



*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

Belfast Hospital School

June 2011

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF BELFAST HOSPITAL SCHOOL, BT12 6BE (131-6560)

The focused inspection of Belfast Hospital School in March 2009 highlighted strengths in many aspects of the areas inspected. These included:

- the very good quality of the teaching and learning in the school;
- the benefits of providing education within the hospital settings and at home;
- the positive working relationships among the teaching staff and the warm working ethos they promote in all of the teaching sessions; and
- the positive impact on the pupils' well-being and learning.

The inspection also identified significant inadequacies in the leadership and management of the school which needed to be addressed if the school was to meet effectively the needs of all of the pupils. These included:

- the poor working relationships within the senior management team (SMT);
- the lack of professional, SMT meetings to determine the key strategic needs of the school within the school development plan and to provide a clearer definition of the key management roles and deployment of senior staff; and
- the absence of a whole-school evaluation system.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out two monitoring visits in February 2010 and June 2010, followed by a follow-up inspection in June 2011. The school received significant and effective support from the Belfast Education & Library Board (BELB) adviser for special education, particularly to revise the original action plan in the year after the inspection. The Inspectorate's monitoring visits indicated steady improvement in the areas for development.

The follow-up inspection in June 2011 identified a number of important contextual changes in the school. The Principal resigned due to ill health. An Acting-principal is now in place. There is a new SMT in place and good relationships and teamwork are now evident. The BELB have informed the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Governors that they are reviewing the overall provision of the school.

The follow-up inspection identified a number of key developments in the school which have resulted in significant improvement. These include:

- the development of an appropriate school development plan which sets out clear targets for the next three years and which fully meets the statutory requirements of the Department of Education;
- the effective arrangements in place for promoting self-evaluation which are beginning to show positive results;
- the development of very positive SMT working relationships and the evolving collaborative leadership and effective decision making processes which have resulted in improved roles and responsibilities and more effective monitoring of practice; and

- the significant achievements in information and communication technology (ICT), including national recognition in the ICT Chartermark, and the highly creative and successful partnerships delivering a wide range of innovative and stimulating experiences for the pupils.

The Acting-principal and Board of Governors should continue to monitor progress and continue negotiations with the BELB to clarify the remit of the school within the overall out-of-school provision in the board.

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 follow-up inspection has identified some aspects of the areas for improvement still to be addressed but equally the school has demonstrated the capacity to address these.

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