

eti

*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

**St Brigid's High School
Armagh**

March 2012

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST BRIGID'S HIGH SCHOOL, ARMAGH, BT60 4BR (523-0160)

The standard inspection of St Brigid's High School in October 2010 highlighted strengths in the quality of teaching in most lessons, the strong pastoral support for pupils, the exemplary behaviour of the pupils and their positive attitudes to learning, and the strong links the school has with a wide range of external agencies to enrich the learning experiences of the pupils.

The inspection identified the following key areas for improvement:

- to raise further the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in at least five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects, including English and mathematics;
- to review urgently the school development planning process to underpin it with rigorous self-evaluation; and
- to review the curriculum provision through more collaborative and effective arrangements in the area learning community, in order to meet the needs of the pupils.

The quality of the provision in Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), and in English was evaluated as satisfactory with important improvements required in literacy development, teaching and standards.

The report also concluded that the Department of Education (DE), the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for and manage issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions, related to the work of the school, have taken place:

- the publication of the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education report on area-based planning in the Armagh area;
- the lack of improvement in the financial position of the school; and
- the support provided by officers from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Southern Education and Library Board Curriculum, Advice and Support Service, to help the school address the main areas for improvement identified in the original inspection report.

After the inspection, an action plan was received and a first interim follow-up visit (IFUV) was undertaken in June 2011, as a result of which, the action plan was adjusted. Following a second IFUV in January 2012, further adjustments were made to the action plan.

The following are the most important improvements since the original inspection:

- the quality of the provision in CEIAG is now very good, with significant improvements in the range of learning resources that are used in taught careers lessons, the refurbishment of the careers room, and the extensive range of up-to date information for pupils on post-16 pathways; and

- the more effective collaboration with schools in the local area learning community to broaden the curriculum offer at key stage (KS) 3 and KS4.

While there has been an improvement in school development planning, the attainments of the pupils are still low, with only 16% of pupils in 2011 achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. Further urgent action is needed to develop coherent approaches to school development planning, with further improvements in the effective use of target-setting based on rigorous self-evaluation in order to support those pupils at risk of underachievement.

In English, there have been improvements in teacher assessment and in the quality of the pupils' responses. Nevertheless, the quality of the provision has not improved and remains satisfactory. Urgent action is needed to improve the outcomes at GCSE level, and to implement more coherent approaches to support literacy across the school.

It also remains important that DE, the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for and manage issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is still satisfactory; the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

© 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

