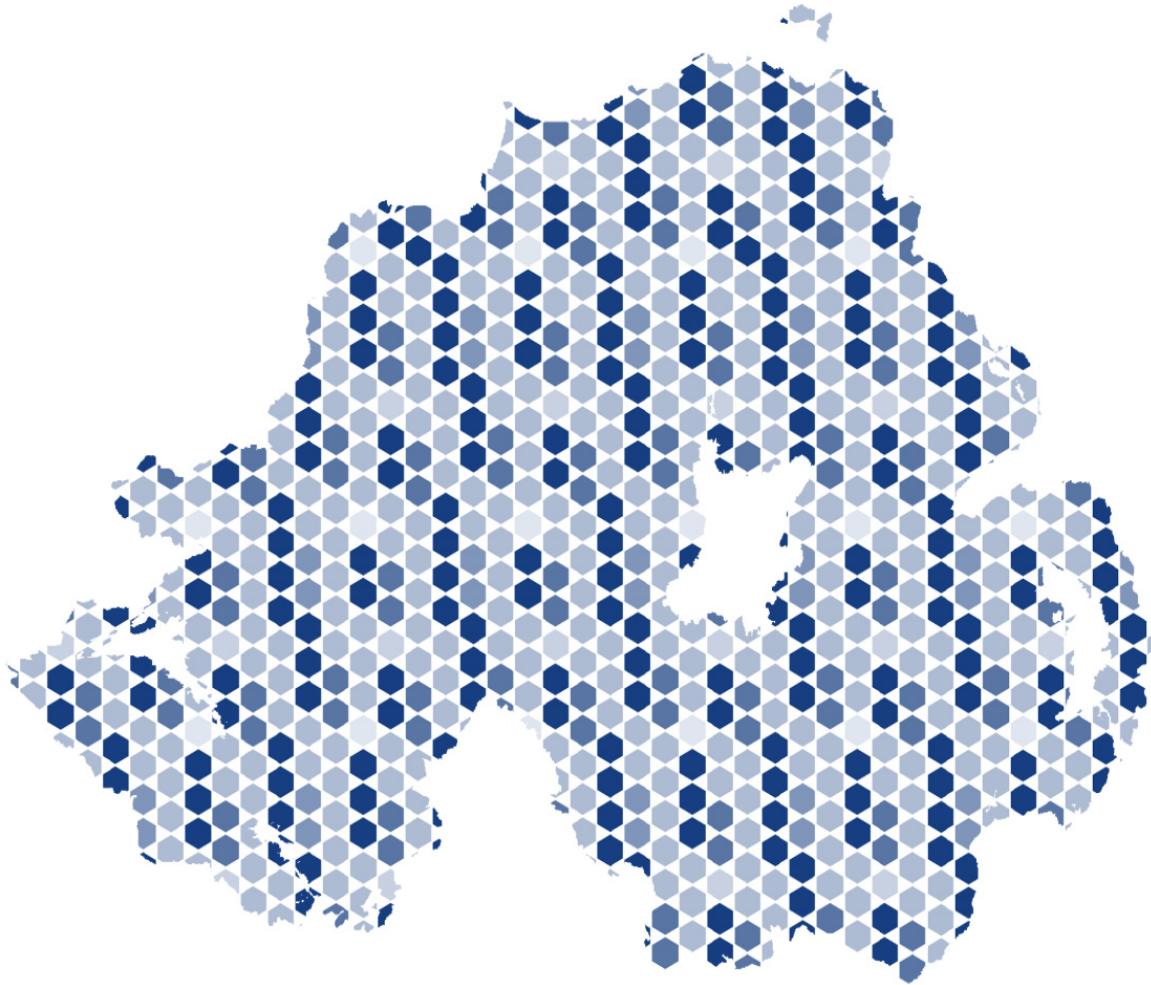


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Eugene's High School,
Castlederg

Report of an Inspection
in March 2011

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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 Eugene's High School is situated in Castlederg, County Tyrone, and is a maintained non-selective co-educational school providing education for 11-16 year-olds. The current enrolment figure is 127, following a 37% decline in the year 8 intake in September 2010. The pupils are drawn from the town of Castlederg and the surrounding rural area within a radius of approximately ten miles. Approximately 54% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and 22 (17%) of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN), with eight of those having specific statements of needs. In addition, there are seven newcomer pupils. The school has 13 teachers, including the Principal.

