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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Ballee Community High School
Ballymena**

January 2008

SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (SSP) FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF BALLEE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, BALLYMENA BT42 2HS (321-0233)

The follow-up inspection in January 2007 highlighted a number of strengths including:

- the consistent and effective use of learning intentions across the curriculum;
- the increasing use of a wider range of strategies and effective tailor-made resources to support the pupils' learning;
- the good behaviour and response of the majority of the pupils and the consistent strategies used to address the challenging behaviour of a minority of the pupils;
- the effective focus on continuing to provide high quality pastoral support for all of the pupils;
- the improvements in the quality of the teaching and learning of mathematics;
- the commitment of the recently appointed Principal and SSP co-ordinator to all aspects of the life and work of the school; and
- the good progress in gathering and recording data to inform better the education plans for those pupils with additional learning needs in literacy.

The inspection also identified the need to address and to raise more consistently:

- the standards in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum; and
- the standards in, and use of, information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum through the co-ordination of an effective training and support programme for the staff.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a monitoring visit in October 2007, and a follow-up inspection on 14-15 January 2008.

In the interval since the follow-up inspection in January 2007, actions which have affected the work of the school have included:

- the appointment of the former vice-principal and SSP co-ordinator as Principal, under whose direction a culture of self-evaluation continues to develop;
- the appointment of a new vice-principal who, since September 2007, has assumed the role of SSP co-ordinator;
- the appointment of six new members of staff;
- the focus of the work on developing the pupils' communication skills;
- the creation of a numeracy support unit with a part-time member of staff and a dedicated room and resources;
- the review of key curriculum policies;

- effective collaboration with the neighbourhood renewal group; and
- further refurbishment and improvements to the school campus.

The following are the most important improvements which have taken place since the inspection in January 2007:

- the effective use of ICT by an increasing number of staff to promote learning;
- the integration within individual teacher's planning of support for those with additional learning needs to ensure that it complements the work undertaken in the withdrawal sessions;
- an increasing consistency in the quality of the teaching;
- the effective use of active learning strategies in the majority of lessons observed;
- the effective promotion of improved learning within the classroom including the development of the pupils' talking and listening skills and their ability to work effectively together; and
- the good behaviour of the majority of the pupils.

The main area which requires further improvement includes the need to:

- use more effectively the data collected at all levels to track progress, to inform planning and teaching and to set targets for improvement in order to raise the standards achieved by the pupils, which remain below that of schools of similar type.

The Inspectorate will continue to monitor the work of the school to ensure that the improvement which is needed is implemented effectively.

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