4% (304)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	36	50	70	85
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the Learning Support Centre (if appropriate)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. of newcomers	10	10	20	20
<i>Intake<sup>3</sup>:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	*	0	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	6	*	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	53	49	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	58	50	#	#

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Very Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Very Good

#### 5. Achievements and standards

- Almost all of the pupils engage enthusiastically with their learning and demonstrate high levels of motivation to succeed. They are courteous and respectful towards each other, the staff and visitors to the school. The pupils develop increasing levels of independence, self-confidence and educational aspiration as they acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills to achieve the ambitious academic and pastoral targets they have agreed with their teachers. They are proud of their school and leave it well prepared for the next stage of their learning and for wider civic participation.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

<sup>3</sup> From 2013, KS2 standards in English and mathematics are reported as Levels of Progression in Communication and Using Mathematics and cannot be compared directly with KS2 data from previous years

- The pupils benefit significantly from an extensive range of sporting, cultural and tailored community activities, which develop further their personal and social skills. The pupils' engagement in these activities impacts positively on attendance and participation levels, which are on a rising trend. Similarly, the pupils benefit well from increasing access to leadership experiences, which include involvement in restorative justice initiatives, mentoring and community engagement.
- The standards attained by the pupils in English are good. There has been a significant improvement in attainment at grades A\* to C in GCSE English language over the last five years and the three year trend reflects that performance is almost in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools. The pupils show good levels of engagement and can read and write with increasing confidence and accuracy as they progress through the school.
- The standards attained by the pupils in mathematics are good, with an upward trend. Over the last three years, the school's performance in GCSE mathematics at grades A\* to C has been above the NI average for similar non-selective schools. The pupils enjoy their learning in mathematics and work well independently and collaboratively.
- The standards attained by the pupils in occupational studies are good. They develop and apply good practical skills and their files show that most of them are making good progress in the development of critical evaluation skills over the duration of the programme. The pupils work very effectively both independently and in small groups, display enjoyment in their work, demonstrate increasing levels of confidence and resilience and aspire to achieve to the best of their ability.
- In two out of the last three years, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE examinations or equivalent at grades A\* to C has been in line with or well above the NI average for similar non-selective schools in the same free school meals band. The percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent, including English and mathematics, has remained steady over the last three years and is at, or above, the NI average for similar schools.
- There is variation in the standards attained by the pupils in individual subjects at GCSE grades A\* to C. Just over one-half of the subjects are in line with or above their respective three-year NI averages. In contrast, a small number is below the NI average and seven of the subjects are more than ten percentage points below the three-year NI average.
- Over the last three years, the percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to C has been consistently at, or above, the NI average for similar non-selective schools. The performance of most of the individual subjects at GCE A level is below the respective three-year NI averages for all schools at grades A\* to C. At grades A\*-E, however, over one-half of the subjects are performing above the all schools' averages.

- The attainment of the significant number of pupils entitled to free school meals has been steady over the last three years, with around 30% of them achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics, which is in line with the NI average. In the same period, a majority of the pupils who require additional support with their learning achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, with a minority achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics.
- In 2014/15, the proportion of year 12 pupils who progressed to year 13 is well above the corresponding NI average, but the proportion of year 13 pupils who progress to year 14 is well below the average, due to a number of pupils leaving school after completing their Level 2 qualifications. Just over 85% of year 13 pupils returned to complete their Level 3 courses, which is a better outcome. Significantly, the proportion of pupils who enter higher education, on completion of GCE A2 level study, is well above the NI average for similar schools.
- Improving pupil attainment in public examinations has been prioritised by the school and there is a longer-term rising trend due to recent improvements in English and mathematics outcomes and through the establishment of a more enabling applied and vocational curriculum. The school recognises the need to continue to address the unduly high variation in standards across some subject areas and to improve the efficacy of intervention strategies to support those pupils at risk of low or underachievement, and to challenge ineffective practice where appropriate.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- Four-fifths of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better and it is noteworthy that over one-third (36%) of all of the lessons observed were evaluated as very good or better. This highly effective practice is underpinned by a whole-school strategy that strives to ensure that all pupils are ready-to-learn and that learning and teaching is informed well by pupil feedback on the pedagogy they experience. This highly effective practice is characterised by: well planned, innovative teaching strategies that meet the pupils' needs; incisive questioning by the teachers to extend their knowledge and understanding; and learning that optimises the pupils' inquisitiveness and interests. Consequently, there is better pupil engagement and progression in learning.
- In one-fifth of the lessons observed, there were important areas for improvement. This less effective practice had insufficient detail and depth of planning to meet the needs of all pupils across the ability range, which resulted in activities that lacked a meaningful context and which led to a small number of pupils to pupil disengage.
- Most pupils benefit well from the effectiveness of the teachers' planning and assessment practices. The most effective planning had a sharp focus on learning, rather than planning an activity. Appropriate assessment strategies, including effective marking for improvement, are used well by teachers to support the pupils' learning in the classroom. Whilst the teachers correct work regularly and diligently, in some subjects the pupils do not receive enough specific evaluative feedback to help them improve the standard of their work. The use of assessment data at whole-school level to set appropriate targets and to track the progress of individual pupils is having a positive impact on identifying need, ensuring swift intervention and securing more successful outcomes. Of particular note are the recently introduced arrangements to provide additional support in English and mathematics for a significant number of the pupils.

