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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Standard Inspection

**St Genevieve's High School
Belfast**

Inspected: October 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

St Genevieve's High School is a non-selective girls' school situated on an attractive, spacious site on the Stewartstown Road in west Belfast. The new school building, procured through the Public Private Finance Initiative, opened in March 2002. The school draws its pupils from a wide catchment area. At the time of the inspection the enrolment was 1024 pupils, approximately 32% of whom are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 46% of the pupils who have either medical or educational needs as requiring additional support with their learning. A well-established consortium has been developed with La Salle Boys' College to cater for the needs and widen the opportunities of the pupils in years 13 and 14.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels across the school, and, in addition, on the provision for English, modern languages and physical education. The school's provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection were also inspected as was the school's general approach to promoting health and well-being. As part of the inspection of pastoral care, inspectors observed classes in a range of other subjects.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, BOARD OF 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, 12, 13 and 14.

Just over two hundred questionnaires were issued to parents; 37% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 27 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires, and the comments from the parents, were highly affirmative, indicating that the parents are very satisfied with almost all aspects of the work of the school. In particular, the parents mentioned the high standing of the school in the community, the caring and supportive teachers and the good standards of education which the pupils receive.

The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school highlighting the commitment and dedication of the staff, the good links with the community and the quality of the pastoral care.

Fifty-nine per cent of the teachers completed a confidential questionnaire. Almost all highlighted the strengths in the work of the school and expressed support for the work of the Principal and senior leadership team.

In discussions held with the pupils, they talked enthusiastically about what they enjoy in the school, the purposeful role of the student council and of the approachable and encouraging teachers. They indicated that they know whom to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their work or their safety and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the very few areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION

The quality of arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is excellent. The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars. The parents, staff, governors 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.

The strengths of the school include:

- the inclusive, pupil-centred ethos;
- the effective arrangements in place for pastoral care and child protection;
- the commitment and dedication of those with key responsibilities for pastoral care and child protection; and
- the quality of the monitoring and evaluation of pastoral care within 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 policies and programmes in place, for example a healthy cookery club and effective student council, which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 STANDARDS

The pupils show interest and are generally motivated to do well in their work. Almost all the pupils in year 12 are entered for five or more subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level. Over the past three years, the examination results at GCSE level have been above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. In 2007, more than 56% of the year 12 pupils achieved grades A* to C, and over 90% achieved grades A* to E, in five or more subjects.

In the last two years 95% of year 14 pupils achieved grades A to E in at least 2 General Certificate of Education (GCE) subjects. The number of pupils achieving grades A to C in 3 GCE A levels has been increasing steadily and was over 35% in 2007. More details about examination results are provided in Appendix 2.

2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The quality of teaching in almost all the lessons observed was sound, in most cases it was consistently good or better and on a few occasions it was excellent. In the best practice the teachers used effectively a range of appropriate strategies to engage and interest the pupils. In a minority of lessons, however, the learning and teaching activities lacked the pace and challenge necessary to actively involve and sufficiently motivate the pupils.

2.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal has been in post since 2002. She provides excellent strategic leadership which clearly focuses on the quality of the educational experience for the pupils. The Principal is ably supported by two Vice-principals and four senior teachers within the recently restructured senior leadership team. Leadership and management functions are carried out in an atmosphere of mutual support; this collegiate approach draws effectively on the collective and individual strengths of the team and its members. In most areas inspected there is a clear commitment by middle management to the ongoing development of the life and work of the school.

For many years the school has been using a development planning process which involves consultation with all teaching staff; there is clear evidence of actions being systematically planned for and implemented. The School Development Plan sets out agreed priorities for improvement but needs to be developed further to meet more fully the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations NI 2005 Order. There is a need to ensure that whole-school priorities are being addressed in all departments.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the distinctive ethos which permeates all aspects of the life of the school;
- the quality of the pastoral care provided for the pupils;
- the quality of teaching observed in almost all lessons;
- the standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations;
- the use made of qualitative and quantitative data in the monitoring and evaluation of provision at whole-school level; and
- the quality of strategic leadership, particularly the direction given by the Principal and the senior leadership team.

