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*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 Standard Inspection**

**St Mary's College  
Clady**

**Inspected: November 2009**

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT

St Mary's College is a maintained, co-educational, 11-18 non-selective school. It is situated in Clady two miles from Portglenone and draws its pupils from the surrounding rural area. The enrolment has remained steady over recent years. Over the past three years approximately 67% of the intake did not participate in the Transfer Procedure and 28% obtained grades C and D. Approximately 22% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and the school has identified 17% of the pupils as requiring additional support with their learning. Currently there are ten pupils with English as an additional language.

### 1.2 THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF, GOVERNORS AND PUPILS

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the teachers and the support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings held with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of pupils from years 8, 10, 12, 13 and 14.

One hundred and forty-one questionnaires were issued to parents; 27% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 15 contained additional written comments. The majority of the responses from the questionnaires were very positive, indicating high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. The parents commented particularly on the quality of the care and support for their children and the approachable staff. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the few other matters emerging from the parents' questionnaires.

Almost all of the teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with two teachers providing additional written comments. Eleven support staff completed a confidential questionnaire, including three written comments. All of these responses were wholly positive, highlighting the excellent working relationships at all levels and the leadership of the Principal.

The governors expressed strong support for the work of the school. In particular, they commented favourably on the child centred ethos, the Principal's leadership and the strong links with the local community.

The pupils talked very positively about their experiences in school. In particular, they value the happy atmosphere and the strong commitment shown by the teachers to their personal, social and academic achievement. In discussions held with pupils, there was evidence that they are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

### 1.3 FOCUS

The inspection focused on learning and teaching, and leadership and management at all levels across the school and, in addition, on the provision for English and mathematics. The school's provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs were also evaluated as well as the school's general approach towards promoting healthy eating and physical activity. As an additional evidence base for the inspection, inspectors observed classes in a range of other subjects.

A summary of the main findings for the specialist subject areas under focus can be found in Appendix 1.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK**

### **2.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

The pupils respond positively to the high expectations of their teachers and, when given the opportunity, demonstrate very good levels of engagement in their learning.

The pupils' achievements in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations at grades A\*-C have improved significantly in recent years. Over the past three years, there also has been an improvement in the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C in at least five subjects at GCSE level including English and mathematics. The pupil's achievements at Grades A\*-C including English and mathematics, is well above the average for similar schools. The General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level results at grades A-E are stable, with almost all of the pupils attaining two GCE A level passes. The results at grades A-C, however, have declined in recent years and these are below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for all post-primary schools.

There is an appropriate GCSE entry policy for most of the pupils, although there is a need to reconsider the policy of offering, as an additional subject, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) occupational studies for year 11 and year 12 pupils. The school has identified appropriately the need to broaden the GCE A level curriculum.

The majority of the pupils with special educational needs achieve accreditation across a range of GCSE subjects. Several pupils with learning difficulties gained good GCSE results and attain well overall. The pupils with English as an additional language are making sound progress in writing and there is clear improvement in the standards in reading.

More details about the examination results are given in Appendices 3 and 4.

### **2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING**

The quality of the learning and teaching was good or better in most of the lessons observed; the quality in over one-third was very good or better. In the most effective practice, the lessons were characterised by: the clear structure with a good focus on learning intentions; the pupils' high levels of motivation, enthusiasm and active engagement in paired and group work; and the teachers' high expectations. In the less effective practice, the lessons were over-directed by the teachers and lacked challenge. In order to support the pupils' learning further, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) needs to be embedded more effectively across the curriculum.

Learning support is characterised by an ethos of high expectations. The learning support assistants provide regular, intensive literacy and numeracy support using a range of suitable approaches in an integrated manner.

The pupils have good access to a coherent careers education information advice and guidance (CEIAG) provision including careers education, work experience and impartial advice and guidance from the Department for Employment and Learning careers service. The range of CEIAG resources, including specialist accommodation, is inadequate to meet effectively the needs of the pupils.

More detailed evaluation of the subjects under focus is provided in Appendix 1.

### 2.3 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. This is characterised by the caring and supportive ethos, the strong sense of social responsibility displayed by the pupils and the support given through the pastoral curriculum in order to raise standards. In addition, there are very good cross-community links and the senior pupils make positive contributions to the mentoring initiatives to support pupils in year 8.

### 2.4 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by DE.

### 2.5 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the appropriate external links with food and health related organisations and the school's promotion of healthy food choices at break time, which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

### 2.6 INCLUSION

The school has comprehensive arrangements in place to support the pupils with English as an additional language, including a classroom assistant trained in 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language', and the availability of translators at parents' evenings. The pupils value the academic and pastoral help they receive to ensure they are included in all aspects of school life.

## 3. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal, with the support of the governors, provides clear leadership based on a detailed knowledge of the school and demonstrates a high level of commitment to the raising of standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

The school development plan complies with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 Order and includes priorities for improvement, including links to the Rural Learning Partnership plan. There is also an engagement with other schools within the Rural Learning Partnership to bring about school improvement through collaborative staff development.

The use of self-evaluation to plan and review the quality of education across the school is at an early stage. There is a need to develop more systematic approaches to self-evaluation to identify and share best practice in teaching and learning within and across different subject areas.

There is a developing delegated management structure consisting of staff teams to address whole-school issues. Roles and responsibilities at all levels to manage the future development within the school require further clarification.

