



*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

**Laurelhill Community College
Lisburn**

January 2014

A FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LAURELHILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE LISBURN, CO ANTRIM, BT28 2UH (421-0201)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Laurelhill Community College in October 2011 when the quality of the provision was evaluated as inadequate. The school entered the formal intervention process on the 10 November 2011. The Department of Education (DE) indicated at that time that a follow-up inspection would take place and that an interim follow-up visit (IFUV) would monitor the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements.

The post-inspection action plan was received by the DE in February 2012. The Department of Education acknowledged the positive response that the school had made, and planned to make, regarding the areas for improvement identified in the report.

Interim follow-up visits were carried out on the 18 October and on the 3-4 December 2012. During the IFUV, a representative of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board reported to the ETI on the nature and extent of the support provided to the school in the interval since the original inspection. The principal and the chair of the board of governors reported that they were satisfied with the level of support provided.

A follow-up inspection (FUI) took place on 8-9 January 2014.

In the interval since the original inspection:

- the membership of the senior leadership team (SLT) has changed significantly several times, due to retirements;
- a new head of mathematics and an assessment co-ordinator have been appointed;
- the enrolment has decreased from 829 to 769;
- the number of teaching staff has decreased from 61 to 53;
- the number of pupils on the special educational needs register (SEN) register has decreased significantly from 219 to 83;
- six teachers have completed a peer-to-peer teaching programme;
- innovative methods have been introduced to encourage pupils to take pride in their school and to focus on their learning;
- arrangements have been made for senior and middle leaders to undertake training in order to strengthen further their leadership and management capacity and to bring about sustained improvements in learning and teaching and standards;
- action plans have been developed to involve the governors further in supporting and challenging the strategic leadership and management of the school;
- the allocation of time during training days and department meetings has been increased to disseminate good classroom practice; and

- the SLT and the staff are starting to analyse the school's internal and external data in order to identify underachievement, set targets within their action plans and create progress statements to inform parents on the progress their child is making.

The following are the most important improvements since October 2011:

- the new SLT is now stable in terms of its membership;
- the SLT's more clearly defined roles and responsibilities enables a sharper focus on bringing about improvement in the pastoral and curricular provision, learning and teaching, and the standards the pupils achieve;
- the SLT links with departments, and in particular mathematics and English, have resulted, through monitoring, review and evaluation, in improved pupil engagement with the curriculum and better outcomes in public examinations;
- the provision for mathematics which was inadequate is now good;
- the provision for English which was satisfactory is now good;
- the quality of learning and teaching observed during the FUI ranged from satisfactory to very good with most of the lessons being good or better; and
- all pupils in year 14 obtained grades E or above in at least two A levels, which is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools.

The school has been able to demonstrate a number of improvements in the outcomes for pupils, in particular for English and mathematics, although the school's standards at both KS4 and post-16 remain well below the NI average for similar schools.

- The percentage of pupils obtaining grades A*-C at GCSE level in at least five subjects is 47.7% which is almost 20 percentage points below the NI average for similar schools.
- The percentage of pupils obtaining grades A*-C, when English and mathematics is included is 38.6% which is almost seven percentage points below NI average for similar schools.
- The percentage of pupils obtaining grades A*-G at GCSE level in at least five subjects is 94.8% which is below the NI average for similar schools.
- The percentage of year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C is 7.1% which is well below the NI average for similar schools.
- The percentage of year 14 pupils obtaining grades C or above in at least three A levels is 17.2% which is almost 30 percentage points below the NI average for similar schools.

Furthermore, the KS4 curriculum currently provided is not sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the needs and career aspirations of all of the pupils.

The areas for improvement are:

- to review the KS4 curriculum offer;
- to raise standards in public examinations; and
- for management at all levels to ensure that the processes of self-evaluation, target setting and the use of intervention strategies in lessons lead to sustained improvement in the quality of the pupils' work across the whole range of abilities.

Overall, the provision in the school remains inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The school is unable to demonstrate evidence of sustained improvement in the outcomes for pupils at KS4, and there are significant areas for improvement in learning and teaching, in curricular provision and in leadership and management which still need to be addressed urgently if the needs of all the pupils are to be met effectively.

ETI will carry out a further follow-up inspection within 12 months and a report will be published.

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