



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

**St Joseph's College Learning Support Centre
(St Vincent's)
Belfast**

December 2015

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRE (ST VINCENT'S) BELFAST, CO ANTRIM

The original inspection¹ carried out in December 2013, concluded in the areas inspected, the quality of the education provided by this centre was satisfactory. The strengths outweighed areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection identified the areas for improvement, which needed to be addressed if the needs of all the pupils were to be met more effectively, including the need to:

- provide clear guidance regarding the remit of the centre to include, the financial support required to manage the centre, the opportunities for the pupils to re-integrate to their referring school and have greater opportunities to access the full statutory curriculum;
- improve the provision for information communication technology (ICT) within the centre to a comparable level to that provided within mainstream schools; and
- extend the range of accredited courses available for pupils in KS4.

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 support from a range of education authority staff and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an interim follow-up visit on 25 November 2014, and a follow-up inspection on 7 December 2015.

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

- a deputy teacher in charge of the centre has been appointed;
- the number of pupils attending the centre has increased to the maximum of 30; and
- the C2k computer system has been installed and an ICT co-ordinator appointed.

The teacher in charge of the centre was absent at the time of inspection.

Key Findings

- The management and governors of St Joseph's College have not agreed the remit of St Vincent's Learning Support Centre as stated by CCMS.
- The management report that they are satisfied with the level of funding provided for the centre but they have not yet provided opportunities for the pupils to integrate with their peers in the mainstream school.
- The centre is not effectively meeting the needs of the pupils; the teachers have insufficient skills, training and resources to address the complex barriers to learning and challenging behaviours of the pupils. In two thirds of the lessons observed the pupils were not effectively engaged in learning, there was a lack of structure, limited behaviour management strategies and slow pace, with work that did not interest and motivate the pupils. There is a need to progress the teachers' professional development, skills and care and support to address more effectively the complex barriers to learning and challenging behaviours of the pupils.

¹ <http://www.eti.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-education-other-than-at-school-provision/inspection-reports-alternative-education-provision-2014/inspection-report-st-josephs-college-special-unit-st-vincent-centre-belfast.pdf>

- The lack of resources, structures and the poor fabric of the building are having a detrimental effect on the behaviour of the pupils resulting in their disengagement with learning. The lack of effective behaviour management strategies has resulted in a number of recent incidents of extremely challenging behaviour.
- The provision for the care and support of the pupils requires further development to create a more positive climate for learning and to ensure that effective behaviour management strategies are firmly embedded into classroom practice.
- The C2k system is installed but the infrastructure of the building is preventing wireless connectivity in all classrooms. There are insufficient computers and ICT resources to provide for the needs of all the pupils and poor resources to enable teachers to teach effectively and enhance learning. The provision for ICT requires urgent significant improvement to provide a comparable level to that within mainstream schools.
- The systems for tracking and monitoring attendance, academic progress and behaviour of pupils are not effective. The staff in the centre require training and support to use the C2k management information systems effectively to record and collate progress, behaviour and attendance, and to identify at an early stage factors that indicate barriers to attainment.
- The range of accredited courses available for pupils in KS4 has been extended to include GCSE courses in learning for life and work, technology and design resistant materials and art creative crafts and a certificate in preparation for adult life; however pupils cannot access the full statutory curriculum.

Overall Effectiveness

The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interests of all learners. It requires external support to do so.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- for the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Education Authority and the management and governors of St Joseph's College to agree on the remit of the centre;
- to improve the resources and provision for ICT within the centre to a comparable level to that within mainstream schools;
- to progress the teachers' professional development, skills and care and support to address more effectively the complex barriers to learning and challenging behaviours of the pupils; and
- to provide pupils with access to the full statutory curriculum and opportunities to integrate with their peers in the mainstream school.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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