



*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

**Lisnagarvey High School
Lisburn**

March 2011

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL, LISBURN, CO ANTRIM, BT28 1HN (421-0051)

The standard inspection of Lisnagarvey High School in November 2008 highlighted strengths including: the good quality of working relationships between teachers and pupils; the significant improvement in the standards reached by the pupils taking five or more subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level at grades A*-C; the strong commitment of the school to retaining marginalised pupils through innovative and effective projects with other partners; the very good or better teaching observed in a significant minority of the lessons; the vision and commitment of the Principal who has a strong and effective focus on raising standards; and the high priority given by the school to the development of constructive links with the local community.

The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the wider dissemination of effective learning and teaching strategies to actively engage, motivate and challenge the pupils;
- the sharper focus at whole-school level to raise the standards in English and mathematics, including in public examinations, as identified appropriately by the school; and
- the development of management roles at all levels to focus more specifically on self-evaluation leading to whole-school improvement.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out two monitoring visits; and a follow-up inspection on 14 and 15 March 2011.

The action plan produced by the school in response to the inspection findings of November 2008 was of a satisfactory quality and the school's development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

In the interval since the inspection, the following are the most important changes which have affected the work of the school:

- the increase in the enrolment from 321 to 417 and in the number of staff from 23 to 31;
- the decrease in the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals from 39.5% to 30.9%;
- the increase in the number of pupils with statements from 16 to 26;
- the introduction of baseline testing to monitor the pupils' progress;
- the audit of aspects of the literacy and numeracy provision to identify areas for improvement;
- the development of a programme of shared classroom observations;
- the collaboration between the school, other local schools and the further education sector to increase the school's curricular offer at key stage (KS)4 and at post-16;
- the support provided by the curriculum advisory support services of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB);
- the further development of the school's wide range of extracurricular events and activities; and
- the significant capital investment by the SEELB and the school to improve the infrastructure of the school building.

However, the school is unable to demonstrate evidence of sustained improvement; the outcomes for pupils at key stage (KS) 4 are unsatisfactory and there are significant areas for improvement in learning and teaching and in leadership and management which need to be addressed urgently if the needs of all the pupils are to be met effectively.

The areas for improvement are the need:

- to raise the standards achieved in public examinations which have decreased:
 - from 81.2% to 78.2% of the pupils in year 12 entered for five or more subjects at GCSE level;
 - from 44% to 31% of the pupils obtaining grades A* to C in five or more subjects at GCSE level, which is almost 30 percentage points below the Northern Ireland (NI) average;
 - from 21% to 7% of the pupils obtaining grades A* to C in five or more subjects including English and mathematics, which is over 25 percentage points below the NI average;
 - from 41% to 33% in the percentage of pupils obtaining level 5 or above in KS3 mathematics which is almost 30 percentage points below the NI average;
 - from 44% to 17% in the percentage of pupils obtaining level 5 or above in KS3 English which is almost 50 percentage points below the NI average.
- to improve the pupils' attendance which is currently four percentage points below the NI average;
- to provide staff development in the effective use of data to monitor and evaluate improvement;
- to improve the quality of leadership throughout the school and ensure that whole-school self-evaluation, action planning and target setting lead to significant and sustained improvement in the quality of the pupils' work across the whole range of abilities; and
- to review the roles and leadership responsibilities of all members of the SMT to focus on monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching.

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in the provision. The follow-up inspection has confirmed the major areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the pupils.

Furthermore, in light of the small number of pupils in the sixth form which is currently 52, and the poor retention rate which has varied between 80% and 50%, it will be important that the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the sixth-form provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

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