

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
INSPECTORATE

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION

Coleraine Grammar School, County Londonderry

DE Ref No 342-0317

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in May 2024



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Department of Education
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Follow-up to the inspection of Coleraine Grammar School, County Londonderry, BT51 3LA (342-0317)

Introduction

Coleraine Grammar School is an 11-18 co-educational voluntary grammar which opened in September 2015, following the discontinuance of Coleraine Academical Institution and Coleraine High School. The new school established a vision founded on '**respect**' (**R**esponsibility, **E**quality, **S**elf-discipline, **P**erseverance, **E**xcellence, **C**ommitment, **T**olerance), where every child is provided with high quality learning opportunities and is encouraged to develop academically, emotionally and physically within a safe, moral and values-based framework.

This follow-up inspection was carried out in May 2024 and provided the school with the opportunity to demonstrate its progress in addressing the area for action from the last inspection in November 2022, namely, to show improvements in the consistency in the quality of learning and teaching, and in the quality of middle leadership.

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.

Across the key stages just over 17 per cent of pupils (177) responded to the questionnaire, with 31 pupils providing additional written comments. The responses reflected the outworking of the school's vision, affirming that the staff provide good care and support. Inspectors met and spoke with pupils from years 8 to 14 in three focus groups. The pupils were very positive about their school experiences and reported that the staff listen to, and act upon, their ideas and that they feel safe in school.

There were just over 13 per cent of parents/carers (111) who responded to the questionnaire and most of these responses were positive. Around 85 per cent of the parents who responded reported they are content with their child's learning experiences and would recommend the school to others. There were 57 parents who provided written comments, most of whom praised aspects of the school's work, including the teaching and pastoral care for the pupils and the extra-curricular opportunities provided.

There were 72 per cent of teachers (52) who responded to the questionnaires. Nearly all expressed clarity about the school's vision and most of the responses commented favourably on how well the vision is lived out in the school. Most teachers stated that they benefitted from professional learning opportunities and that their skills, understanding and knowledge are valued.

A small number of classroom learning assistants responded to the questionnaires with wholly positive and affirmative responses; 11 support staff responded and a majority of these were positive.

Any issues raised in the questionnaires were shared with the principal and representatives from the Board of Governors.

Key actions

The key actions which affect the work of the school are set out below.

- The senior leadership team (SLT) has prioritised professional learning opportunities for staff to promote better classroom practice and support middle leaders in self-evaluation and action planning.
- The SLT has completed lesson observations and provided feedback on learning and teaching to the teaching staff.
- The pastoral and curriculum leadership teams have gathered quantitative and pastoral data to create individualised holistic learning profiles for each pupil that inform learning and teaching, care and support.
- The school continues to provide pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including whole school opportunities in team sports and a popular musical spring show.
- The school has received external support from the EA in relation to action planning and the role of middle management in leading pedagogical and pastoral developments.

Key findings

- The school's vision, underpinned by the whole-school values encapsulated in 'respect', is shared by all members of the school community and understood well by the pupils.
- The SLT has close oversight of its improvement priorities; it uses well its analysis of the impact of this work to acknowledge success, identify challenges and explore ways to improve the provision and outcomes for the pupils.
- There is greater consistency in the quality of learning and teaching. All of the teaching observed during the inspection was effective in promoting active learning. Key features of this practice included creative, well-paced and challenging learning activities, effective differentiation to meet the varying needs of the pupils and high levels of pupil engagement.
- The work to develop pupil learning profiles, which integrate academic and pastoral data and information, has resulted in a greater understanding of pupil strengths, needs and learning preferences, which inform classroom practice and interventions. The school knows its pupils well.

- The middle leaders are well informed in relation to self-evaluation and carry out robust monitoring and evaluation processes; this work is leading to important improvements in provision, outcomes and pastoral support for the pupils.
- The improved provision for English and mathematics is effective and, in all the lessons observed across the two departments, a good range of engaging learning, teaching and assessment strategies were used by the teachers to enable the pupils to recap well and progress in their learning.
- The school celebrates well the pupils' many successes in sporting, musical and cultural events through celebratory assemblies, school magazines and newsletters, extensive social media promotions and a good quality [website](#) that showcases the range of success to excellent effect. There is an effective positive rewards scheme across the school that encourages pupils to engage positively in their education.
- The school has recognised and celebrated appropriately the creative work of the wellbeing 'logo group'.
- The school has developed well its arrangements for collaborating with others and building an extended community of learning. For example, working more closely with parents, the attendance of a small group of pupils has improved through the implementation of a school-based 'partnership in achievement' programme. The school shares more effective practice with other schools and has also been sharing some of its practice with other schools facilitated by the EA.

Child Protection

At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the school demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance. The ETI will monitor the progress of the school in addressing an administrative element of the child protection arrangements.

Going Forward

The school's improvement work is underpinned by 'respect', where every child is provided with high quality learning opportunities and is encouraged to develop academically, physically, socially and emotionally. The staff support the pupils through consistency in learning and teaching to ensure they develop within a safe, moral and values-based framework.

ETI will continue to work with Coleraine Grammar School, including to share examples of effective practice from which others may learn.

The aspects of practice which should be shared more widely include:

- how the development of the pupil learning profiles allows the school to support their pupils more holistically and effectively; and
- how the school's journey to improve consistency in learning and teaching has been underpinned well by prioritising teacher professional learning in order to promote more consistent and effective classroom practice.

Coleraine Grammar School is well placed to take forward the priorities for school development work detailed in this report. No further follow-up inspection is required.

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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