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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Providing Inspection Services for
**Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Standard Inspection

**St Aidan's High School
Enniskillen**

Inspected: November 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

St Aidan's High School is situated in the village of Derrylin in County Fermanagh. The pupils are drawn from the village and the surrounding rural area; the majority of the pupils travel to school by bus. The enrolment has decreased steadily over the past five years, falling from 221 in 2003/04 to the present figure of 172. Approximately 8% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals; one-quarter of the total enrolment has been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Over the past three years, almost 10% of the intake obtained grades A or B in the Transfer Procedure, while around one-half elected not to take the tests.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels across the school and, in addition, on the provision for art, information and communication technology (ICT) and modern languages. The provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection were also inspected as was the school's general approach to promoting healthy eating. As an additional evidence base for the inspection, lessons were observed in a range of other subjects.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS AND PUPILS

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of pupils from years 8 and 12.

Approximately 140 questionnaires were issued to parents; 48% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 25 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires, and the comments from the parents, were highly affirmative of the work of the school. In particular, the parents mentioned the highly committed, approachable and supportive teachers, the caring ethos and high standards maintained. The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the very few areas of concern emerging from the parents' questionnaires.

The governors also expressed their strong support for the work of the school. In addition to the strengths mentioned above, the governors commented on the strong community involvement with the school. They also expressed concern about the future prospects for the school in light of the enrolment trend.

Almost 75% of the teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with seven providing additional written comments. The responses were wholly positive and provided evidence of a strong team ethos among the staff and their commitment to the school.

In their discussions, the pupils talked enthusiastically about the value of the mentoring system, what they enjoy in the school and the approachable and dedicated teachers. They indicated that they know what to do if they have any concerns regarding their work or their safety and well-being.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is very good. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars. The governors, staff, parents and pupils are fully aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school.

1.5 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The school gives very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are effective health education and nutrition policies in place. The school has developed programmes which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles including, for example, healthier canteen break provision, a health education audit and a survey of pupils about the canteen service.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 EXAMINATIONS AND STANDARDS

At all ability levels, the pupils enjoy school and co-operate well with their teachers and each other. They are highly motivated, interested in their work and many demonstrate confident oral skills. The pupils achieve excellent examination results. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in five or more subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level is well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools. Over the previous three years, the GCSE standards in a majority of subjects were more than ten percentage points above the corresponding NI averages, with most subjects more than five percentage points above the NI average. More information about the results achieved in public examinations is given in appendices 3 and 4.

2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Most of the teaching observed was good or better and, on occasions, it was excellent. Many of the teachers teach a variety of subjects and have a wide range of responsibilities. The characteristics of the good to excellent teaching included well paced and structured lessons, strong engagement of the pupils, high expectations of the standards to be achieved, and good use of ICT to support the learning. In the excellent lessons, there were worthwhile group activities which promoted the pupils' independence and developed their thinking skills. In the minority of lessons where the teaching was less effective, there was little effort to promote the pupils' self-esteem, the work was not differentiated and there was insufficient focus on what the pupils needed to learn. More detailed evaluation of the subjects under focus is provided in appendix 1.

2.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal and Vice-principal set a positive tone for the work of the school and provide good leadership. They know the pupils well and are highly committed to their education and welfare. There is a clear and effective focus on improving standards through a range of strategies which include appropriate target-setting and tracking of performance. The subjects

under focus completed a useful self-evaluation of their work and it is appropriate that the school has identified this aspect as a priority for further development. There is a comprehensive school development plan (SDP) which is supported by appropriate action plans and is well focused on whole-school improvement. The departmental plans complement the overall SDP. The school meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (NI) 2005.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the exemplary behaviour of the pupils and the excellent relationships which predominate their educational experiences;
- the strong support of, and links with, parents, governors and the community;
- the strong caring, supportive and spiritual ethos;
- the good and, on occasions, excellent quality of most of the teaching and, in particular, the provision in art, ICT and modern languages;
- the very high standards achieved by pupils; and
- the leadership of the Principal and Vice-principal and the strong collegiate and supportive staff.

