



*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**

**Fort Hill College  
Lisburn, County Antrim**

**October 2015**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE POST PRIMARY INSPECTION OF FORT HILL COLLEGE, LISBURN, COUNTY ANTRIM, BT27 4TL (425-0072)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Fort Hill College<sup>1</sup> in December 2013, when the quality of education was evaluated as satisfactory<sup>2</sup>.

The main areas for improvement were the need to:

- consolidate and raise further the improving standards in public examinations;
- build capacity and leadership and management at all levels, especially in light of recent changes; and
- disseminate further the effective practice which exists in planning and teaching to bring about improvement.

The school's action plans took appropriate account of the areas for improvement and were of a good quality. The school reports that it has received effective support from a range of external services, including the education authority.

The ETI carried out interim follow-up visits during 2014/15, with a follow-up inspection in October 2015.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- the school's enrolment has decreased from 890 pupils at the time of the original inspection to 854;
- the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased significantly to 34%;
- the number of newcomer pupils has increased from 12 to 26;
- the structure of the school day has changed from nine daily periods to seven; and
- co-ordinators for key stage (KS) 3 and KS 4 have been appointed.

### **Key findings**

- The whole-school review to baseline the three-year school development plan has led to greater openness and transparency in communication, more effective accountability at all levels, and is building to good effect the capacity of leadership and management within the school. The senior leadership team has facilitated the sharing of good practice to support learning and teaching across the school and to raise standards.

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<sup>1</sup> See inspection report at <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2014/post-primary-inspection-fort-hill-college-lisburn.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as satisfactory, will now be reported as having important areas for improvement.

- The role of the curriculum leaders has been strengthened and they play a key part in the school's processes for monitoring, evaluation and review, particularly at KS 4. The more effective processes for the quality assurance of the provision, along with a curriculum which is more relevant to the pupils' needs, has underpinned the improved standards achieved by them.
- The annual review and analysis of examination results has been effectively refined and progressed from subject overviews to focusing on supporting the needs of individual pupils. The implementation and evaluation of a successful mentoring programme at KS 4 has resulted in improved attainment at GCSE level by those pupils being mentored.
- The standards achieved by the pupils at the end of KS 4 have improved significantly. The percentage of the year 12 pupils obtaining GCSE grades A\* to C or equivalent in at least five subjects has increased by almost 20 percentage points to 82%. The percentage of the pupils attaining GCSE grades A\* to C or equivalent in at least five subjects, including English and mathematics, has increased by almost 25 percentage points to 57%. It is noteworthy that the percentage of year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics, has increased by almost 30 percentage points to 57%.
- The action planning processes at all levels are more rigorous, with qualitative and quantitative data at subject level being used more effectively to monitor and evaluate the progress of individual pupils. As a result, the whole-school focus on target-setting has been strengthened, although more work is necessary to raise further the standards achieved by the pupils at post-16.
- In English, there have been important improvements in leadership and management, the quality of provision for learning and in the standards attained by the pupils. The department now demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement.
- The deployment of staff is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The well-conceived staff development programme provides appropriate opportunities for the staff to develop leadership and management skills through the whole-school literacy initiative, the development of new courses and the access for staff to relevant continuous professional development programmes.
- The positive impact and legacy of the signature project has resulted in the school retaining smaller class sizes at KS 4 along with a closer working relationship between the English and mathematics departments to strengthen the cross-curricular provision to further develop the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

### **Overall effectiveness**

The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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