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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Glengormley High School
Newtownabbey**

January 2008

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE STANDARD INSPECTION AND SPECIALIST SCHOOL
BASELINE INSPECTION OF GLENGORMLEY HIGH SCHOOL,
NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM, BT36 5HP (321-0202)**

A standard inspection of Glengormley High School took place in January 2006. The inspection report highlighted strengths amongst the pupils, the staff, the school leadership, in the policy development, within the teaching, the information and communication technology (ICT) programme, the community links, the support for pupils with special educational needs, the careers education and the sixth form provision. It identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- more consistent classroom management strategies in a minority of the classes, in line with the agreed school policy, to engage those pupils whose behaviour is challenging;
- improvement in the overall achievements of the pupils, in a majority of the classes, through the effective dissemination of the excellent teaching practice and building upon the analysis of examination performance which the Principal and the senior leadership team have begun to carry out annually with each subject department; and
- more rigorous implementation and monitoring of the school development plan by the Principal, the senior leadership team and all staff in order to promote improvement in the quality of learning and teaching and, in particular, to address the single example of unsatisfactory teaching observed, and to develop more effective ICT experiences to enhance the learning across the curriculum.

The school was subsequently selected to take part in a Specialist Schools' pilot project and a baseline inspection visit took place in October 2006. This visit took into account the areas for improvement identified in January 2006 and found that the school had identified appropriate and measurable targets for improvement to demonstrate that:

- information and communication technology is a curricular strength with good and rising levels of attainment, and good teaching at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and post-16 level. There is also an appropriate, and necessary, emphasis on the provision of better access to ICT resources for subject departments;
- there are departments which have a clear vision of how ICT can enhance their subject and meet better the needs of their pupils; and
- most departments are clear about how they wish to embed ICT more fully into their planning and how to use the potential offered by the deployment of subject-focused ICT link teachers to develop resources and to support other members of the department.

The baseline inspection recommended that, for the purpose of showing improvement more clearly, the school needed to:

- link the Specialist School plan and associated targets more overtly to the findings of the recent inspection, and the overall improvement agenda in public examinations;
- ensure that effective structures are in place to monitor and evaluate the school's work in the Specialist School plan;
- review the ICT curriculum at key stage (KS) 3 to ensure that there is adequate initial assessment of the pupils' skills and appropriate challenge in the activities;
- have a more co-ordinated approach for the development of ICT within and across the departments and to disseminate the good practice; and
- review curriculum planning to provide more opportunities for the pupils to have better vocational, occupational or work related learning experiences and opportunities, particularly at KS4.

It was also recommended that it would be helpful for the school to access well-focused support from the North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB).

In September 2007, the school submitted a report to the Department of Education (DE) in which it indicated that some of the year 1 targets which the school had set itself had been achieved, good progress was being made on others, and yet others had not been achieved.

The school's development plans (2006 and 2007) have been adjusted in light of the relevant inspection findings and the school has evaluated the progress made in the areas for improvement identified in both inspections.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a formal follow-up inspection on 16-17 January 2008 which identified the following important improvements:

- the school is making progress in bringing together the aspects of the specialist programme within the school's development plan;
- information and communication technology, as a specialism (a set of subjects), remains a real curricular strength;
- the behavioural problems in the school have been addressed effectively, with support from the NEELB, through appropriate staff development with regard to management strategies; the pupils' behaviour observed during the follow-up inspection was good;
- the school has reviewed curriculum planning and developed the entitlement curriculum through a range of vocational programmes which provide more opportunities for the pupils to have better vocational, occupational or work-related learning experiences; the school has achieved a high state of readiness for the entitlement framework;

- the school is taking an active part in the development of the Newtownabbey Learning Community, including cross-community links;
- the school has developed the roles of senior management, in particular the role of the assistant Vice-principals and the establishment of a curriculum support team;
- there is a wide deployment of the investment in ICT resources, and a considerable investment in identifying, modifying and creating ICT-based resources which are predominantly suitable to support teaching;
- there is evidence of innovative approaches to cross-curricular development and course provision;
- the standard of teaching seen during the follow-up inspection was always sound, with most being good or better;
- the increasing percentage of pupils achieving 2 or more General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) levels at grades A-E; and
- the gradual improvement in the standards being achieved in a number of subjects at GCSE level.

For the purpose of showing improvement more clearly the school needs to:

- adopt and monitor strategies to address aspects of the attendance of year 12 pupils;
- engage staff in all departments in a consistent, documented process of department-based self-evaluation, based on strengthening the existing benchmarked analysis of examination performance which in turn informs the setting of targets for improvement and focuses on raising standards across the whole school;
- develop and extend the SMART* objectives (including adequate initial assessment of the pupils' ICT skills) for the benefit of the whole school and community aspects of the specialist school programme, for the purpose of supporting more effectively the co-ordination of the work of the programme and accountability to DE for the investment; and
- link the Specialist School work more overtly to the overall improvement agenda by a focus on developing more challenging ICT experiences to promote and enhance active learning by the pupils and continue to develop amongst staff an understanding of ICT and connected learning.

In some aspects of this work the school would benefit from further support, including that available from the NEELB.

* Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound.

The follow-up inspection findings confirm that good progress has been made in most of the areas for improvement identified during the original inspections but some areas still require improvement. The school is developing a rigorous process of self-evaluation which leads to improvement.

The Inspectorate will continue to monitor the school's continued progress as part of the Specialist Schools' Programme.

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