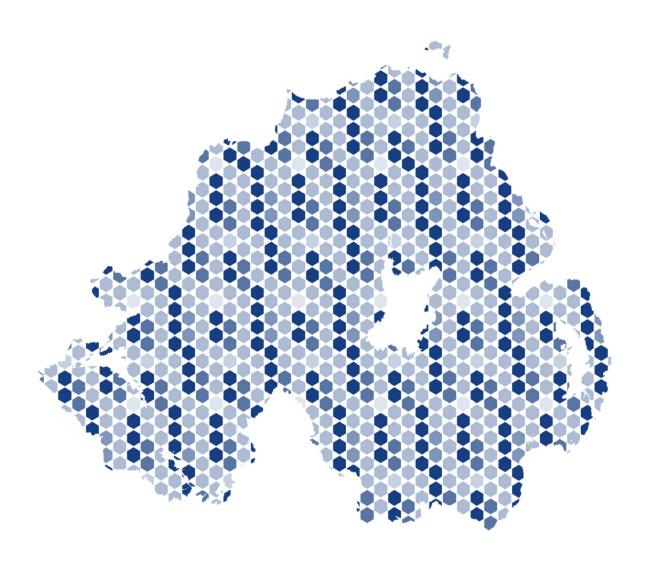
POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training Inspectorate

St Colm's High School, Draperstown

Report of an Inspection in January 2011



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education Department for Employment and Learning Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure





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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 SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Colm's High School is a co-educational, non-selective school situated in Draperstown, County Londonderry. The enrolment has increased over the last five years and currently stands at 425, including 63 post-16 pupils. The school has identified 16% of the pupils as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning, with 3% having a statement of educational need. Approximately 13% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and eight are newcomer pupils.

1.2 FOCUS OF THE INSPECTION¹

The inspection focused on:

- achievements and standards;
- learning and teaching;
- curriculum provision across a wide range of subjects with a particular focus in English, mathematics and science; and
- leadership and management at all levels across the school.

The inspection also focused on the provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection; the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life; progress towards the Entitlement Framework (EF) and the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG); the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum; and the approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. In addition, there was a short specialist visit to French which contributed to the overall inspection findings. The views of the pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and governors were taken into account in the inspection.

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the pupils and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

2.1 The main strengths of the school include:

- the motivated and engaged pupils whose behaviour during the inspection was exemplary;
- the very good achievements of the pupils including their outstanding attainments in public examinations;
- the quality of the teaching observed most of which was good or better;

¹ The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in post-primary schools are available in the Inspectorate's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm

- the outstanding quality of all aspects of care, guidance and support;
- the high levels of participation in the extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities offered to the pupils; and
- the outstanding leadership of the Principal, senior management team (SMT) and governors and the developing culture of self-evaluation.

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

- 3.1 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 meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of pupils from years 8, 10, 12, 13 and 14².
- 3.2 The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that the parents are highly appreciative of the work of the school, in particular, the regular and informative communication between school and home, the care and support provided for each individual pupil and the dedicated and approachable staff.
- 3.3 All of the teachers identified the care and support provided for the pupils as a significant strength of the school. The teachers have very good opportunities to contribute to whole school priorities and value the respect and support they receive from colleagues and parents. The support staff reported how they enjoy working in the school and know they are valued members of the school team.
- 3.4 The governors voiced their very strong allegiance to the school and their support for a very broad range of aspects of its life and work, including its central importance to the community and the parish. They expressed their pride in the high academic standards attained by the pupils, the commitment and hard work of the principal and all of her staff and the ways in which all members of the school community bring meaning to the school's vision statement: Believe and Achieve.
- 3.5 In discussions, the pupils talked openly, positively and with a clear sense of pride about their experiences in the school. They value the support they receive from all of the staff, the mutual respect between pupils and teachers and the friendly atmosphere within the school. They also indicated that they feel safe in the school and are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns regarding their work, safety or well-being.
- 3.6 The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the responses to the questionnaires.

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² The number of questionnaires issued and returned, and the number containing written comments are shown in appendix 2.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4.1 ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

All of the pupils develop well and have outstanding levels of attainment in public examinations; they demonstrate high levels of motivation and engagement in their work and, when given the opportunity, respond confidently and work collaboratively with their peers. They display appropriately high levels of expectation in what they can achieve, which reflects the core value of the school to 'Believe and Achieve'. The pupils' attendance in 2009/10 was 95%, which is well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average.

