



*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

**Larne Grammar School
Co Antrim**

September 2013

FOLLOW-UP TO THE STANDARD INSPECTION OF LARNE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, CO ANTRIM, BT40 1PQ (342-0046)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a standard inspection¹ of Larne Grammar School in April 2010 when the quality of the provision was evaluated as satisfactory and the quality of leadership and management was evaluated as inadequate. ETI carried out a first follow-up inspection in May 2012 at which time the evaluations did not change.

At that time, the follow-up inspection identified the need for the senior leadership, including the principal and the governors, to:

- develop appropriate and effective lines of communication in all aspects of the work of the school, and to commit fully to the development of an ethos that values openness, transparency, mutual respect and consultation;
- put in place, adhere to and monitor robustly, statutory policies and practices to safeguard the welfare of all of the staff and to improve significantly the poor working relationships that existed between and among a significant minority of the teaching staff, the senior leadership and the governors; and
- develop the capacity of the senior leadership team to self-evaluate in a realistic and robust manner leading to improvement, underpinned by effective analysis and interpretation of relevant qualitative and quantitative data.

The ETI carried out two monitoring visits in the interim period and a further follow-up inspection on 23-24 September 2013.

The action plan produced by the school in response to the inspection findings is of a good quality and the school's development plan is in line with the statutory requirements set out by the Department of Education.

The following changes, which affect the work of the school, have taken place in the interval since the first follow-up inspection: a new principal has been appointed; training has been provided by the North Eastern Education and Library Board on aspects of governance; important, statutory policies have been put in place to help guide the work of the school.

Three-quarters of the teaching staff and most of the support staff completed confidential questionnaires, with 22 members of staff providing written comments. All of the staff responded that the school is now led and managed well at all levels and there is effective communication. All of the teaching staff reported that they have good opportunities to be involved in self-evaluation and development planning. All staff also affirmed that there is an inclusive, welcoming and pastoral ethos for all members of the school community. The questionnaire responses were significantly more positive than at the time of both the standard inspection and the first follow-up inspection.

The quality of almost all of the lessons observed during the follow-up inspection was good or very good; the majority were very good. The most effective practice was characterised by excellent relationships between the teachers and the pupils; the effective, progressive development of the skills and capabilities of the pupils; comprehensive assessment of the extent of the learning taken place; and the enthusiasm of the teacher for their subjects.

¹ See standard inspection report at http://www.etini.gov.uk/report_detail.asp?id=4780

The following are the most important improvements:

- the implementation of appropriate lines of two-way communication which have led to improved relationships and trust and have facilitated development work;
- the increased openness and transparency in the working practices of the school which have resulted in a healthy climate for whole-school development work;
- the systematic monitoring and review of whole school policies and practices;
- the increased confidence of the staff in the capacity of the board of governors to function effectively, particularly in areas relating to staff welfare;
- the clarification of roles and responsibilities within the board of governors, and their commitment to develop their knowledge and improve their capacity to support and challenge appropriately the work of the school;
- the clarification and re-negotiation of roles and responsibilities of staff at middle and senior management level, including the setting up of the senior development team;
- the increased capacity of the staff to self-evaluate robustly, and critically, and
- embrace change, and the appropriate involvement of all staff in decision-making on aspects of the life and work of the school which affect them;
- the effective, transformational leadership of the principal in taking the school forward; and
- the quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance which was evaluated as satisfactory and which is now good.

There remains a need to:

- raise the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations at GCE A-level which remain below the Northern Ireland average for similar schools.

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 an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The ETI will continue to monitor the school's progress in addressing the remaining area for improvement.

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