



*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**

**Laurelhill Community College  
Lisburn**

**September 2015**

## **A FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LAURELHILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE LISBURN, CO ANTRIM, BT28 2UH (421-0201)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Laurelhill Community College in October 2011 when the quality of the provision was evaluated as inadequate. The school entered the formal intervention process in November 2011. The Department of Education indicated at that time that a follow-up inspection would take place.

A follow-up inspection took place in January 2014 when the overall quality of provision remained inadequate, and consequently the school stayed in the formal intervention process. The areas for improvement identified during the follow-up inspection included the need:

- to review the key stage (KS) 4 curriculum offer;
- to raise standards in public examinations; and
- for management at all levels to ensure that the processes of self-evaluation, target-setting and the use of intervention strategies in lessons lead to sustained improvement in the quality of the pupils' work across the whole range of abilities.

The Department of Education indicated at that time that a further follow-up inspection would take place. An interim follow-up inspection visit took place in April 2015 followed by a second follow-up inspection in September 2015.

In the interval since the first follow-up inspection, the following changes and actions which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- the school's enrolment has decreased from 769 pupils to 685 and the number of teaching staff has decreased from 53 to 49;
- the number of pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register has increased from 83 to 130;
- the membership of the senior leadership team (SLT) has changed;
- new governors have taken up post, undergone significant training in 2014/15 and are beginning to exercise their support and challenge functions more robustly;
- each member of the SLT has taken forward a co-ordinated set of intervention strategies and have implemented a fortnightly monitoring, tracking, and mentoring programme for year 12 pupils;
- the curriculum has been reviewed and revised and is in the second year of implementation; and
- personal education plans are in place to identify and support the needs of individual pupils across the curriculum.

## Key Findings

- The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals achieving five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent, including English and mathematics at grades A\* to C, has increased from 7% to 35%, which is five percentage points above the corresponding NI average.
- The percentage of year 14 pupils obtaining grades A\* to C in at least three GCE A level subjects or equivalent has increased from 17% to 43%, which is now in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools; the percentage attaining grades A\* to E in two A level subjects or equivalent is also in line with the NI average for similar schools.
- In a number of the subjects inspected, there is evidence of effective action being taken to monitor the quality of provision and provide feedback which addresses aspects of the pedagogy; these approaches need to be built upon across the whole school to effect more consistent and sustainable improvement.
- The school has taken some important steps to review and broaden the curriculum at KS 4.
- The effectiveness of the provision in English language has been sustained. While the school has increased proactively the uptake by the pupils of GCSE English literature, the standards attained by the pupils in this subject is an important area for improvement.
- The school has identified appropriately the actions necessary to bring about improvement in literacy across the school. A more strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation is needed, however, to ensure that the outcomes from the learning and teaching are consistently effective in improving the pupils' literacy skills.
- The provision for mathematics is an important area for improvement. The quality of learning and teaching in just over one-half of the lessons observed during the follow-up inspection provided insufficient opportunities for the pupils to extend and consolidate their learning and so improve the standards achieved by all of them.
- While a majority (64%) of the lessons observed during the follow-up inspection were good or better (approximately 25% of them were very good or better), it is a concern that 36% of the lessons observed had important areas for improvement.
- The percentage of pupils taking GCSE or equivalent qualifications in at least five subjects has decreased from 96% to 90%, which needs to be reviewed.
- The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE or equivalent qualifications at grades A\* to C has decreased from 57% in 2014 to 53% in 2015; this is 15 percentage points below the corresponding NI average for similar schools.
- The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE or equivalent qualifications at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has remained steady at approximately 40%, which is three percentage points below the corresponding NI average.

- The boys are underperforming at the end of KS 4; in 2015, only 25% of them achieved five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent, including English and mathematics, at grades A\* to C; this is more than 30 percentage points below the girls in the same year group. Furthermore, over the past three years none of the boys at stages 1 to 4 on the SEN register achieved five or more GCSE or equivalent qualifications at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.
- A range of improvement strategies is helping to build and sustain a positive ethos. Pupils who require additional learning support or other appropriate interventions are identified to good effect and in a timely manner. A closer approach to monitoring and evaluation, however, is needed to ensure that the interventions are consistently effective. The class teachers need to make more consistent and effective use of all the available information and data to adapt more appropriately their approaches to planning and teaching to better meet the needs of individual pupils.

### **Overall Effectiveness**

The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. The areas for improvement include the need:

- to improve the quality of learning and teaching;
- to raise the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations and in particular to address the standards attained by boys and pupils with additional learning needs;
- to evaluate the impact of the curricular changes made and to strengthen the provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance in order to ensure that the interests, aptitudes and aspirations of the pupils are being provided for more effectively; and
- for management at all levels, and the governors, to ensure that the processes of self-evaluation, target-setting and the intervention strategies are rigorously monitored and evaluated to ensure that improvement is effected consistently across the whole school.

Further action will be considered by the Department of Education.

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