



*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

**Cambridge House Grammar School
Ballymena**

October 2013

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION VISIT AND FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF CAMBRIDGE HOUSE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM, BT42 2EH (341-0297)

Cambridge House Grammar School was originally inspected in April 2011 and entered the formal intervention process on 3 June 2011. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection in October 2012 and the school exited formal intervention. The Department of Education (DE) indicated at that time that a further follow-up inspection (to include a focus on biology, chemistry and English across the school) would take place and that an interim follow-up visit (IFUV) would monitor the progress being made in bringing about the necessary improvements.

In the interval since the most recent follow-up inspection the school has continued to receive support¹ including from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). Increasingly the school has been proactive in identifying opportunities to learn from effective practice in other schools.

The following changes which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- a number of staff appointments have been made including the post of principal, head of English and head of physical education;
- a new chair, vice-chair and two additional governors have been appointed;
- there has been an overall reduction in the number of teaching staff by five full-time and two part-time teachers; and
- the leadership roles and responsibilities of the members of the senior leadership team have been clarified further.

The most important improvements since the last follow-up inspection are outlined below.

- Most of the pupils demonstrate a stronger disposition towards learning, and work with greater independence.
- The proportion of pupils achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A* to C improved further from 57% to 68%.
- The proportion of pupils achieving seven or more GCSE grades at A* to C increased from 78% to 92%, and the proportion achieving seven or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics increased from 62% to 87%.
- As the result of well-targeted intervention and support, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals achieving five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics increased from 50% to 91%.
- There is an improving trend in a majority of the individual subjects at both GCSE and GCE A level.
- Most of the lessons observed continue to be either good or very good.

¹ Continued professional development has also been provided by the Regional Training Unit; C2K have continued to provide support relating to the effective use of assessment data.

- In biology, chemistry and English, standards improved. The teachers have a clearer focus on learning and on engaging the pupils more actively. The departments are being led effectively and the overall quality of the provision is now good.
- At a whole-school level, assessment data continues to be used effectively to help raise standards.
- As a result of better careers information, advice and guidance, the improved retention rate at the end of year 13 has been sustained.
- The senior leadership team has developed a more strategic approach towards the review, design and development of a curriculum that is matched to the needs, interests and aspirations of the pupils.
- The senior leadership team continues to challenge and support the work of middle leaders both strategically and effectively.
- At all levels, leaders continue to demonstrate a commitment to the improvement agenda.

In the areas inspected originally, the quality of education provided by the school is now good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational provision.

The inspection has identified the following areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address:

- to maintain and raise further the standards that the pupils achieve in public examinations; and
- to bring about greater consistency in the quality of the provision for learning and in the outworking of monitoring and evaluation strategies within and across all subject departments.

The employing authority, governors and staff need to continue to plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school's provision and budget in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The ETI will continue to monitor, through district inspection activity, the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

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