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*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

**Nendrum College
Comber**

May 2015

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF NENDRUM COLLEGE, COMBER, DO DOWN, BT23 5BX (421-0045)

In May 2012, a standard inspection of Nendrum College reported that the quality of education was satisfactory. The areas for improvement identified were in leadership and management, including school development planning, and in the low expectations and levels of challenge, resulting in poor standards in public examinations.

A first follow-up inspection (FUI) in February 2014 reported that the quality of education provided by the school remained satisfactory with the areas for improvement being the need:

- to consolidate and raise more consistently the standards attained across the school, including in public examinations; and
- to improve the provision in both English and science.

The FUI also identified that improvements since the original inspection were brought about by the effective, monitoring, guidance and support provided by the recently-appointed Principal and the newly re-structured senior leadership team (SLT). This very good strategic leadership is continuing to secure real and significant improvements across the school.

The following changes which affect the work of the school have taken place since the first FUI.

- A review of the curriculum has taken place, resulting in more appropriate curriculum choices to meet the needs and interests of the pupils.
- The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has risen by almost ten percentage points to 31%.
- The length of the school day has been extended to maximise learning opportunities.
- The SLT has consolidated its focus on building capacity for leadership at all levels, including seconding middle managers on a temporary and voluntary basis to the SLT, and by working with the Regional Training Unit and with another school.
- A 'Connected Learning' cross-curricular initiative in key stage (KS) 3 is proving successful for both teachers and for pupils. It engages the teachers from different subject areas in worthwhile and creative integrated approaches to planning and teaching and it strengthens the pupils' transferable knowledge, their literacy and their wider learning skills.
- The school continues to be oversubscribed, with a significant upsurge in applications for the school year 2015/16.

The following are the most important improvements since the first FUI.

- Most of the teaching observed during the second FUI was good or very good, which marks a notable improvement in the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning.

- The percentage of the pupils attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C has increased by ten percentage points from 44% in 2013 to 54% in 2014. The percentage attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is now 31% which is in line with the average for similar non-selective schools.
- The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C has increased significantly from 8% in 2013 to 36% in 2014, which is slightly above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools.
- The provision for English has been enhanced significantly and leadership has improved notably; provision, which was originally inadequate, is now good. In 2014, the percentage of pupils gaining GCSE English Language at grades A* to C has increased significantly from 38% in 2013 to 51% in 2014, which is now in line with the average for similar schools.
- Since 2013, it is notable that ten subject departments have improved standards in public examinations, with almost all attaining above the NI average for similar schools.
- The percentage of pupils progressing to institutions of further education is well above the NI average and is 20% higher than the corresponding figure at the time of the original inspection.

The main area for improvement is:

- for the school to sustain and improve further the standards in public examinations, and in particular, in science.

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

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress in addressing the area for improvement.

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