



*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

**Ballymoney High School
Co Antrim**

October 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE STANDARD INSPECTION OF BALLYMONEY HIGH SCHOOL, CO ANTRIM, BT53 7AN (321-0133)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a standard inspection¹ of Ballymoney High School in October 2012 when the quality of education was evaluated as satisfactory.

The inspection identified three areas for improvement:

- to raise the overall standards achieved by the pupils including the levels of attainment in public examinations;
- for the teachers to raise their expectations of what the pupils can achieve, and use assessment more effectively to inform classroom practice in order to meet the needs and ability of all of the pupils; and
- for leadership, at all levels, to develop further their role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching in order to identify actions to effect sustained improvement in the provision.

The ETI carried out two interim follow-up visits to monitor progress and a follow-up inspection took place in October 2014. The school's action plan, in response to the inspection, took appropriate account of the areas for improvement and informed the school development plan, which is in line with the Department of Education's requirements. The principal and the chair of the board of governors report that the school has received effective support, since the inspection, from the Regional Training Unit and the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the North Eastern Education and Library Board.

Since the original inspection an action research group has been set up to define and foster best practice in aspects of classroom practice.

The following important improvements have been effected as a result of a clearly defined improvement agenda, led well by the senior leadership team, and brought about through engagement and commitment by all staff.

- The teachers have higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve and use more active learning strategies; as a consequence, the pupils exhibit higher levels of confidence, engagement and motivation.
- A range of professional development opportunities have been provided for all staff, focusing mainly on effective learning and teaching; this training has improved the quality of the lessons observed, with almost all being effective at promoting learning.
- Quantitative and qualitative data is being used more effectively by all class teachers to inform their teaching, which is better at meeting the individual needs of the pupils. Data is also being used well by heads of year, whose role has been widened to support both the pastoral and the academic needs of the pupils, to identify and address underachievement. Well-planned mentoring supports those pupils identified as being at risk of underachieving. Pupils are now involved more in setting their own targets, evaluating their learning and, through this practice, are developing greater independence.

¹ See standard inspection report at <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2012/standard-inspection-ballymoney-high-school-2.pdf>

- Improved assessment strategies are evident; in particular, there is effective questioning by the teachers which encourages the pupils to extend their responses; there is constructive marking in the pupils' books to guide them on how to improve their work.
- The review of the curriculum, the widening of subject choice and the improved examination entry policy has led to curriculum provision which is better matched to the needs, ability and interests of all of the pupils.
- There is more robust, collegial monitoring, evaluation and review by middle managers and senior leaders of the quality of teaching and learning, with a clear focus on ensuring that the provision meets the needs of all of the pupils. The views of the pupils have been sought and acted upon appropriately.
- Middle managers are better empowered to effect improvement through good quality monitoring, evaluation and review, and by producing action plans to drive the improvement agenda. Senior leaders have developed more effective lines of communication at all levels to ensure that the actions taken lead to the required improvement.
- The quality of provision for mathematics has improved to good; in particular, the teachers have higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve, resulting in the use of a broader range of learning approaches and more effective questioning.
- The quality of provision for geography has also improved to good; a key strength is the monitoring and evaluating of classroom practice by all teachers.

Furthermore, there has been improvement in the standards attained by the pupils in examinations at GCSE level. A particular strength lies in the standards attained in GCSE English language at grades A* to C which has improved from 40% in 2012 to over 70% in 2014.

The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE examinations (or equivalents) at grades A* to C has increased from 42% in 2012 to 61% in 2014. When English and mathematics are included, standards have increased from 28% to 34% in the same period. Both improvements are from below, to in line with, the standard for similar schools in the same free school meals category.

Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is now 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 which is to sustain, and build on, the improvements in the standards the pupils attain.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2014

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website:
www.etini.gov.uk