- The quality of the provision for learning in English is good. The effectively planned opportunities for purposeful talking and listening and the range of learning and teaching strategies adopted by the teachers result in a vibrant learning environment that enables the pupils to make good progress and to develop and apply creative, analytical and evaluative skills.
- Literacy has a high priority in the school and is promoted effectively to ensure standards in oral and written communication are high across all aspects of the curriculum. The pupils benefit from a focus on talk-to-learn, which underpins a significant amount of the more effective learning and teaching across the curriculum.
- The quality of the mathematics provision is good. Lessons are well structured and mostly effective, the pupils settle quickly and work independently and in purposeful paired or group activities, where their mathematical oracy is developed well.
- Appropriate policies and action plans are in place to develop the pupils' numeracy skills within and across subject areas. As a result,, the pupils benefit from an increasingly more coherent approach towards the promotion and acquisition of numeracy skills.
- Although the proportion of pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning seems to have declined over the last three years to around 31%, this masks recently introduced arrangements that provide support to a significant number of pupils who require help with English and mathematics, where the school keeps these pupils under close scrutiny
- The quality of the provision for learning in occupational studies is good. The pupils make good progress through active engagement in a wide range of innovative learning and teaching strategies, where expectation for success is high and the teachers instil a sense of belief in the pupils to reach their full potential.
- The arrangements for the care and support of the pupils in the school are highly effective. The skilful harnessing of past pupils as role models, the quality and depth of the integrated guidance and the successful extension of care and support to the wider family and the local community supports significantly the pupils' learning and their personal and social development. Through the inclusive student council, the volunteering and mentoring programmes along with their roles as anti-bullying ambassadors, the pupils engage in active democracy, develop independence and leadership skills and contribute meaningfully to the improvement of their school and local community.
- A particular strength of the school's provision is the well conceived preventative curriculum, which is effectively underpinned by immediate access to a range of support mechanisms forged from strong, highly-developed partnerships with an extensive range of external agencies. As a result, the pupils display high levels of confidence and resilience and are prepared well to be informed and effective citizens.

- A strategic approach across the full service extended school to identifying and lowering the barriers to learning for all pupils has been established. The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning benefit from the school's innovative approaches to consultative, co-ordinated, tailored programmes of support. Positive, respectful relationships are key to the success of the nurturing centres and there is a clear focus on developing the pupils' life skills to ensure that they interact confidently with their peers and staff and can engage well in their learning.
- The school gives a high priority to developing a curriculum which is both relevant and responsive to the wide-ranging needs and abilities of the pupils. The curriculum supports well the pupils' holistic progression: it provides them with engaging, purposeful experiences which develop them academically, personally and socially. The qualifications offered have a high degree of currency with employers and with third-level education providers, ensuring that the pupils have access to appropriate progression routes. The school meets the requirements of the Entitlement Framework, the provision being significantly enhanced through a well established consortium arrangement with Belfast Model School for Girls and effective collaboration among the other schools in the North Belfast Area Learning Community.
- The pupils benefit from a highly effective programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. It is planned systematically and meets well the needs and career aspiration of all of the pupils. The school has well developed relationships with industry, business and public and voluntary services, which enhance the provision of high quality work-related learning experiences for the pupils. From year 8 onwards, in partnership with parents, the pupils are supported in developing increasingly effective personal goal-setting and career planning skills. Consequently, they are equipped with the confidence and self-awareness to aim highly and to make appropriate, well-considered choices for their future.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- Leadership and management is a strength and the pastoral and academic work of the school is deliberately dove-tailed tightly and coherently. There is an over-arching sense of care, integrity and high ambition for raising further the educational aspirations and expectations of the pupils and of the wider community. A sharp vision on sustaining a culture of continuing improvement permeates all aspects of the curricular and pastoral leadership, ensuring the provision meets the increasingly complex needs of all of the pupils and provides them pupils with the opportunity to succeed.
- Appropriate priorities for school improvement are identified through rigorous data analysis and comprehensive and meaningful consultation. The school development plan<sup>4</sup> and associated action plans, guide well the work of the school in clear, coherent and measurable way.

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<sup>4</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010

- Monitoring and evaluation is systematic and well-embedded. The senior leadership oversees a comprehensive and highly effective programme of professional development (both in-house and externally). This builds staff expertise and capacity and is linked closely to whole-school priorities for improvement, while responding swiftly to pupil need, as barriers to achievement emerge.
- Most of the middle managers provide clear curricular and pastoral leadership within their areas of responsibility. They are receptive to and very appreciative of the opportunities to develop as emerging leaders and the extent to which the senior leadership has invested significantly in their professional development.
- The governors are highly supportive of the life and work of the school. Communication with the principal is very good and governors are informed well about the school's priorities, pupil attainment and the effectiveness of the provision. They are especially proud of the pupils and the dedication of their staff. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the ETI evaluation is that the school and wider community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of inspection, the school's arrangements for safeguarding young people are comprehensive. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they are concerned about their safety or well-being.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

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 in:

- addressing the variation in the standards attained by the pupils across the subject departments through improving greater consistency in the quality of learning and teaching.

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