

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 Patrick's College
Belfast**

March 2012

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE, BELFAST, BT15 4DZ (123-0026)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a standard inspection of St Patrick's College in January 2010 which highlighted strengths in: the outstanding ethos of the school; the very good quality of the pastoral care; the motivation of the pupils; the quality of the teaching observed; the innovative and effective links with the local and global community; and the leadership of the Principal.

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

- to address the variation in the standards achieved by the pupils across all subjects, matching more closely the teaching and learning strategies to the needs and interests of the pupils;
- to review the School Development Planning process, taking account of the inspection findings and, in particular, making stronger links between assessment and the associated target-setting processes at departmental and whole-school level; and
- to develop appropriate action plans to address the areas for improvement identified in the careers, history, mathematics and Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision.

Following the original inspection, ETI carried out two interim follow-up visits (IFUV) and, on 1-2 March 2012, a follow-up inspection (FUI).

The action plan produced by the college in response to the inspection findings was of a good quality.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the college have taken place:

- the appointment of a new Principal in September 2011;
- the development of a rigorous and effective system for tracking individual pupil performance;
- the formation of the Student Leadership Team;
- an extensive staff development programme, which has a clear focus on learning and draws upon the expertise of the staff, supported well by the Belfast Education and Library Board's Curriculum Advisory and Support Service, the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment, and by C2K;
- the review of the option choices in year 10 to widen access to a greater range of courses at key stage 4 both within the college and in collaboration with the North Belfast Learning Community; and
- a necessary review of staffing and of management structures, including a clear definition of key leadership and management roles and responsibilities.

The Principal is conducting a systematic and rigorous review of the provision in order to inform the school development planning process and to promote improvement. While the process has progressed well, the school development plan does not yet meet the statutory requirements as set out by the Department of Education in The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

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

- the systematic and rigorous approach to self-evaluation led effectively by the Principal, senior leadership team and heads of department;
- the effective links between assessment and target setting at departmental and whole-school level;
- the very good quality of the careers education, advice, information and guidance provision;
- the very good provision for those pupils who require support with aspects of their learning;
- the good quality of the provision in history; and
- the improved quality of the teaching observed during the follow-up visits, most of which was good or better, with half of the lessons very good or outstanding.

The remaining key area for improvement is the need to:

- raise the standards of provision and the outcomes in mathematics; and
- consolidate and improve further the standards attained by the pupils at General Certificate for Secondary Education (GCSE), which at 19.6% for five GCSE grades A*-C including English and mathematics, are in line with the average for similar schools.

CONCLUSION

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education remains satisfactory; the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision.

The college has demonstrated significant improvement in key aspects of the provision; however, the important areas for improvement in standards achieved in mathematics and in public examinations more widely, remain to be addressed urgently if the needs of all the pupils are to be met effectively.

It will be important that the employing authority, governors and staff plan for and manage issues related to the sustainability of the sixth form in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The ETI will carry out a second 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