At the time of the inspection, the school was waiting for the publication of the report of the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education Post-Primary Review for the West Tyrone area, which will outline details for the long-term future of all Maintained schools in the area. The school reports that the decline in the year 8 intake occurred because the Post-Primary Review consultation process had resulted in parents being unclear about the long-term future of the school.

The school was last formally inspected in February 2003, when it had a focused inspection in Modern Languages.

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 and mathematics; 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; and, progress towards the Entitlement Framework (EF) and the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). The views of the pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and governors were sought and are included in the inspection report.

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, teaching and learning, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed if the needs of all the pupils are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

¹The 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>

2.1 The main strengths of the school include:

- the very good behaviour of the pupils and their positive disposition towards learning;
- the hard-working and committed teachers;
- the willingness of teachers to take on teaching responsibilities in a variety of subjects;
- the quality of teaching, most of which was good, very good or outstanding;
- the standards achieved by the pupils in Business Studies, Technology and Design, Business and Communication Systems and Single Award Science; and
- the very good quality of provision in mathematics for all of the pupils.

2.2 The main areas for improvement are the need:

- to address urgently the underachievement of pupils in Art and Design, English, Learning for Life and Work, Motor Vehicle Studies and Sports Studies; and
- for the senior management team to lead and manage in a more coherent and strategic way in order to improve the curricular provision and outcomes for 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

3.1 The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teachers and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives of the Board of Governors (governors) and groups of pupils from years 8, 10, and 12².

3.2 The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that the parents regard highly the work of the school and the friendly and caring ethos. A few parents praised the care and support provided for their children who have special educational needs, particularly mentioning the progress they had made.

3.3 The teachers and support staff acknowledged that there are ample opportunities for staff discussion about identifying and achieving the school priorities, they enjoy working in the school, they have benefited from staff development in recent years and the management promotes their welfare and the care and well-being of the pupils.

3.4 A minority of the staff raised concerns about the lack of opportunities for the pupils to contribute effectively to the decision making process of the school.

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

3.5 The governors expressed their appreciation of the work of the Principal and staff, particularly in regard to the efforts the staff make in welcoming and supporting new pupils who transfer from other post-primary schools. They reported that they were kept well-informed of the work of the school and the standards achieved by the pupils.

3.6 The governors expressed their concern that the delay in the publication of the Post-Primary Review report was putting extra pressure on the teaching staff and making it very difficult for the Principal and governors to plan for the future.

3.7 The pupils talked about the friendly and supportive teachers, and they reported that they are aware of what to do if they have a concern about their safety or well-being and that they feel safe and secure in the school.

3.8 The Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the very few areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4.1 ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

Overall the attainments and standards achieved by the pupils are satisfactory.

The pupils are motivated and co-operate well with their teachers and their peers, and are positively disposed towards all aspects of their learning. When given the opportunity, for example in mathematics, they work independently and contribute to the organisation of their learning.

In 2010, almost all of the pupils in year 12 were entered for five or more subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level with approximately one-half achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or their equivalent). While this proportion is below the average for all non-selective schools in Northern Ireland (NI), it is on the average for similar schools in the same free school meals band. There is, however, a downward trend over the last three years. When English and mathematics are included in the group of five subjects, the school's figure in 2010 is just above the average for similar schools, although a similar downward trend occurred over the last three years.

In a majority of subjects, the standards achieved at A*-C are within or above five percentage points of the corresponding NI three-year averages. In a significant minority of subjects, including English, the three-year average is more than ten percentage points below the NI average. Each year over half of the pupils take Occupational Studies; approximately one-half of these pupils achieve the equivalent of GCSE grades A* to C.

The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning, particularly in the classes where the teachers have high expectations and the teaching is most effective. The pupils with special educational needs are entered for GCSE examinations along with their peers and achieve well.

More information about the results achieved in public examinations is given in Appendices 3 and 4.

4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.2.1 QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

In the most effective practice, the teachers had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve; they used effective questioning which encouraged and enabled the pupils to make full responses; they planned the lessons well, building on the pupils' previous learning, using a variety of activities to engage and interest the pupils, and modelling the activities with a clear emphasis on the intended skills to be acquired and learning to take place; and they made explicit the connections with other aspects of the subject.