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 and local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Genevieve's High School v. Date of Inspection: W/C 01.10.07
 ii. School Reference Number: 1230155 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Roman Catholic Maintained

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 8 Intake	162	163	162	164	162	160
Total enrolment	996	1036	1014	1028	1012	1024

1.3 Attendance

Year 2006/07	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2006/07	NI Average 2005/06
% Attendance	93.2	91.7	90.9	89.7	91.7	90.5	89	91	90

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): iv. Numbers of Teachers involved in Area of Study: (Focused Only)

Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolment: Girls	160	160	163	160	162	148	71	1024
Enrolment: Total	160	160	163	160	162	148	71	1024
PTR	14.582	14.582	14.673	14.769	14.737	14.951	12.577	

1.5 Staying On Rate (2006/07) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	82.1	NI Av Year 13	35.3
Year 14	43.2	NI Av Year 14	25.2

1.6 Leavers Destinations

2005/06	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	31		147	
Another School	32%	8.3	5%	1.6
Employment	19%	12	20%	18.5
Full-time Further Education	13%	37.6	39%	20.8
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	31%	44.9
Full-time Training	23%	34.4	1%	6
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	3%	4.2	1%	4.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	10%	3.5	3%	3.3

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Genevieve's High School

SCHOOL YEAR: 2007/2008

GCSE	2005	2006	2007
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	97.26	99.35	99.36
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	39.04	45.75	56.41
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	76.03	80.39	90.38
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2005	2006	2007
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	25	28.54	35.09
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	83	95	95

APPENDIX 2

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 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	English Literature French Geography	Drama	Art and Design Home Economics Home Economics Child Devt Information Technology Learning for Life and Work Religious Studies Science Double Award 1 st Subject Technology and Design	History Mathematics Science Single Award Sport/PE Studies	Business Studies English Irish Music

	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*-E		French Geography	Art and Design Business Studies Drama English English Literature History Home Economics Home Economics Child Devt Information Technology Irish Learning for Life and Work Mathematics Music Religious Studies Science Double Award 1 st Subject Sport/PE Studies Technology and Design		Science Single Award
GCE A-level A-C			Art and Design Drama English Literature	Media Film and TV Studies	Biology Business Studies Chemistry Geography History History of Art and Design Home Economics Information Technology Irish Mathematics Music Politics Psychology Religious Studies Sociology Sport/PE Studies

<p>GCE A-level A-E</p>		<p>Psychology</p>	<p>Art and Design Business Studies Drama English Literature Geography History History of Art and Design Home Economics Information Technology Irish Media Film and TV Studies Music Politics Religious Studies Sociology Sport/PE Studies</p>		<p>Biology Chemistry Mathematics</p>
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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 Drama English Literature Information Technology Mathematics Additional Music	Irish Science Double Award 1 st Subject Technology and Design	Business Studies English French Geography History Home Economics Home Economics Child Devt Learning for Life and Work Mathematics Religious Studies Science Single Award Spanish Sport/PE Studies Statistics

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCSE A*-E	Art and Design English Literature Science Double Award 1 st Subject	Business Studies Drama English French Geography History Home Economics Home Economics Child Devt Information Technology Irish Learning for Life and Work Mathematics Additional Music Religious Studies Spanish Sport/PE Studies Statistics Technology and Design	Mathematics Single Science Award		

GCE A-level A-C	Art and Design Media Film and TV Studies	Business Studies Chemistry Drama English Literature French Geography History History of Art and Design Irish Mathematics Music Politics Religious Studies Sociology Sport/PE Studies	Biology Home Economics Information Technology		Psychology
GCE A-level A-E	Art and Design Business Studies Chemistry Drama English Literature French Geography History History of Art and Design Home Economics Information Technology Irish Mathematics Media Film and TV Studies Music Politics Religious Studies Sociology Sport/PE Studies				

Table 3 showing AVCE Single Award results at Grades A-C and A –E for the past three years. Corresponding NI averages are not available for these subjects.

Subject A-C	2004-2005			2005-2006			2006-2007				
	Entry	A-C	%	Entry	A-C	%	Entry	A-C	%	Cum Entry	School A-C
Applied Business	7	5	71%	4	0	0%	6	5	83%	17	52%
Applied ICT	19	17	89%	12	11	92%	18	16	89%	49	90%
Moving Image Arts	0	0	0%	12	10	83%	7	7	100%	19	92%
Subject A-E	2004-2005			2005-2006			2006-2007				
	Entry	A-E	%	Entry	A-E	%	Entry	A-E	%	Cum Entry	School A-E
Applied Business	7	7	100%	4	4	100%	6	6	100%	17	100%
Applied ICT	19	19	100%	12	12	100%	18	18	100%	49	100%
Moving Image Arts	0	0	0%	12	11	92%	7	7	100%	19	96%

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