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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Ballee Community High School
Ballymena**

January 2007

SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (SSP) FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF BALLEE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, BALLYMENA BT42 2HS (321-0233)

The follow-up inspection in January 2006 highlighted a number of strengths including:

- the establishment of four action plan teams to lead on whole-school improvement issues which focus appropriately on raising academic performance;
- an increase in the literacy support which is providing effective assistance for those pupils experiencing difficulties with aspects of their learning;
- the effective leadership of the Principal and the SSP co-ordinator who provide a clear and realistic vision for the school;
- the good support provided by the action plan leaders and their teams, and the progress which they have made so far;
- the greater consistency in the quality of teaching and the growing commitment of the majority of the teachers to reflect on their practice to meet better the individual learning needs of the pupils;
- the improving ethos leading to a more positive climate for learning, which has led to an improvement in the behaviour and attitudes to learning of an increasing number of pupils; and
- the effective use of resources that have been used appropriately to meet the objectives identified in the action plans.

The inspection also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the development of planning at individual teacher level to meet the needs of the ability range building on the progress already evident in the sharing of intended learning outcomes with the pupils;
- the consistent implementation of agreed strategies to promote positive behaviour, and to improve literacy and numeracy;
- the development of middle management to enable them to draw up strategies to monitor and improve teaching and learning in the classroom, and to raise standards in external examinations; and
- the fuller integration of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum to enhance the pupils' learning.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a follow-up inspection on 15-16 January 2007. The inspection team acknowledge that the staff of the school have shown a high level of commitment to the quality of education of the pupils during a very difficult year which saw the death of the Principal. They also acknowledge the good work of the previous Principal in guiding the school through the SSP.

In the interval since the follow-up inspection in 2006, actions which have affected the work of the school have included:

- a further reduction in the number of teaching staff; and
- the appointment of a new Principal.

The following are the most important improvements which have taken place since the inspection in January 2006:

- the consistent and effective use of learning intentions across the curriculum;
- the increasing use of a wider range of strategies and effective tailor-made resources to support the pupils' learning;
- the good behaviour and response of the majority of the pupils and the consistent strategies used to address the challenging behaviour of a minority of the pupils;
- the effective focus on continuing to provide high quality pastoral support for all of the pupils;
- the improvements in the quality of the teaching and learning of mathematics;
- the commitment of the recently appointed Principal and SSP co-ordinator to all aspects of the life and work of the school; and
- the good progress in gathering and recording data to inform better the education plans for those pupils with additional learning needs in literacy.

The areas which require further improvement include the need to address and to raise more consistently:

- the standards in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum; and
- the standards in, and use of, ICT across the curriculum through the co-ordination of an effective training and support programme for the staff.

The Inspectorate will continue to monitor the work of the school to ensure that the improvements which are needed are implemented effectively.

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