Approximately one-sixth of the pupils have a range of special educational needs (SEN). Assessment information, professional guidance and advice is distilled by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to provide appropriate guidance for all of the teachers and the learning support staff to tailor their approaches to specific needs. As a consequence, most of the pupils identified with literacy and/or numeracy difficulties are well supported to follow General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses. By the end of key stage (KS) 4, all of the pupils have made significant progress and achieve commendable success in GCSE examinations.

Almost all of the pupils in year 12 are entered for at least nine subjects at GCSE level.

Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSEs grades A* to C has remained very significantly above the NI average for similar non-selective schools. Over the same period almost all of the results in subjects at grades A* to C remain more than ten percentage points above the NI average for non-selective schools.

Over the same period, the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics remains significantly above the NI average for similar non-selective schools.

At General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level the percentage of pupils achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades at A*-C is double the average percentage of all non-selective schools.

The overall achievements of the pupils, including the outstanding results in public examinations, are very good, reflecting the value-added support provided by the staff in response to the range of abilities in the school.

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

4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING

The quality of the teaching, learning and assessment is very good.

4.2.1 QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of the teaching in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding with almost one-half being very good or better.

In the most effective teaching, the pupils take responsibility for their learning, discuss the learning intentions and agree the success criteria. The teachers question the pupils effectively to extend their thinking, oracy and confidence. The teachers encourage the pupils to make connections with other areas of learning and make good use of ICT to support and enhance the teaching and the learning. The pupils are involved actively in

investigations, and engage in high levels of discussion about their own learning in the plenary sessions, which inform the teacher's future planning. The teachers' planning and practice in the classroom is informed by their professional knowledge of the individual pupils and a sound understanding of their needs. The planning is reviewed regularly and identifies clear learning intentions, appropriate teaching strategies, and specific reference to cross curricular links, such as, cultural diversity through French.

To ensure consistency of provision it is appropriate that the school continues to share good practice across departments, as identified in the school development plan (SDP), and develop further the monitoring and evaluation of learning.

Overall the provision for SEN is outstanding.

There are well-developed, inclusive approaches which integrate the pastoral with the SEN provision. The pupils with special needs, and a small number of newcomer pupils who need additional support with their language, are helped in most cases to overcome effectively barriers to learning through their active participation in lessons.

When the pupils enter year eight, information about their individual needs is identified early on, in cooperation with the contributory primary schools. Assessments, setting challenging targets, tracking pupil progress and a range of evaluations are conducted, and repeated regularly at appropriate times, for the purposes of ensuring that the individual pupils make the best possible progress to develop their literacy. The programme of the different interventions for literacy is appropriate to the needs of the pupils and is effective in supporting their progress. The school has appropriately identified the need to extend the use of the diagnostic testing in numeracy.

The SENCO, the learning support staff, the librarian, the teachers and, at times the senior pupils who volunteer as classroom 'buddies', all work very hard to ensure that the pupils' literacy benefits from as full an engagement as possible in the curriculum.

4.2.2 CURRICULUM PROVISION

The school provides a curriculum which is suitably broad and balanced for the pupils of all abilities and which is relevant to their interests, abilities and career aspirations.

The school is committed to the rationale of the Entitlement Framework and engages actively in the Rural Learning Partnership (RLP). The school, through a number of its teachers, is involved in development work through the RLP, as outlined within the school development plan.

The school's curriculum provision at KS4 has been extended in recent years to meet more appropriately the pupils' needs, abilities and career aspirations, resulting in very good outcomes. Progress towards providing an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum for pupils, at post-16 level, is also very good.

The school, through the many aspects of its extra-curricular provision, which is very well integrated with the local community and the parish, provides an enriching diet of broader learning experiences for the benefit of the personal and social development of the pupils. For example through the Eco-club the pupils are involved in activities which raise the environmental awareness of the whole school and the community; they have produced an 'Eco-DVD' to encourage other schools to become more involved in sustainable development.

Restrictions to improvements in accommodation are inhibiting the development of curricular provision.

