



*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**

October 2011

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 Department of Education (DE) indicated at that time that a follow-up inspection would take place and that, in the interim, follow-up visits would evaluate the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements.

The standard inspection in October 2009 highlighted strengths in:

- the good quality of pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection;
- the courteous and well-behaved pupils; and
- the good standards in public examinations achieved in mathematics and art and design.

The areas for improvement identified were the need to:

- improve the overall standards achieved by the pupils, including the standards in public examinations;
- improve the quality of leadership at all levels throughout the school; and
- develop a rigorous school development planning process involving all the staff, which focused strongly on effective learning and teaching and incorporates a robust process of self-evaluation and review.

The quality of education provided in English, in science and in technology and design was evaluated as inadequate.

An initial visit was carried out by ETI on 16 March 2010 shortly after an acceptable action plan was submitted by the school.

An interim follow-up visit was carried out by ETI on 14 October 2010 and confirmed that the school was making satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the original inspection report.

In the interval since the inspection the school reports that it has received good support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board and the Regional Training Unit in the following areas: leadership and management; whole school development planning; self-evaluation and action planning and support for a range of subjects, in particular those under focus in the original inspection.

Since the October 2010 interim visit, the following are the most important improvements:

- the appointment of four new heads of department, which has led to some initial improvements;
- the introduction of a pupil pursuit programme by the Vice-Principal responsible for pastoral care, in order to support effectively self-evaluation for improvement;

- the development, by the newly appointed Principal supported by CASS, of a supplementary school development plan (SDP) (which complies with the DE's SDP Regulations, 2005) through a process which has actively engaged all of the teachers;
- the creation of a new faculty structure, with five appointed heads of faculty, resulting in better communication, mutual support and improved morale; and
- a staff development programme, supported by CASS, which is developing the teachers' skills in the use and analysis of data to inform better the planning and target setting for tracking the progress of individual pupils.

The quality of the teaching observed during the FUI ranged from inadequate to outstanding; the majority of lessons were good or better, a significant minority was satisfactory.

The overall standards achieved in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in 2011 decreased from 35% to 23% of the pupils in year 12 obtaining grades A* to C in five or more subjects, which is 36% below the average for non-selective schools.

16.7% of the pupils obtained grades A* to C in five or more subjects at GCSE level, including English and mathematics, which is 18% below the average.

Pupil attendance, whilst slightly improved, remains below the NI average.

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school remains inadequate, including in the three subjects originally evaluated as inadequate; the significant areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision.

There are important areas for improvement, which were identified in the 2009 Standard inspection, in standards, in learning and teaching and in leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

The areas for improvement are the need to:

- sustain the purposeful start made in improving teaching, learning and assessment, and
- raise the standards attained in external examinations, which are well below the NI average for similar schools.

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 and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will carry out a further follow-up inspection within 12 months and a further report will be published.

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