



*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 an Inspection Visit

**Cambridge House Grammar School
Ballymena**

April 2011

INSPECTION VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE HOUSE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, BALLYMENA, CO ANTRIM BT42 2EH (341-0297)

On 13 and 14 April 2011 the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) visited Cambridge House Grammar School at the request of the Department of Education.

The focus of the inspection was to evaluate and report on the quality of the provision within the sixth form, including:

- teaching and learning; and
- careers education information advice and guidance (CEIAG) and/or pastoral care.

The arrangements for the inspection visit included the opportunity for representatives from the Board of Governors and groups of pupils from years 12, 13 and 14 to meet with the inspectors.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

- Overall, the standards achieved by the pupils in the sixth form are inadequate. Since the time of the standard inspection in 2009, the percentage of pupils achieving seven or more General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) grades at A*-C has risen from 76% to 82%, demonstrating improvement. However, there has been a lack of improvement in whole-school standards at General Certificate of Education Advanced (A) level; the proportion of pupils achieving three or more A levels at grades A-C has fallen from 42% to 40% and is almost one-half of the average for similar selective schools.
- The quality of the teaching observed in the sixth form during the inspection visit ranged from very good to inadequate; a significant minority of the lessons observed was good, and the majority was either satisfactory or inadequate, with significant areas for improvement. There is insufficient long-term or short-term planning for teaching and learning in the sixth form. In addition, there is an inconsistent approach towards the use of all available data to identify targets for attainment both at Advanced Supplementary (AS) and at A2 level, to track pupil progress, and to identify underachievement and the actions necessary to bring about improvement.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the sixth form provision, and of pupil progress and achievements, is not sufficient to bring about the necessary improvement in the outcomes at A level.
- The school's published criteria for admission to year 14 are inappropriate. The school needs to review this policy, particularly, but not exclusively, for pupils studying three AS subjects in year 13, in order to ensure appropriate access to a two year programme of study for all pupils entering the sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils dropping out at the end of year 13 is too high; well above the Northern Ireland average.

- The arrangements for the delivery of effective CEIAG in the sixth form are unsatisfactory; there is no coherent and progressive CEIAG programme. The arrangements for pupils to make GCSE, AS and A level choices are unsatisfactory. There is no systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the CEIAG provision by the senior leadership team and there is insufficient use made of data, such as information on the destinations of leavers, to inform curricular planning and development.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the overall quality of the provision is inadequate; the significant areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the sixth form provision. The leadership of planning, learning and teaching in the sixth form in this school is not effecting the required improvement in standards identified at the time of the inspection in 2009. The substantial areas for improvement identified in standards, learning and teaching, and the leadership and management of aspects of the sixth form provision need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the pupils.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's continuing work to address the issues identified during this inspection visit within 12-18 months.

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