



*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

**Knockbreda High School
Belfast**

September 2013

FOLLOW-UP TO THE STANDARD INSPECTION OF KNOCKBREDA HIGH SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT6 ONE (421-0086)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a standard inspection of Knockbreda High School in the week of 4 October 2009 and as a result the school entered the formal intervention process on 20 October 2009. The inspection identified the need for improvement in a number of key areas, including in the standards achieved in public examinations and the quality of leadership at all levels throughout the school.

The ETI carried out a follow-up inspection (FUI) in October 2011 and noted that, despite initial improvements in learning and teaching, the standards at key stage (KS) 4 in October 2011 remained significantly below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools. The need to sustain and improve further the examination standards was identified as a key area for improvement.

A second FUI conducted in September 2012 noted that, for the year (2011-12) in which she was in post, a new principal had radically restructured the management arrangements. As a consequence, there was a number of important improvements, including an increase, across twelve subjects, in the percentage of pupils obtaining GCSE grades A*-C, although standards in a significant minority of subjects remained 10% or more below the NI average.

A third FUI took place on 25-26 September 2013 and evaluated the quality of provision as satisfactory. The following are the most important changes since September 2012:

- an acting principal, was in post from September 2012;
- and a further acting principal was appointed from September 2013;
- the school's enrolment dropped from 395 to 314;
- the number of pupils from homes where English is an additional language has increased to 20% of the enrolment;
- four departments have been involved in a connected learning project under the auspices of the STEM¹ initiative;
- the choice of courses available to pupils, in particular at KS4, has widened; and
- three new members were appointed to the school improvement team.

Drawing on effective support from the South-Eastern Education and Library Board Curriculum and Advisory Support Services, the following are the most important improvements at September 2013.

- the development amongst the pupils of positive attitudes, skills and dispositions towards learning in an increasingly multi-cultural school community;
- the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in any five or more GCSE subjects, has more than doubled from 23% in 2011 to 49%;
- when GCSE English and mathematics are included in the five subjects, the percentage has increased from 16% to 30%;

¹ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

- the percentage of pupils achieving A*-E in any five or more GCSE subjects has increased from 73% to 81% in 2013; and
- the quality of provision in English has improved to satisfactory.

While the standards attained in public examinations are rising steadily, and the level achieved in five GCSEs at A*-C including English and mathematics is now just below the average for similar schools, there remains scope for continued improvement.

The restructured management, at all levels, has the capacity to build further on the established improvement processes to, for example, differentiate more accurately between low and under achievement and to intervene and support pupils individually.

The quality of education provided by the school is now satisfactory. The strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision.

The key areas for improvement which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the pupils are:

- to continue to raise standards and bring greater consistency to improvements in learning and teaching;
- to consolidate links with the community to address the poor overall level of attendance of the pupils, which remains consistently below the NI average and is having a direct impact on the standards the pupils attain; and
- to improve further the quality of self-evaluation, based on the action plans, to identify the impact of those actions which are raising standards effectively.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over the next 12 to 24 month period.

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