In the less effective practice, the teaching was over-directed by the teacher; there was a lack of pace and challenge; and the pupils were too passive. On occasions, there was too great an emphasis, in both the planning and the teaching, on the pupils completing the activity, rather than on developing their knowledge, understanding and skills.

In order to improve the pupils' confidence and levels of independence, the teachers need to provide greater opportunities for the pupils to take more responsibility for their learning and develop competence in oral communication.

The quality of provision for those pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are individual educational plans (IEPs) in place and the pupil's progress is reviewed every term. There is a need to make the individual targets within the IEPs more specific and to review how they can be used more effectively to inform planning for learning.

4.2.2 CURRICULUM PROVISION

The small size of the school and the low levels of collaboration at key stage (KS) 4 prevent it from providing a sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum for all the pupils.

While the school provides an initial choice from 21 subjects for KS4 pupils, it cannot support a curriculum comprising more than 14 subjects. The subjects taken include Occupational Studies, which is provided through collaboration with the South West College at Omagh. The school needs to review the range of accredited subjects available at KS4 and develop collaboration with other schools to enable pupils to make better informed career decisions which are matched well to their ability and aspirations.

The Principal demonstrates satisfactory commitment to the rationale which underpins the aims of the EF: he attends meetings of the Derg Mourne Learning Community (DMLC) and the implementation of the EF is a priority within the school development plan (SDP).

Appropriately, developing community links is a priority in the SDP and the school has developed good community and school links through, for example, the Churchtown Community Association and the Extended Schools Initiative.

4.2.3 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. The head of pastoral care is committed and dedicated to the welfare of the pupils and leads effectively the pastoral team. There is a caring and supportive ethos and the excellent working relationships between all the staff and the pupils are built on the strong mutual respect of

one another. The teachers provide extra-curricular activities and opportunities for pupils to enjoy a good range of sporting, social and cultural experiences. The pupils feel valued and their good behaviour, attendance and hard-work are celebrated by the whole-school community through an effective reward system.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion and cultural diversity, and provides a very good inclusive and supportive learning environment for all of the pupils. There is a strong emphasis placed on the support and retention of vulnerable pupils in the school and there are very effective links with a range of support services to address the individual needs of these pupils. The school needs to put in place arrangements to monitor the pastoral care and educational provision of the few pupils who are currently in alternative education provision offsite and ensure they are visited by staff on a regular basis.

There are currently seven pupils who have English as an additional language from four different countries. The school provides very good support for the newcomer pupils and has put in place measures to make them feel welcome and included.

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 relevant Department of Education (DE).

4.2.5 CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

At the time of the inspection, the head of Careers, who is solely responsible for the careers provision, was absent. The evidence available indicates that she manages the provision effectively: she regularly attends the DMLC Careers sub-group, has led professional development for the staff in CEAIG, including aspects relating to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), and has identified a number of appropriate areas for development, including increasing the opportunities for the pupils to receive advice and guidance. The pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the world of work and of the range of education, training and employment opportunities available to them.

4.3 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory

Since being appointed in September 2005, the Principal has overseen considerable changes to the staffing of the school, managed the finances so that the school's budget is now in surplus, stabilised a long-term steady decline in enrolment until this current year, managed and empowered staff to take on the teaching of subjects other than their specialism, and developed good working relationships at all levels. This year a new extended senior management team (SMT) has been formed and meets weekly. The team needs to review its purpose with regard to planning, monitoring and evaluating all aspects of curricular provision in order to provide greater strategic and coherent leadership focused on improving the standards and achievement of the pupils.

The school has a development plan which complies with the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. The quality of the associated action plans is varied; they generally need to be more specific and include measurable targets, including the use of benchmark performance statistics when appropriate. In addition, the procedures through which the priorities are identified and the progress against the targets is reviewed are too narrow; for example, more formal arrangements for consulting with parents are needed and the annual review needs to involve the teachers and governors in a more rigorous way.

The Principal, vice-Principal and SMT know the school well and they use the analysis of performance data effectively to inform their deliberations. Appropriately, raising achievement in literacy has been identified as a school priority and the SDP includes action plans relating to this at KS3 and KS4. Monitoring and evaluation is, however, predominantly informal in nature and needs to focus on improving the teaching and learning and the outcomes for the pupils.

