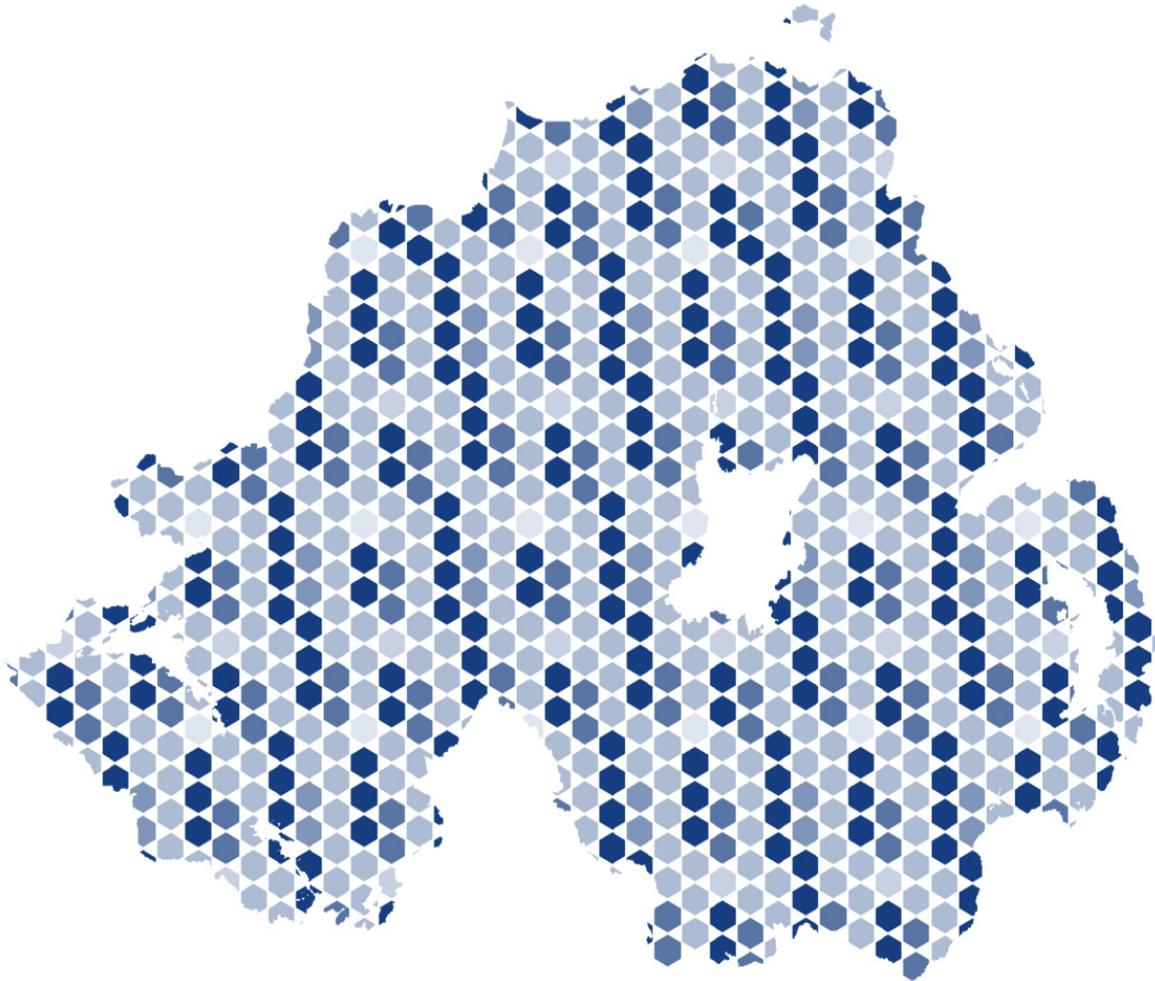


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Craigavon Senior High School,
Co Armagh

Report of an Inspection
in September 2010

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Craigavon Senior High School is a controlled, co-educational school catering for pupils at key stage (KS) 4 as part of the Craigavon system of junior and senior high schools. It is situated on two campuses in Portadown and Lurgan. The school draws its pupils from a number of the junior high schools in the locality. The enrolment has decreased significantly in the last year, and currently stands at 604; 214 pupils on the Lurgan campus and 390 on the Portadown campus. The school has identified just over 21% of the pupils as requiring additional support with their learning. Approximately 18% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on:

- achievements and standards;
- learning and teaching;
- provision across a wide range of subjects with a particular focus in English, mathematics and science, including the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum;
- the progress being made towards an extended curriculum;
- the views of the pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and the Board of Governors (governors);
- the provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection;
- the approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity;
- the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life;
- the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG),and
- leadership and management at all levels across the school.

