



*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**



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Blackwater Integrated College
Downpatrick**

October 2013

A FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF BLACKWATER INTEGRATED COLLEGE, DOWNPATRICK, CO DOWN, BT30 6SG (426-0309)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Blackwater Integrated College in November 2011 when provision was evaluated as inadequate. The inspection identified significant areas for improvement in standards, governance, leadership and management, and in self-evaluation for improvement, which needed to be addressed urgently. The school entered the formal intervention process in May 2012.

An interim follow-up visit was carried out on 15 and 16 October 2012 which identified that the school was addressing partially the key issues for improvement identified in the original inspection and reported that, while results in GCSE examinations had improved, they remained below the Northern Ireland average for similar schools. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the implementation of the action plans needed to be monitored and evaluated to ensure that they led to an improvement in the quality of learning and teaching and raised standards.

A follow-up inspection was carried out on 21 and 22 October 2013 when the provision was evaluated as good.

The most important changes since October 2012 are that:

- enrolment has declined from 310 in 2011 to 257 with a decrease in the percentage of pupils entering year 8 having achieved at the expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics;
- the principal returned to her post following an eight month secondment before the follow-up inspection;
- three members of the senior leadership team have moved to promoted posts in other schools;
- funding from the Signature Project has enabled the school to appoint an additional teacher of mathematics; and
- the percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register has increased to more than one-half of the enrolment, with more than one in four pupils holding a statement of educational need.

The following are the most important improvements since the original inspection:

- the staff have received effective training in cognitive ability testing which has resulted in better informed classroom practice, intervention strategies and improved outcomes;
- assessment manager software is being used well to collate internal and external data and to assist staff in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress;
- a co-ordinator for careers education has been appointed;
- the percentage of Year 12 obtaining grades C or above in at least 5 subjects has increased from 52.46% to 71.43% which is almost 15 percentage points above the average for similar schools;

- the percentage of Year 12 obtaining grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE mathematics increased significantly from 27.9% in 2011 to 36.5% in 2012, which is above average, and then dropped in 2013 to 30.6% which is line with the average for similar schools;
- the governors are better informed about school improvement and exercise appropriate levels of challenge and support to the SLT which has resulted in a significant improvement in standards;
- the senior leadership team has been re-structured, with a more strategic sharing of roles and responsibilities;
- progress in middle management action-planning and self-evaluation had led to an improvement in the quality of provision for: mathematics and careers education, information and guidance which is now very good; and for English and special needs which is now good;
- the school has comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding the pupils; and
- the school's budget is no longer in deficit.

Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is now good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The follow-up inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The areas identified for improvement are:

- to sustain and improve further the outcomes for the pupils at KS4, and specifically for pupils entitled to free school meals;
- to sustain the improvements in leadership and management at all levels to ensure that standards continue to improve; and
- to continue to disseminate the best practice in learning and teaching, with a view to meeting effectively the needs and abilities of the changing intake of pupils.

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, in order to assess the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The ETI will monitor, through district inspector monitoring, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

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