3.2 It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

4. CONCLUSION

The quality of education provided in this school is very good. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents/local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

Pastoral Care

The strengths of the work include:

- the very caring and supportive ethos;
- the exemplary behaviour of the pupils;
- the opportunities provided to celebrate the pupils' achievements;
- the effective and committed leadership of the Vice-principal and other key personnel for pastoral care; and
- the quality of the policy documentation which guides the pastoral care work within the school.

Art

The strengths of the work include:

- the excellent achievements of the pupils in GCSE Art and Design;
- the consistently good quality of the teaching;
- the effective management by the head of department; and
- the rigour of the departmental development plan and supporting action plan, which reflect appropriately the whole school priorities for improvement.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The strengths of the work include:

- the good results achieved by the pupils in specialist ICT examinations;
- the generally good range of opportunities for the pupils to develop and apply ICT skills across many of the subjects;
- the assessment and accreditation of the pupils' ICT skills at key stage (KS) 3, across an increasing range of subjects;
- the mostly good quality of the teaching in the specialist ICT lessons; and
- the enthusiastic and effective leadership and co-ordination of ICT across the school.

The areas for development are:

- to build upon the good start made to the monitoring and evaluation of the provision for ICT through the implementation of an appropriate framework to support the review and self-evaluation of ICT throughout the school; and
- to review the curriculum for ICT at KS3.

Modern Languages

The strengths of the work include:

- the caring and purposeful environment;
- the quality of the teaching observed;
- the very positive response of most of the pupils;
- the improved results in French at GCSE; and
- the developing culture of reflection and self-evaluation.

APPENDIX 2

Health and Safety and Accommodation

- The accommodation provided for home economics does not comply with the recommendations specified within the DE Building Handbook.
- There are inadequate locker facilities and space for the pupils.
- The toilet facilities for pupils and staff are in need of refurbishment.
- There is inadequate accommodation for administration.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Aidan's High v. Date of Inspection: W/C 12.11.07
 ii. School Reference Number: 223-0166 vi. Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-16
 iv. Status: Catholic Maintained

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 8 Intake	34	43	26	40	27
Total enrolment	221	230	198	190	172

1.3 Attendance

Year 2006/07	8	9	10	11	12	Average 2006/07	NI Average 2005/06
% Attendance	96.4	92.5	95	93.3	91.9	94	90

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 13.9 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.63
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 12.4

Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	16	30	15	20	18	99
Enrolment: Girls	11	11	9	25	17	73
Enrolment: Total	27	41	24	45	35	172
PTR	15.67	13.88	11.37	14.22	10.58	

1.5 Leavers Destinations

2005/06	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	49	
Another School	53%	8.3
Employment	4%	12
Full-time Further Education	14%	37.6
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training	27%	34.4
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	4.2
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	2%	3.5

APPENDIX 3

1.6 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Aidan's High School, Derrylin **SCHOOL YEAR:** 2007/2008

GCSE	2005	2006	2007
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	59	70	71
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	86	98	92.7

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing the GCSE and GCE A2 subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2007, in comparison with the respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

Table 1

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCSE A*-C	Art and Design English Literature Geography History Irish* Mathematics Music* Religious Studies Science Double Award 1 st Subject Technology and Design	Information Technology	English Science Single Award		French Mathematics Additional*

* Denotes subjects which had a total entry of less than 30 over three years.

Table showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1.

Table 2

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCSE A*-C			Art and Design Music	English Literature Information Technology Mathematics Additional Science Double Award 1 st Subject	English French Geography History Irish Mathematics Religious Studies Science Single Award Technology and Design

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Occupational Studies Double Award GCSE	Level 2	Level 1	Total Entry
2007	11	10	21
2006	8	1	9

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