



*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**

**Dunluce School  
Bushmills**

**February 2015**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE STANDARD INSPECTION OF DUNLUCE SCHOOL, BUSHMILLS, CO ANTRIM, BT57 8QQ (321-0222)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Dunluce School in February 2012, when the quality of provision was evaluated as inadequate<sup>1</sup>. The school entered the formal intervention process in March 2012.

The areas for improvement identified in the original report were the need: for all teachers to work collaboratively to improve the inadequate standards achieved by the pupils; for leaders at all levels, particularly the senior leadership team, to develop and sustain a consistent focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching as the means of raising the standards achieved by the pupils; and to improve the inadequate leadership and management across the school, particularly through more rigorous and systematic monitoring and evaluation and a more coherent school development plan (SDP), to ensure that efforts to improve the provision result in higher standards and outcomes in most of the subjects.

A follow-up inspection (FUI) was carried out in September 2013 and, while a number of significant steps taken, including a change of leadership, were addressing the areas for improvement and had led to some important improvements, the quality of provision remained inadequate<sup>2</sup>.

ETI noted the provision of a more appropriate curriculum, tighter monitoring and intervention practices and the embedding of management information systems.

The three remaining areas for improvement were the need to:

- raise urgently the inadequate standards being achieved by the pupils, in particular the low percentage attaining five grades at A\*-C including GCSE English and GCSE mathematics, and in a majority of GCSE subjects where the performance at grades A\*-C is 10 percentage points or more below the three year Northern Ireland (NI) average;
- build the capacity of the governors to offer a stronger challenge function and support the leaders in bringing about improvement; and
- increase the pace of change, leading to improvement.

Since the FUI in 2013, the ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in October 2014 when significant improvements in leadership, school development planning and improvement processes were noted.

A second FUI took place in February 2015. The principal and chair of the board of governors report that, since the original inspection, the school has received effective support from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the North-Eastern Education and Library Board, which has had a positive impact on the work of the school in raising standards and building capacity for improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2012/standard-inspection-dunluce-school-bushmills.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2013/follow-up-inspection-dunluce-school-bushmills-2.htm>

Compared with the time of the original inspection, leadership, school development planning and improvement processes are good.

- There are significant changes in leadership and governance, including the appointment of a new principal in June 2013, and newly-appointed members of the leadership team who are leading the school well to make the necessary improvements.
- Key post-holders report regularly to governors on issues such as, safeguarding, careers, and special educational needs, thus contributing to the governors' understanding of the work of the school and enhancing their challenge function.
- The SDP meets the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010; the SDP has helped to re-focus the school on an improvement agenda.
- Data is used more effectively; good progress is being made in ensuring that the teachers are able to track individual pupil progress closely, identify learning issues quickly and intervene appropriately.
- The middle managers are better equipped to monitor provision, create appropriate action plans and lead improvement; however their effectiveness is variable across the school.
- The quality of learning and teaching has improved significantly; the majority of teachers have higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve. A majority of the lessons observed during the FUI were good. A small number was highly effective and a similar percentage was not effective enough and requires improvement.

There are important improvements in standards.

- Nearly all pupils are entered for 5 or more GCSEs, or equivalents; the percentage attaining 5 or more qualifications at grades A\*-C has risen steadily from 32% in 2012, to 53% in 2013, and to 86% in 2014, which now compares very favourably with similar schools.
- Provision and outcomes in GCSE mathematics and science are now good, due in no small measure to the effective leadership provided by the respective heads of department and a sharp upward trend in pupil outcomes.
- As a result of the department's strong commitment and hard work to address the areas for improvement, outcomes in GCSE English have also improved steadily to 43% at grades A\*-C, remaining below the average for similar schools. Outcomes remain satisfactory and there is an urgent need to sustain the upward trend and to close the gap to mathematics.
- When GCSE English and GCSE mathematics at grades A\* to C are included in the headline standard, the school has improved from 15.4% in 2012 to 27% in 2014; the school is now closing the gap between its outcomes at this benchmark and the Northern Ireland average for similar schools.

- While subjects with larger number of pupils such as music, business (vocational) and French perform above the average for pupils achieving at GCSE A\*-C, there remains too much variation in standards across some other subjects.

As the school continues to develop further its improvement agenda, it will be important for the principal, senior leaders and governors to address the remaining issues identified in this report, in order to ensure improvements are sustained and standards can rise further.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is now satisfactory. The inspection endorses the effectiveness of the school's continuing work in improving learning and raising standards.

The school is demonstrating an improved capacity to address the areas for improvement which are to:

- continue to develop the capacity of key post-holders and improve leadership further; and
- sustain and bring more consistency and further improvement to pupil outcomes.

ETI will carry out a further follow-up inspection within 12-18 months and a report will be published.

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