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Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Focused Inspection**

**Fleming Fulton School  
Belfast**

**Inspected: April 2008**

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## STATISTICAL INFORMATION (SPECIAL SCHOOLS)

1.1 i. **School: Fleming Fulton School Belfast**                      iii. **Date of Inspection: W/B 07.04.08**

ii. **School Reference Number: 131-0012**                      iv. **Nature of Inspection: Focused**

1.2

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total Enrolment	154	150	145	143	142

The enrolment for the current year is the figure on the day of notification of inspection. For previous years it is the figure in the annual return to the Department of Education.

1.3 Number of Pupils in Outreach Programme:                      0

1.4 Average Attendance for the Previous School Year: 86.5%

1.5 i. Number of Teachers in School:                      30                      on Outreach Programme: 0  
 (including the Principal and p/t teachers)  
 (f/t equivalent = 25 teaching hours)

ii. PTR (pupil/teacher ratio):                      4.73

iii. Average Class Size:                      7.10

iv. Number of Classroom Assistants:                      32.6

v. Ancillary Support:  
 Number of Hours per week:

Clerical Support:                      122

vi. Percentage of children in receipt of free school meals:                      35%

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Fleming Fulton School is situated on the Upper Malone Road in Belfast and provides education for 142 pupils with physical disability from across Northern Ireland.

1.2 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. One hundred and thirty-eight parental questionnaires were issued and 52 were returned. Of these, 35 parents took the opportunity to submit a written response. Almost all the parents commented on how happy their children were in Fleming Fulton School and felt that the management and staff were friendly and approachable. A few parents raised specific concerns which were discussed with the Principal. Only one member from the Board of Governors (governors) was available to meet with the inspectors. A few issues were raised at this meeting which were then shared with the Principal; these issues should be addressed by the full Board of Governors, and it is important that any actions taken as a result are shared openly with the staff. The pupils, in discussion with the inspection team, indicated their awareness of arrangements to ensure their safety and security in school.

1.3 The focus of the inspection was on the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of the provision for learning, the leadership and management of the school and the arrangements for child protection and pastoral care.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 In this report, standards of achievement are judged in relation to the pupils' previous attainments, their individual abilities and their special educational needs. Fleming Fulton School is a good school where the pupils achieve well in a caring and supportive environment. The pupils are highly motivated, engage eagerly in learning, form strong and lasting friendships with one another, become confident young people and enjoy their experiences in school.

2.2 There is a strong sense of the school as a community, and despite a number of deficiencies in accommodation, the staff provide stimulating experiences which challenge, motivate and engage the pupils. Many achieve well across a range of appropriate accreditation while others demonstrate good skills using assistive technology to communicate and access their learning.

2.3 The school gives excellent attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are effective policies and programmes in place, for example 'Save our Smiles', water provision, Friday café, healthy tuck shop and vending machines, which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2.4 The inspection findings indicate the following achievements and standards:

- the very motivated learners who enjoy school, work hard and achieve well in lessons;
- the confident young people who demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the school;

- the promotion of the pupils' overall health and well-being throughout the school;
- the pupils' growing levels of independence as they progress from class to class;
- the pupils' success in a wide range of appropriate accreditation; and
- the strong attention paid to the pupils' preparation for adult and working life and their awareness of learning pathways and post-school opportunities.

### **3. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

3.1 The teachers are hard-working and committed to developing the pupils' learning experiences across the curriculum; priority is given to developing the confidence, independence and self-esteem of the pupils. The majority of the teaching was consistently good, and of outstanding quality in almost 20% of the lessons seen. Throughout the school the teachers and assistants provide good quality experiences well suited to the individual needs of the pupils.

3.2 There is a broad, relevant curriculum with a strong emphasis on the creative and expressive arts and good quality individual planning and resourcing in the specialist subjects. The school has appropriately identified the need to review the process of individual education planning, in order to ensure greater consistency, regularity and coherence. All the staff, including the classroom assistants and support staff, make an effective contribution towards multi-disciplinary team-work in the school.

3.3 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection has important strengths. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant Department of Education (DE) Circulars and has identified appropriately a few areas for improvement which it is currently implementing. Among the strengths are the very caring and supportive ethos, the skilful contribution made by the support staff to the pupils' well-being and their learning experiences and the counselling service for pupils provided by Contact Youth. The areas for improvement include the need to ensure that all governors complete their training in child protection, to ensure that the Record of Child Abuse Complaints is reviewed annually by the governors, and to review and update the parental information on pastoral care and child protection.

