



*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

**Newtownabbey Community High School
Co Antrim**

October 2013

FOLLOW-UP TO THE STANDARD INSPECTION OF NEWTOWNABBEY COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, CO ANTRIM (321-0279)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a standard inspection¹ in September 2010 when the quality of education was evaluated as satisfactory. At the time of a first follow-up inspection (FUI) in September 2012 the quality remained satisfactory.

While the first FUI identified some improvement, the following areas remained to be addressed to ensure that the needs of all of the pupils will be met effectively to:

- sustain and build further on the recent improvement to the standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations, in particular, through developing a whole-school approach to raise the pupils' literacy skills; and
- to disseminate more effectively the very good and outstanding learning and teaching practice which exists within the school.

On 25 June 2013, the North-Eastern Education and Library Board recommended the amalgamation of the school with Monkstown Community School.

ETI carried out two monitoring visits and then a second FUI on 7-8 October 2013.

The action plan produced by the school in response to inspection findings is of a good quality² and, since the first FUI, the senior leadership team, with the support of the North Eastern Education and Library Board, has revised the whole-school literacy policy.

During the standard inspection, the quality of less than one-half of the lessons observed was good or better. The quality of the lessons observed during the second FUI was consistently improved with almost all of the lessons being good or better, and three-fifths very good or outstanding across almost all areas of learning.

On entry to the school, more than one-half of the pupils had low levels of prior attainment in English and mathematics, and had reading ages below their chronological age. One-third of the pupils who sat their GCSE examinations in June 2013 did not enrol in Newtownabbey Community High School in year 8 but transferred from other schools during their post-primary schooling.

The following are the most important improvements:

- throughout the school, a culture of achievement has been established leading to significant improvement in the pupil's behaviour, disposition to learn, work both in class and at home and attainment in public examinations;
- attendance has improved steadily from 84% in 2010 to over 90%, in line with the NI average for non-selective schools;
- more effective dissemination of high quality practices in teaching has improved both the consistency of learning experiences for the pupils and their engagement and motivation;

¹ See standard inspection report at <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2010/standard-inspection-newtownabbey-community-high-school.htm>

² The school's development plan is in line with the requirements set out by the Department of Education

- the quality of planning and assessment has improved significantly and is now very good;
- appropriate changes have been made to the curriculum which now meets more effectively the needs, interests and abilities of all of the pupils;
- school development planning is underpinned by rigorous, critical self-evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels, resulting in the identification of appropriate priorities for action which are communicated well to all staff, external support agencies and the wider school community;
- the quality of the provision of both mathematics and English, which was evaluated as satisfactory at the time of the standard inspection, is now good;
- examination standards are now significantly above the average when compared with similar schools, for example, the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C increased from 38% in 2010, to 55% in 2012, and to 63% in 2013;
- when English and mathematics are included the GCSE average increased from 15% in 2010, to 21% in 2012, and to 35% in 2013, which is also significantly above average for similar schools;
- whole-school improvement in the pupils' literacy skills has contributed to raising standards in English which were originally inadequate and are now good; and
- the outstanding, transformational work of the senior leadership team has enhanced the overall quality of education for the pupils.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is now very good, as a consequence of steady improvement over three years, built upon significant staffing and curricular change, the outworking of structures to effect improvements in practice and in outcomes and the positive response of the pupils.

The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the pupils; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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