



*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

**Newry High School
Co Down**

March 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF NEWRY HIGH SCHOOL, CO DOWN, BT34 1QN (521-0186)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Newry High School in October 2010 when the quality of education provided by the school was evaluated as satisfactory¹.

A follow-up inspection (FUI) in November 2012 identified a range of improvements and a number of areas for further development.²

A second FUI was conducted in March 2014 which evaluated the quality of the education provided as good.

Since the time of the first FUI, the posts of principal and vice-principal have been appointed permanently and the senior leadership team (SLT) has been extended with the recent appointment of three additional senior teachers with responsibilities for pastoral care, teaching and learning, and for assessment. The special education coordinator also attends the SLT meetings.

The school governors and leaders have taken the opportunity of these changes to establish a range of effective mentorship, line management and leadership support arrangements, comprising link responsibilities by individual governors and by members of the SLT with subject leaders and curriculum coordinators.

The principal is the deputy chair of the area learning community (ALC) and the school is developing strategically its arrangements for access to post-16 courses with some of the other local schools; all pupils are now entered for public examinations.

A number of significant improvements demonstrate the progress made by the school since the time of the original inspection.

- The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE or equivalent subjects at grades A*-C has risen steadily since 2010 from 39% to 55% which is close to the average for similar non-selective schools. When GCSE English and Mathematics are included, standards have risen by one third to 41% which is above the average for similar non-selective schools; furthermore, the attainment of pupils entitled to free school meals has improved to the average for non-selective schools. The percentage of pupils achieving 3 or more A levels at grades A*-C has also risen over the same period from 19% to 50%, which remains above the average for similar non-selective schools. The trends overall, confirmed further by the school's predictive analysis of its own internal data, represent a steady consolidation, sustaining the above average standards being attained.

¹ Standard Inspection, Newry High School, October 2010 www.etini.gov.uk

² Follow-up Inspection, Newry High School, November 2012 www.etini.gov.uk

- The quality of classroom practice and in the pupils' work has improved since the last inspection, through better planning for learning, effective classroom management and some active and innovative teaching methods. The dissemination of good practice flows from the successful establishment of a collegial culture of professional openness and sharing across the school. The high quality of a small sample of lessons observed during the FUI shows a continued improvement in the effectiveness of teaching and learning, with the quality of over half of the lessons observed being either very good or outstanding.
- The school is making more effective use of tests, assessment data and other information to inform decisions about:
 - the curriculum provision, to ensure that it is more appropriate to the needs of all of the pupils;
 - developing more active and engaging teaching strategies to address, in particular, the preferred learning styles of boys; and
 - developing more appropriate teaching resources and using them in innovative ways.
- Standards in science have improved, the uptake of English literature has increased and the overall quality of the provision for English and science is now good.
- The continued development of pastoral care and positive behaviour policies and practices and their explicit linkage with relationships in classrooms is evident, for example, in improvements in the pupils' dispositions to learn and reduced suspensions. Pastoral care, evaluated in 2010 as satisfactory, is now very good.
- The senior leadership team and governors have created stability and have brought effectiveness to the process of improvement. Senior leaders have identified, through sound self-evaluation, a small number of areas in middle leadership where there is a need to build further the capacity to effect the improvement required in standards.
- Meaningful communication and effective consultation between staff and governors are evidence of proactive engagement by governors in development planning and self-evaluation leading to improvement. The parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the effectiveness of governance and of school strategic leadership.

In the areas inspected in the original inspection, considerable progress has been made and the overall quality of education is now good. The follow-up inspection has identified, as areas for improvement, the need to continue to address remaining variations in standards in a small number of subjects, by evaluating more robustly the quality of the pupils' learning experiences and ensuring that the actions taken bring about the required improvements with sufficient urgency.

The ETI will continue to monitor the school's progress in addressing these areas.

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