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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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Area-Based Inspection

Northern Regional College
Ballymena

February 2009

AREA-BASED INSPECTION - BALLYMENA AREA 2009: STRATEGIC PLANNING, COHERENCE IN LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an area-based inspection in Northern Regional College, Ballymena during February 2009.

The strengths include:

- the well-considered vision for the college, which is supported with coherent approaches to strategic and operational planning, to provide high quality education and training in the local and regional area;
- the commitment of the college to Government priorities in education and training, especially, through the development of links with industry, which has resulted in innovative approaches to curriculum and staff development;
- the good pre-entry advice and guidance provided to students;
- the very good links that the college has developed with local post-primary schools, through Ballymena Learning Together, including the wide range of programmes provided under the Entitlement Framework and the contribution of the college to local area-based planning; and
- the good links developed by the college, with a wide range of stakeholders and external agencies, to ensure that students enrolled at the college, receive appropriate tailored support during their studies.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the college to work with local post-primary schools to share information, to identify good practice in teaching and learning approaches, and to improve the standards of the students work in literacy and numeracy; and
- work with local post-primary schools to ensure that there is effective sharing of reliable information, to enable the college to provide appropriate and timely support, for those students with specific learning needs.

While a few specific areas for improvement have been identified in this report, the composite report from the area-based inspection raises broader issues which need to be addressed by all of the schools and organisations visited.

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