The Learning Support Co-ordinator has devised comprehensive documentation which focuses appropriately on the early identification of pupils who have learning difficulties, and effective liaison with the associated primary schools. There is continuous and robust monitoring of the pupils and immediate action is taken to eliminate barriers to learning.

#### 4. **SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

The main strengths of the school include:

- the caring, supportive and inclusive ethos;
- the very good quality of the arrangements for pastoral care;
- the good improvement in the standards at GCSE level;
- the quality of teaching observed in most of the lessons which was good or better;
- the very good quality of provision for those pupils who require additional support for their learning; and
- the committed and dedicated leadership of the Principal and the conscientious staff.

The area for improvement is:

- to develop more systematic approaches to self-evaluation focusing on learning and teaching.

#### 5. **CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

It will be important that the employing authority, governors and the Principal and management team, 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.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FOR THE SUBJECT AREAS UNDER FOCUS**

**English**

The overall provision for English is good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the good standards achieved by pupils in GCSE English Literature and, in particular, GCSE English;
- the quality of the learning and teaching, which was always satisfactory and most of which was good or better;
- the good planning and revised schemes of work which meet the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- the very good standard of extended writing in a range of genres;
- the departmental self-evaluation which identifies appropriate areas for development; and
- the good leadership of the head of department in promoting literacy across the curriculum.

The area for improvement is:

- the need to promote greater consistency in the provision of learning and teaching.

**Mathematics**

The quality of the provision for mathematics is good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the improving standards achieved by the pupils at key stage 3 and GCSE level;
- the hard work and commitment of the teachers in supporting the pupils;
- the good or better quality of the learning and teaching in a majority of lessons observed;
- the willingness of the pupils to respond enthusiastically and think mathematically when given the opportunities;
- the start made to encouraging pupils to self-evaluate their work; and
- the enthusiasm and leadership of the head of department.



The area for improvement is:

- the need to develop the strategies for self-evaluation in order to improve the quality of learning and teaching and to improve further the standards achieved by the pupils.

**Health and Safety**

The supporting cable of an electricity transformer situated within the school grounds causes a hazard to pupils where it crosses a pathway.

**Accommodation and Resources**

There are shortfalls in the accommodation and resources for careers education to meet the needs of the pupils. These include the following:

- a specialist classroom for careers education and the education for employability strand of learning for life and work;
- a careers interview room; and
- inadequate provision of ICT resources for careers education.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Mary's College  
 ii. School Reference Number: 323-0142  
 iii. Age Range: 11-16  
 iv. Status: Roman Catholic Maintained  
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 23/11/09  
 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Year 8 Intake	40	41	60	49	47
Total enrolment	275	274	282	285	282

1.3 Attendance

Year 2008/09	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2008/09	NI Average 2007/08
% Attendance	95	93.3	92.6	93.2	91.1	93.3	88.6	93	90

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 21.4      iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.73
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 12.89

Year 2009/10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	31	27	40	28	24	21	10	181
Enrolment: Girls	16	21	20	16	18	8	2	101
Enrolment: Total	47	48	60	44	42	29	12	282
PTR	15.93	14.47	14.57	9.72	9.61	23.48	8.59	

- 1.5 Staying On Rate (2007/08) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	48.7	NI Av Year 13	N/A
Year 14	50.0	NI Av Year 14	N/A

1.6 Leavers Destinations

2007/08	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	23		28	
Another School	17%	11.3	4%	N/A
Employment	9%	8.7	11%	N/A
Full-time Further Education	4%	41.8	14%	N/A
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	61%	N/A
Full-time Training	70%	30.3	7%	N/A
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	4.4	4%	N/A
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.5	0%	N/A

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Mary's College, Clady

SCHOOL YEAR: 2009/2010

<b>GCSE</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	88.89	89.74	93.48
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	48.89	66.67	67.39
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	28.89	48.72	39.13
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	73.33	89.74	84.78
<b>GCE A2 Level or equivalent</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	75	36	37.5
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	100	92	100

## EXAMINATION RESULTS

*Table showing the GCSE and GCE A Level subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2009, 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	Art and Design Business and Communication Systems* Construction and the Built Environment* Design and Technology: Resistance Materials French* Irish* Motor Vehicle Studies* Single Award Science	Double Award Science 1 <sup>st</sup> Subject English Home Economics Food*	English Literature Geography History* Home Economics Mathematics Polish* Religious Studies Sport/PE Studies*	Design and Technology Information Technology	Performing Arts*
GCE A Level A-C	English Literature** History**	Design and Technology: Product Design**		Religious Studies**	Art and Design** Media Studies**

\* less than 30 pupils over three years

\*\* less than 20 pupils 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	Polish		Art and Design Information Technology Music	Double Award Science 1 <sup>st</sup> Subject English Literature Irish Performing Arts	Business and Communication Systems Construction and the Built Environment Design and Technology Design and Technology: Resistance Materials English French Geography History Home Economics Home Economics Food Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport/PE Studies
GCE A Level A-C		Art and Design English Literature History Media Studies Religious Studies		Design and Technology: Product Design	

**Table 3 showing results for Occupational Studies 2007-2009**

	<b>Pupils entered</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>2007</b>		
Double Award Level 1	3	50%
Double Award Level 2	3	50%
<b>2008</b>		
Double Award Level 1	6	86%
Double Award Level 2	1	14%
<b>2009</b>		
Double Award Level 1	4	44%
Double Award Level 2	5	56%

<b>2007-2009 GCE Applied A Level A-C Summary</b>	
Health and Social Science	75%
Information Technology	73%

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