Almost all of the teachers hold positions of responsibility, with many holding more than one. They carry out their duties conscientiously and, through an annual report and follow-up interviews, they keep the Principal informed about their areas of responsibility. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has recognised the need to record SEN assessment data more efficiently and to monitor more closely the effectiveness of support strategies.

5. CONCLUSION

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, teaching and learning, and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the pupils are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

It will be important that the employing authority, school 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 children and the staff.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

English

The quality of the provision for English is satisfactory.

The strengths of the work include:

- the good working relationships which exist in all of the classes;
- the willingness of many of the pupils to engage in learning;
- the schemes of work and key stage overviews created by the head of department;
- the department's self-evaluation which identifies appropriate areas for development particularly with regard to promoting the pupils' oral skills; and
- the quality of teaching observed, which was mostly good.

The areas for improvement are the urgent need to:

- improve the inadequate standards including those in public examinations; and
- adopt a more strategic approach to bring about improvement in teaching, learning and outcomes.

Mathematics

The quality of the provision for mathematics is very good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the very good standards achieved by most of the pupils across the age and ability range;
- the good or very good teaching and learning in all of the lessons observed;
- the high expectations of the teachers and their ability to make connections within the subject and extend the pupils' learning;
- the very hard-working, enthusiastic and caring teachers who create an ethos of nurture, encouragement and success within their classrooms;
- the pupils' motivation to learn and ability to work well collaboratively during investigational and practical activities; and
- the very good leadership of the head of department and her aspiration that every pupil will enjoy mathematics and succeed at GCSE.

QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	106	29	27%	18
Teachers	13	13	100%	5
Support Staff	8	5	63%	0

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Eugene's High
 ii. School Reference Number: 223-0111
 iii. Age Range: 11-16
 iv. Status: Maintained
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 07/03/11
 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 8 Intake	19	34	30	27	17
Total Enrolment	142	147	146	146	127

1.3 Attendance

Year 2009/10	8	9	10	11	12	Average 2009/10	NI Average 2008/09
% Attendance	93.6	90.9	88.9	84.4	90.4	90	91

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 13 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.754

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 8.615

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	12	14	15	13	10	64
Enrolment: Girls	5	14	14	20	10	63
Enrolment: Total	17	28	29	33	20	127
PTR	9.858	8.292	7.538	12.757	5.913	

1.5 Leavers' Destinations

2008/09	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	26	
Another School	31%	12.8
Employment	0%	5.7
Full-time Further Education	31%	46.6
Full-time Higher Education	38%	N/A
Full-time Training	0%	27.5
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	3.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	-%	3.5

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Eugene's High School,
Castlederg

SCHOOL YEAR: 2010/2011

GCSE	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	61	56	50
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	44	28	24
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	83	80	87

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table 1 showing the GCSE subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2010, in comparison with respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

	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	Technology and Design*	Business and Communication Systems Business Studies* Single Award Science	Double Award Science Home Economics (Child Development)* Mathematics Music* Religious Studies		Art & Design* English Learning for Life and Work Motor Vehicle Studies* Sport (PE) Studies
GCSE A*-E		Music* Single Award Science	Business and Communication Systems Technology and Design* Double Award Science Mathematics Sport (PE) Studies	Business Studies* Home Economics (Child Development)* Religious Studies	Art & Design* English Learning for Life and Work Motor Vehicle Studies*

*Denotes subject which had a total entry of less than 30 over 3 years

NOTE: GCE A* grade applies from 2010.

Table 2 showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1

	100%-96%	95%-86%	85%-76%	75%-66%	65%-0%
GCSE A*-C			Art and Design Music	Double Award Science Home Economics (Child Development)	Business and Communication Systems Business Studies Technology and Design English Learning for Life and Work Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies
GCSE A*-E	Sport (PE) Studies	Art and Design Business and Communication Systems English Home Economics (Child Development) Learning for Life and Work Music Religious Studies Single Award Science	Business Studies Technology and Design Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies		

NOTE: GCE A* grade applies from 2010.

Other Results

Occupational Studies (Double Award)	No of pupils	%A-C (Level 2)	% D-E (Level 1)	% First Skills – Entry Level 3
2008	13	46%	46%	8%
2009	19	53%	37%	5%
2010	17	47%	47%	0%

Occupational Studies (Single Award)	No of pupils	%A-C (Level 2)	% D-E (Level 1)
2008	2	100%	
2009	0		
2010	2	50%	

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