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good.

2.1 The main strengths of the school include:

- the standard of the pupils' behaviour and the very good development of their personal and social skills, which help them take responsibility for their learning by year 12;

- the care and support demonstrated by the teachers for the welfare of the pupils and their commitment to bringing about improvement in the quality of the pupils' learning;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, just under three-quarters of which was good or very good;
- the good use of ICT to support learning and teaching;
- the effective links between the pastoral care and the special educational needs (SEN) provision; and
- the highly effective leadership provided by the Principal, supported ably by the Vice-principal and the senior management team (SMT).

2.2 The main areas for improvement are the need:

- to improve the transition from the junior high schools through the teachers taking greater cognisance of, and building more effectively on, the pupils' prior learning in order to raise further the standards at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level; and
- to broaden further the curriculum offer and to review aspects of the careers provision to meet more fully the needs of all of the pupils.

A summary of the main findings for the specialist subject areas under focus can be found in Appendix 1.

3. THE VIEWS OF PUPILS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND GOVERNORS OF THE SCHOOL

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as representatives from the governors and groups of pupils from years 11 and 12 to meet with the inspectors.

One hundred and twenty-one questionnaires were issued to parents; 35% were returned to Inspection Services Branch and 17 contained additional written comments. Most of the responses from the questionnaires, and the comments from the parents, were highly affirmative, indicating very strong support for the work and life of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the hard work and commitment of the staff to developing the pupils' self-confidence and helping them to achieve their full potential.

Thirty-four teachers and eleven support staff completed confidential questionnaires with five teachers and three support staff providing additional written comments. All of the teachers feel there is effective communication in the school and they have ample opportunities to discuss and identify the school's priorities. Overall, the staff enjoy working at the school and consider the leadership of the Principal to be effective. A majority of the teaching staff who responded would like to see the pupils more involved in decision-making within the school. Furthermore, the support staff would like improved communication with senior management and to be more involved in meetings.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the few areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires.

The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school, highlighting the quality of the pastoral care, the excellent leadership of the Principal and the SMT and the hard work and commitment of the teachers to supporting the pupils in their learning. They highlighted the good reputation of the school in the local community and feel they are kept well informed. They raised concerns in relation to the unsuitable accommodation at the Lurgan campus.

The pupils talked positively about their caring and supportive teachers and complimented them for their commitment to them and willingness to give additional time to supporting them in their studies. There is clear evidence to show that they are aware of what to do and who to talk to if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

Overall, the pupils' general achievements are good.

By year 12 the pupils' behaviour, personal and social skills are very good which help them to take responsibility for their own learning. In the majority of lessons, they work collaboratively with their peers, respond well to active learning and teaching strategies and use ICT effectively to support their learning. The pupils with identified special needs make good progress overall.

In 2010, three-quarters of the pupils in year 12 were entered for five or more subjects at GCSE level with just over one-half achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C. While the results are improving overall, in the past three years the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more subjects at GCSE at A*-C including English and mathematics has remained below or well below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. The standards achieved at A*-C in almost two-thirds of the GCSE subjects are within or above five percentage points of the corresponding three-year NI averages. At A*-E, most subjects are within or above five percentage points of the three-year NI average.

The school has identified appropriately the need, and has initiated a range of strategies, to raise further the pupils' levels of entry to and attainment in public examinations. In particular, the school needs to review the entry policy for all pupils, to ensure that the available courses, examinations and accreditation are matched more closely to their needs, interests and ability.

More information about the results achieved in public examinations is given in Appendix 3.

4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.2.1 LEARNING AND TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to inadequate: a majority (just under three-quarters) of the lessons were good or very good; a further one-quarter had significant areas for improvement.

The teachers are hard-working and committed, and have very good working relationships with the pupils. The quality of the teachers' planning across the majority of subjects is effective with a particular focus on engaging the pupils more actively with their learning; there is good use of ICT to support learning and teaching.

In the best practice: there is effective questioning to support and extend the pupils' learning; the teachers have high expectations of the pupils' learning and there is appropriate pace in the lessons; learning intentions are clearly shared, revisited in the course of the lesson and consolidated at the end; the pupils are engaged effectively in their learning through the active learning methodologies and the creative integration of ICT; and the teachers provide the pupils with purposeful and helpful feedback on how to improve the standard of their work enabling the pupils to reflect on their learning based on shared success criteria.