3.4 The main strengths of the quality of provision for learning are:

- the excellent behaviour of the pupils throughout the school and the good quality working relationships evident in the classrooms and during break, lunch and extended school activities;
- the very good quality displays of work celebrating the pupils' achievements and illustrating their experiences, both in school and in the community;
- the consistently good quality of the teaching throughout the school;
- the wide range of teaching methods well matched to the needs of the pupils and the very strong emphasis on practical activities in the lessons;

- the clear focus on the learning outcomes, shared with the pupils;
- the staff's thorough knowledge of the pupils;
- the well planned lessons to meet the pupils' needs;
- the capacity of the staff to provide a wide range of learning opportunities including accredited courses across the curriculum;
- the strong contribution from the classroom assistants and technical support staff;
- the excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance and extend learning across the curriculum and the strong emphasis on using assistive technology to help pupils communicate and learn;
- the pupils' appreciation of, and the benefits gained from, the immediate onsite access to the expert therapy and medical services which enhance their quality of life and contribute effectively and efficiently to their learning and development; and
- the enrichment of school life provided by the strong programme of European links.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

4.1 The Principal provides good leadership, has been instrumental over the years in effectively developing the school and has given long and dedicated service in this highly specialised setting. The Principal and staff, ably supported by the two Vice-principals, share a clear vision for the future development of the school, for example, evident in the work of the Linked Independent Living and Advice Centre (LILAC), which aims to develop the school as a centre of excellence in supporting inclusion.

4.2 The school's process for development and planning has many strengths. There is a developing commitment to action planning and to the monitoring and evaluation of the pupils' attainments and experiences. There are some effective policies and programmes in place, for example, as produced by each department to guide their work, as well as whole-school policies in particular areas such as ICT. The areas for improvement include the need to provide a more thorough costing of action plans. The school has identified in the school development plan the need to promote more effective communication at all levels, including with the parents, the governors and within the senior management team.

4.3 The main strengths of the leadership and management of the school are:

- the leadership shown by the Principal, ably supported by his two Vice-principals, over a long period of service to the school;
- the strong network of national and international links established by the Principal and staff, which inform and enrich the life of the school;

- the commitment shown by the Principal and management to developing the school across a wide range of areas and the good use of external bodies, for example the British Educational and Communications Technology Agency (BECTA) and Investors in People (IIP), to aid the process of self-evaluation and reflection on practice; and
- the strong emphasis on empowering senior staff and co-ordinators to develop their interests and areas of responsibility through effective staff development and resourcing.

## **5. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

5.1 The overall effectiveness of the school shows strengths in many aspects of the areas inspected. The inspection has identified the following strengths:

- the confident and very motivated pupils who enjoy school, work hard and achieve well;
- the wide range of appropriate accreditation and the strong attention paid to preparation for adult and working life;
- the positive ethos, the excellent behaviour of the pupils throughout the school and the good quality working relationships;
- the strong support provided by classroom assistants, technical and ancillary staff;
- the excellent quality of 20% of the lessons seen during the inspection and the consistently good quality of the teaching throughout the school;
- the excellent use of both assistive technology and ICT across the curriculum; and
- the strong and effective leadership of the Principal in empowering staff and developing the school.

## **6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

6.1 The inspection findings indicate that the following areas for improvement need to be addressed for the staff, led by the management team:

- to ensure that all governors complete their training in child protection, that the Record of Child Abuse Complaints is reviewed annually by the governors, and that the parental information on pastoral care and child protection is reviewed and updated;
- to develop and improve the process relating to target setting and the evaluation of the Individual Education Plans to lead to more effective whole school self-evaluation; and

- to develop more effective lines of communication to ensure that important information is shared within the school, and with the parents and governors.

## 7. **CONCLUSION**

7.1 In the areas inspected, the school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified minor areas for improvement which the school has the capacity to address.

The school's progress on the areas for improvement will be followed-up by the District Inspector.

### ACCOMMODATION

- The specialist accommodation for home economics requires refurbishment and does not comply with the relevant DE Building Handbook regulations. The deficiencies in this specialist accommodation need to be re-addressed as a matter of urgency.
- In addition, the accommodation provided in the main school building for LILAC is inadequate for developing the service. The Belfast Education and Library Board should explore with the governors the options open within the school to provide suitable accommodation, including the existing chalets which are due to close in the near future.

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