



*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

**Knockbreda High School
Belfast**

September 2012

FOLLOW-UP TO THE STANDARD INSPECTION OF KNOCKBRED A HIGH SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT6 ONE (421-0086)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a standard inspection of Knockbreda High School in the week of 4 October 2009 and as a result the school entered the formal intervention process on 20 October 2009. The inspection identified the need for improvement in a number of key areas, including in the standards achieved in public examinations and the quality of leadership at all levels throughout the school. The quality of education provided in English, in science and in technology and design was evaluated as inadequate.

An interim follow-up visit was carried out by ETI on 14 October 2010 and confirmed the progress that the school was making in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the original inspection report.

The ETI carried out a follow-up inspection (FUI) in October 2011 and noted:

- the development, by the newly appointed Principal supported by South-Eastern Education and Library Board's Curriculum Advisory and Support Services, of a supplementary school development plan (which complies with the Department of Education's School Development Planning Regulations, 2005) through a process which has engaged actively all of the teachers; and
- the creation of a new faculty structure, with five appointed heads of faculty, resulting in better communication, mutual support and improved morale.

The October 2011 report noted further that a purposeful start had been made to improve teaching, learning and assessment; however, as the standards at key stage 4 in October 2011 remained well below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools the need to sustain and further improve standards was identified as a key area for improvement. The overall quality of education provided by the school remained inadequate.

The following are the most important changes that have taken place since the FUI in October 2011:

- the principal who had been appointed in a one-year, temporary post in September 2011, left the school to take up a permanent appointment elsewhere in August 2012;
- a new management structure was introduced in June 2012; and
- the school was awarded the UNICEF Children's Rights Respecting School: Recognition of Commitment reflecting a greater involvement which the pupils evidently have in their own learning.

Since the FUI in October 2011, the following are the most important improvements:

- the teachers have developed a wider range of teaching and learning strategies as a result of a structured programme of regular dissemination and sharing of good practice at departmental, faculty and whole-school level;
- there has been a strong focus on capacity-building in leadership and management at all levels;

- a very good start has been made to identifying underachievement among pupils, providing useful support through intervention strategies and offering parents greater opportunity to support their children's learning;
- in twelve subjects there was an increase in the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A*-C in the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) , although a significant minority of subjects are still 10% or more below the NI average;
- while the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in any five or more GCSE subjects remains below the NI average for similar schools, it has doubled from 23% in 2011 to 45% in 2012; when GCSE English and mathematics are included in the five subjects, the percentage increased from 16% in 2011 to 23% in 2012, although this result remains well below the NI average for similar schools; and
- the quality of the provision in science has improved to satisfactory and the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C in single award science has increased from 55% to 90% which is well above the NI average for similar schools.

While the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-G in any five GCSE subjects has increased from 80% to 85%, the standards at this level remain below the average for similar schools.

There has been no improvement in the overall attendance of the pupils, which has remained consistently below the NI average.

All of the staff have worked effectively, in a collegial manner and with active monitoring and support by governors, to begin to develop and implement the planned changes. As a consequence the quality and standards of significant aspects of the education provided by the school have improved in a relatively short period of time.

Overall, important aspects of the school's provision remain inadequate.

In order to sustain, secure and build on the important gains made in the last year the school needs:

- to consolidate and raise more consistently the standards in public examinations;
- to bring stability to the changing leadership and management arrangements; and
- to embed and build upon the self-evaluation leading to further improvement by identifying and addressing low and under-achievement and improving the attendance of the pupils.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will carry out a further follow-up inspection within 12 months and a report will be published.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2012

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