In the less effective practice: the teachers do not build on the pupils' prior learning; the learning activities are not matched closely enough to the needs and ability of all of the pupils; homework is not used effectively to consolidate and extend the pupils' learning, and there is no feedback to the pupils on how to improve their work.

The school has identified clearly those pupils who are in need of additional support for their learning; they receive concentrated support and encouragement from the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and staff. In the majority of lessons, individual education plans are being used effectively by the teachers to inform the planning for learning, thus ensuring that the work is matched closely to the pupils' needs. This good practice needs to be disseminated in order to ensure that differentiation is effective in all classes.

In order to improve the quality of learning and teaching, there is a need to improve the transition from the junior high schools through the teachers taking greater cognisance of, and building more effectively on, the pupils' prior learning in order to raise further the standards at GCSE. Furthermore, the school needs to share the good practice in assessment for learning identified in the English department, including giving the pupils detailed feedback to improve their learning, and continue to develop the target-setting process.

4.2.2 CURRICULUM PROVISION

The school offers a range of applied and general qualifications; one additional option qualification is provided by the school's collaborative arrangement with the Southern Regional College. While the school regards its collaboration with other education providers as a priority and the Principal and senior management have a strong commitment to the development of the Craigavon Area Learning Community (CALC), currently however, collaboration within the CALC is limited. The school needs to broaden further the curriculum offer for all of the pupils at KS4; it is appropriate that the review and development of the curriculum is a key aim within the school development plan (SDP). The school's progress towards the implementation of the Entitlement Framework by 2013 is satisfactory.

The school being split over two sites, and catering for KS4 pupils only, poses a structural constraint to curriculum provision and limits collaboration. Furthermore, there is duplication in the provision over both campuses which needs to be rationalised in order to provide all pupils with a wider range of options.

4.2.3 PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral work of the school is given a high priority and care for the welfare of the pupils, as demonstrated through the commitment of the Principal, the head of pastoral care and other key members of staff, is good. In addition, the school has beneficially supported 22 teachers to complete Master of Education (MEd) degrees in aspects of pastoral care. The caring and supportive ethos throughout the school, based on positive working relationships, helps young people deal with a range of barriers to learning; there are effective links between the pastoral care and SEN provision. The school needs to develop further a policy on promoting positive behaviour, in consultation with the pupils, to extend opportunities for them to make input to, and give feedback on, the life of the school.

The school is committed strongly to pupils at risk of marginalisation; support for these pupils is very good. In addition, the school provides effective intervention and obtains good outcomes for pupils with previous history of suspension and expulsion to alternative placements. The nurturing of these pupils' emotional development is a high priority, providing a sound basis for them to learn in school in a more inclusive way.

4.2.4 CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING

The school has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

4.2.5 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating, for example, the nutritional quality of the school meals and the Healthy Eating Policy outlining arrangements for food provision. The school needs to extend the range of healthy eating initiatives on a whole-school basis, in order to encourage further the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

4.2.6 CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (CEIAG)

The quality of CEIAG is satisfactory. This work is led by a dedicated and hard-working co-ordinator who has developed a well-structured programme for careers education focused appropriately on supporting the pupils with their personal career planning. The school provides a range of work-related learning opportunities and all pupils have the opportunity to participate in successful interview skills training days as well as work experience to enhance their understanding of the world of work. From discussions held with pupils in year 12, there is evidence that the impact of some of the work placements is variable in terms of developing their employability skills and preparing them to make more informed career choices.

The co-ordinator is committed to improving the provision for CEIAG and through effective self-evaluation she has identified appropriate areas for development including the need to improve monitoring and target-setting for pupils. In supporting the ongoing development of CEIAG, the SMT need to ensure a more coherent provision of CEIAG, taking account of all the contributory aspects of the curriculum and the views of the pupils.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management at all levels in the school is good. The Principal and Vice-principal provide highly effective leadership and are supported ably by the SMT.

The Principal has been in post for over 16 years, and provides exemplary leadership for the pupils and staff; he serves the community well through the educational experience provided by the school. He has the confidence of the staff and governors and the respect of the pupils. He is supported ably by the Vice-principal who has pioneered a number of important and innovative curriculum initiatives; she has ensured that the extensive staff development programme supports effectively the priorities identified in the SDP. The recently reconstituted SMT is providing effective support to build the capacity, and develop the strategic role, of middle managers.

The SDP process is well-embedded within the school and there is a strong commitment to action planning and the review processes in order to drive the school's agenda for improvement at departmental and whole-school level. The SDP, however, does not fully comply with the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations Northern Ireland (NI) 2005 Order.