4.2.3 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. The senior teacher with responsibility for pastoral care provides effective leadership and strategic direction. Working relationships are very positive at all levels and the staff are highly committed to the care and well-being of the pupils. A strong sense of community exists and this is underpinned by a distinctive caring, supportive and inclusive ethos which permeates the life and work of the school. The pupils are very welcoming, confident and courteous; their behaviour both in and out of class, during the inspection, was exemplary. The older pupils have adopted an enhanced sense of responsibility and take opportunities to display leadership in their various roles as class monitors, peer mentors, prefects and members of the Student Council. In addition the engagement of many of the pupils in an extensive range of excellent extra-curricular activities, including the President's Award and the Pope John Paul II Award, enriches their educational and social experiences.

4.2.4 SAFEGUARDING

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

4.2.5 CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The overall quality of the CEIAG is outstanding.

The pupils use well the wide range of careers information provided to develop their personal career planning skills to a very high level. They also make good use of current ICT software and careers market information to develop their knowledge and understanding of the various career pathways available, including a range of alternative career routes.

The effective work of the teachers ensures that the pupils have a good knowledge of the qualifications they will need to access the various career pathways which they consider. The arrangements within the careers department for self-evaluation leading to further improvement are very good.

The timetabled careers programme is integrated well with the Learning for Life and Work programme. The leadership provided by the head of department for all aspects of the work in careers is outstanding.

The pupils benefit greatly from their participation in a well-planned range of careers visits and events in the school, supplemented by a week of work experience in KS4 and year 13, which contribute effectively to their understanding of the world of work.

The quality of the care, guidance and support for the pupils is outstanding. The school integrates well the pastoral, careers and SEN provision to support the pupils' personal, social and academic development.

4.2.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives outstanding attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, innovative initiatives to promote the eating of fruit, the structured lunchtime activities and a thematic approach to reinforcing health messages, which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

5. **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

- 5.1 The Principal has been in post for over three years and provides outstanding leadership, demonstrating a clear vision for the school, focused firmly on outcomes for all pupils, with a strong commitment to inclusion and equality. She values the contribution and views of all members of the school community, and has developed high levels of consultation, engaging pupils, parents and all staff to inform the future development of both pastoral and curricular aspects of the school. She is supported well by the vice-principal and senior teacher. The highly committed, meticulous leadership and management of SEN provision are outstanding. Co-ordination is characterised by a profound understanding of the special educational and additional needs of the pupils, very good support for the teachers and learning support staff and an absolute commitment to improvement.
- 5.2 The school is continuing to develop a culture of self-evaluation through a cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review led by middle management, on whole school priorities. It is important that self-evaluation is developed further to focus more acutely on improvements in approaches to teaching and learning.
- 5.3 The improvement process is clearly linked to a well-constructed SDP. The programme for staff development, appropriately addresses the actions identified in the SDP and, is monitored effectively with a clear focus on the impact training will have on the pupils' learning. The school gives very good attention to, and meets fully, the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.
- 5.4 The governors provide excellent support for the Principal and are highly committed to the life and work of the school. They are well informed of all aspects of school life and are engaged appropriately in the strategic planning.
- 5.5 The school deploys its financial resources appropriately providing good value for money.

6. **CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the pupils and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

English

The quality of the provision for English is good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the very good standards in English at KS4;
- the wide range of literacy intervention strategies to help those who require extra support;
- the promotion of reading through activities such as Readathon and Literacy Quizzes;
- the good use of quantitative data to inform planning and target-setting for underachievement; and
- the hard work and commitment of the Head of English.

The area for improvement is:

• to build on the start made to self-evaluation with a sharper focus on the promotion of pupils' independence as learners.

Mathematics

The quality of the provision for mathematics is good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the motivated pupils who engage well in learning mathematics;
- the very good standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, a majority of which was good;
- the hardworking departmental team who have appropriately high expectations of what the pupils can achieve;
- the continuing review of the schemes of work at KS3 which guide effectively the work of the department; and
- the good leadership provided by the head of mathematics.

The area for improvement is:

 to develop further monitoring and evaluation with a sharper focus on teaching and learning to inform self-evaluation and the associated action to promote improvement.

