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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*



*Providing Inspection Services for*  
**Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

**Belfast Hospital School**

**October 2006**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF BELFAST HOSPITAL SCHOOL, FALLS ROAD, BELFAST, BT12 6BE (131-6560)**

The focused inspection in November 2003 in Belfast Hospital School identified many strengths in aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision. In addition, the report identified shortcomings in some areas of the school's work. The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to ensure that an appropriate and flexible information and communication technology (ICT) provision is developed for the Hospital School and the staff use the potential of e-learning to meet the needs of the pupils;
- to develop an effective management information system, to include appropriate documentation, to ensure that informed decisions can be made on a range of strategic issues; and
- to review the work of the senior management team (SMT) which is constrained by the current arrangements affecting the decision-making process; it would be important for the SMT to work together, more effectively as a team, towards agreed and common goals. The Principal should endeavour further to secure the full support of all of the team in implementing agreed goals.

In the interval since the focused inspection, the following action which affects the work of the school has taken place.

- the school now has access to good quality ICT provision and the recently appointed ICT co-ordinator and teachers have made significant improvements to the provision for the pupils;
- a more effective management information system is now available and is in the early stages of use to inform strategic planning; and
- provision in the Young People's Centre has moved to Knockbracken Healthcare Park and provision has been opened in the Belfast City Hospital.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a follow-up inspection on 25 October 2006.

The following are the most important improvements which have been implemented since the inspection.

- The teachers continue to have a high level of commitment and there is good quality teaching in the wards and in home tuition.
- The pupils continue to respond very positively to the one-to-one teaching in the wards and classrooms; they benefit socially and emotionally from the good quality pastoral care and child protection.

- The teachers are meticulous in their planning and preparation and are sensitive in dealing with the pupils' medical needs.
- A significant range of staff development opportunities have been undertaken to meet the needs of a very diverse cohort of pupils.
- There has been significant movement in the use of ICT with very innovative use of Classroom 2000 facilities, including links with other special schools and the excellent work of the teacher co-ordinator and team.
- A more effective ICT based management information system is now available to management and is in the early stages of use to inform strategic planning.

The following area for development has not been addressed:

- the need to review the work of the SMT which is constrained by the current arrangements affecting the decision-making process; it would be important for the SMT to work together, more effectively as a team, towards agreed and common goals. The Principal should endeavour further to secure the full support of all of the team in implementing agreed goals.

This issue has not been dealt with effectively by the Principal and the SMT. It is important that the Board of Governors, Principal and the SMT, supported by the Belfast Education and Library Board, work together to improve working relationships.

Belfast Hospital School has made good progress in addressing some of the areas for improvement. The Inspectorate will carry out another follow-up inspection in one years time to ensure that the improvements which are necessary are implemented.

**ACCOMMODATION ISSUES**

- The school has had major disruption to the accommodation in the Musgrave Park Hospital and planned changes will be detrimental to the quality of provision available to pupils.

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