The systematic and rigorous approach towards the process of self-evaluation is good in the majority of subject departments. In order to develop this self-evaluative practice further, the school should monitor and evaluate more closely the impact of all development work on raising standards at GCSE and the variable quality of learning and teaching provided by substitute teachers.

The SENCO provides effective leadership of the work with pupils with identified special needs. Her detailed knowledge of individual pupils and their identified special needs is made available to all staff and her advice, support and guidance is valued highly. She maintains effective links with outside agencies to support the pupils in their learning. In support of this, senior management need to prioritise a more rigorous scrutiny of whole-school provision for SEN focused on a broader understanding by all teachers of effective teaching.

It will be important that the employing authority, governors and the SMT 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 staff. It is in the interests of the school to have the difficulties caused by making provision on two campuses addressed as soon as possible.

6. CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good.

The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the organisation's progress on the areas for improvement.

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

English

The quality of the provision in English is very good.

The strengths of the work observed include:

- the positive working relationships at all levels;
- the improving trend in GCSE English results for all pupils;
- the quality of the teaching observed, the majority of which ranged from good to outstanding;
- the ongoing development of the use of ICT to support the learning and teaching of English;
- the hard-working teachers, who are committed to improving the provision in English through the identification of appropriate areas for development; and
- the very good leadership which promotes a collegial and self-evaluative approach to development within the department.

The area for improvement is the need:

- to continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of all new strategies and initiatives on the teaching and learning; in order to raise the standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations, as identified by the department.

Mathematics

The quality of provision for mathematics is satisfactory.

The strengths of the work observed include:

- the good to very good teaching in just under one-half of the lessons observed during the inspection;
- the good relationships between the pupils and the teachers in most of the lessons observed;
- the pupils' ability to work well collaboratively, when given the opportunity; and
- the hard work of the head of department and her commitment to the continued improvement of the mathematics provision.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- for the head of department to adopt a more strategic approach to the monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice to ensure greater consistency in the quality of the pupils' learning experiences in mathematics;
- for the teachers to match the learning more closely to the interests, needs and abilities of the pupils; and
- to further develop target-setting to take cognisance of the pupils' prior mathematical attainment and to identify actions to extend learning and raise standards.

Science

The quality of the provision for science is good.

The strengths of the work observed include:

- the positive working relationships between the teachers and pupils;
- the steady improvement in the standards achieved at GCSE in core science;
- the quality of teaching which was good or very good in nearly all the lessons observed;
- the quality of the short-term and medium-term planning which guides effectively the work of the department;
- the good quality of the self-evaluation; and
- the commitment of the head of department and the departmental team to review and improve classroom practice.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- to raise further the standards achieved at GCSE, particularly in additional science; and
- to improve the quality of the assessment of the pupils' learning and to link it more closely with action to raise standards.

APPENDIX 3

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: Craigavon Senior High School **SCHOOL YEAR:** 2010/2011

GCSE	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	91.1	100	76
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	45.4	44.1	55.5
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	36.1	25.1	26.6
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	76.9	78.5	81.5
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	74.4	77.8	74.9

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing GCSE and subject results over the previous three years ending June 2010, in comparison with the respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages:

Table 1

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCSE A*-C	French Home Economics Information Technology Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Sport (PE Studies)	Double Award Science 1 st Subject	Additional Science English Home Economics Child Development Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Religious Studies	Business Studies Geography Single Award Science	Art and Design Design and Technology History Office Technology
GCSE A*-E		Additional Science French Home Economics Learning for Life and Work (PSE)	Art and Design Business Studies Double Award Science 1 st Subject English Geography History Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies		Design and Technology Office Technology

Table showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1.

Table 2

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCSE A*-C			Art and Design Information Technology	Additional Science Double Award Science 1 st Subject Home Economics Child Development	Business Studies Design and Technology English French Geography History Home Economics Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Office Technology Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies
GCSE A*-E	Double Award Science 1 st Subject Sport (PE) Studies	Additional Science Art and Design Englihs French History Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Office Technology Religious Studies Single Award Science	Business Studies Design and Technology Geography Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies		

OTHER RESULTS

Awarding Body	CCEA					
Occupational Studies	2008		2009		2010	
	Number of Pupils	Pass	Number of Pupils	Pass	Number of Pupils	Pass
Level 1	64	39.1%	76	25%	76	28.9%
Level 2		43.8%		59.2%		65.8%

ACCOMMODATION

- The quality of the physical accommodation at the Lurgan campus is unsuitable.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The pupils at the Lurgan campus have no access to outside recreational areas.
- There is insufficient car parking facilities at both the Lurgan and Portadown campuses.

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