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Science

The quality of the provision for science is very good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the excellent working relationships between the pupils and the teachers;
- the outstanding standards achieved by pupils in the public examinations at GCSE level;
- the overall quality of the teaching observed, which was good or better in almost all the lessons;
- the commitment of the teachers to the review of classroom practice and their use
 of a wide range of teaching approaches and resources to engage the pupils
 actively in their own learning;
- the extent to which the science teachers provide additional opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activities related to science; and
- the effective, collegial leadership of the head of department and the very good use of data to track the pupils' progression in their learning.

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	107	70	65.4%	43
Teachers	27	26	96.2%	14
Support Staff	17	16	94.1%	4

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

1.1 i. School: St Colm's High

School Reference Number: 323-0132 ii.

iii. Age Range: 11-18

Status: Catholic Maintained iv.

Date of Inspection: W/C 31/01/11 ٧. Area of Study: Standard Inspection vi.

1.2 **Intake/Enrolment**

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 8 Intake	76	62	72	80	64
Total enrolment	377	377	400	428	425

1.3 **Attendance**

Year 2009/10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2009/10	NI Average 2008/09
% Attendance	96.5	95.1	94.1	94.8	89.4	97	95.7	95	91

1.4 i. Total Number of

Teachers:

28.07

iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):

0.78

ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher

Ratio):

15.14

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	33	41	40	37	40	11	9	211
Enrolment: Girls	31	39	31	30	40	18	25	214
Enrolment: Total	64	80	71	67	80	29	34	425
PTR	15.90	16.99	16.42	14.42	14.05	12.43	14.57	

1.5 Staying On Rate (2008/09) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Yea	r 13	54.8	NI Av Year 13	N/A
Yea	r 14	53.4	NI Av Year 14	N/A

Leavers' Destinations 1.6

2008/09	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	28		24	
Another School	14%	12.8	0%	N/A
Employment	18%	5.7	8%	N/A
Full-time Further Education	57%	46.6	0%	N/A
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	92%	N/A
Full-time Training	4%	27.5	0%	N/A
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	4%	3.8	0%	N/A
Unknown/Long Term	4%	3.5	0%	N/A
Sick/Pregnant				

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Colm's High School, Draperstown SCHOOL YEAR: 2010/2011

GCSE	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	98.55	100	100
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	79.71	86.89	75.86
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	53.62	49.18	46.55
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	98.55	95.08	94.83
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	72.22	82.61	79.49
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	100	100	100

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing the GCSE and subject results over the previous three years ending in 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	Additional Mathematics* Business Studies Double Award Science 1st Subject English French* Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Motor Vehicle Studies Music* Office Technology Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies	Geography Mathematics	Art and Design* Irish*		
GCSE A*-E	Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Single Award Science	Additional Mathematics* Business Studies English French* Music* Office Technology	Double Award Science 1st Subject Geography Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Religious Studies Sport (PE) Studies	Art and Design * Irish*	
GCE A*-C		Geography	Biology Religious Studies		

^{*} Denotes subjects which had a total entry of less than 30 pupils over 3 years.

NOTE: GCE A* grade applies from 2010.

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			Additional Mathematics Art and Design Information Technology Music	Double Award Science 1st Subject Home Economics Child Development Irish	Business Studies English French Geography 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 1st Subject	Additional Mathematics Art and Design English French Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Irish Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Music Office Technology Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies	Business Studies Geography Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies		
GCE A*-C		Geography Religious Studies	Biology		

NOTE: GCE A* grade applies from 2010.

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OTHER RESULTS

GNVQ

Subject	2008		2009		2010		Total entry
	%A*-C	%A*-E	%A*-C	%A*-E	%A*-C	%A*-E	over 3 years
Construction and Built Environment	100	100	82.3	94.1	61.9	85.7	47
Hospitality and Catering	100	100	100	100			38
Performing Arts			80	100	75	91.6	22

Applied General Certificate of Education A Level

Subject	2008		2009		2010		Total entry
	%A*-C	%A*-E	%A*-C	%A*-E	%A*-C	%A*-E	over 3 years
Health & Social Care	100	100	100	100	97.14	100	67
Information Technology	92.8	100	88.9	100	91.7	100	35
Business	100	100	100	100	100	100	54

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