



Providing Inspection Services for

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



## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

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

**Coleraine College**

**March 2016**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF COLERAINE COLLEGE (321 0300)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out an inspection<sup>1</sup> of Coleraine College in March 2014, when the quality of education was evaluated as satisfactory<sup>2</sup>.

The report highlighted strengths in pastoral care, community and external links, aspects of leadership and management and careers education. Two main areas for improvement were identified:

- improve the quality of learning and teaching in order to raise the standards and outcomes for all pupils; and
- plan for, monitor and review the provision more strategically and meticulously, in order to create consistency in the quality of leadership and management.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in November 2015 and the follow-up inspection took place on 14 March 2016. In the interval since the inspection, the principal and chair of the board of governors reported that the school had received, and were content with, appropriate support from the then curriculum advisory and support service for the region in a range of areas, including English, mathematics, middle management training, using data effectively and school development planning.

In the interval since the original inspection, the following changes and actions which affect the work of the school have taken place:

- the pupil enrolment has fallen from 244 to 221;
- the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has continued to increase, rising from 43% to 52%;
- the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs continues to rise over recent years and is now just over 50%;
- a new principal was appointed in May 2015;
- the board of governors was re-constituted in August 2015 with eight new governors;
- a management re-structuring is currently underway; and
- the number of full-time teachers has fallen from 24 to 21.

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<sup>1</sup> See inspection report at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2014/post-primary-inspection-coleraine-college.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as satisfactory will now be reported as having important areas for improvement.

## Key findings

- The school is addressing the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. Key improvements have been effected through revised leadership and management practices, which prioritise learning and teaching as a key driver to raising pupil outcomes, led well by the newly appointed principal, and the senior leadership team. The school development plan and associated post-inspection action plans, including the target monitoring documents, are more robust, evaluative and fit-for-purpose.
- More rigorous monitoring and evaluation practices have been introduced, including pupil pursuits, lesson observations and oversight of teacher planning and the standards of the pupils' work. In addition, the learning and teaching policy was reviewed and revised, alongside the investment of significant professional development to focus on learning and teaching and on up-skilling teachers in the use of data to better inform learning strategies to meet the need of all of the pupils.
- Planning, learning, teaching and assessment have improved with just over 75% of the observed lessons evaluated as good or better, compared with around 67% of the lessons observed at the time of the original inspection.
- The outcomes for pupils have improved at some GCSE level benchmarks. The percentage of pupils attaining five GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics has risen from 21% to 36%, which is around the average for similar schools. More needs to be done, however, to improve the outcomes for those pupils who are entitled to free school meals, whose outcomes in 2015 are too low.
- The pupils attain very good outcomes in an increasingly wide range of applied and vocational courses at level 2, which meet better the academic needs for many of them and allow sound opportunities for further progression. The post-16 curriculum, however, remains too narrow and this needs to be reviewed with some urgency given the limited options for these pupils.
- The outcomes for pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to C, or equivalent, have risen slightly and the school has increased the percentage of pupils who are progressing to higher education and further education.
- While pupil achievement has risen against some benchmarks and is no longer inadequate, the overall level of attainment by the pupils remains an important area for improvement. While it is acknowledged that outcomes in English and mathematics have improved in recent years, there is a longer-term decline in science outcomes at GCSE level which needs to be improved as a matter of urgency.
- There are significant improvements in the quality of provision for English, including an important focus on talking for learning and extended writing across the school. It is important that this work is embedded further in the learning experiences of all of the pupils, and in particular at key stage 3. The standards attained by the pupils in GCSE English at grades A\* to C have more than doubled from 17.9% in 2013 to 43.6% in 2015, and it is very important that these outcomes are sustained.

- The quality of the provision for mathematics has also improved. In the most effective lessons, teachers use a variety of effective learning and teaching strategies. Since the original inspection, the standards attained by the pupils at GCSE grades A\* to C in mathematics have declined slightly to 41% and are now just below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. It is important that the department builds upon recent successes in pupil outcomes and sustains and builds upon this.
- There have been important changes to the leadership of the school, including the on-going revision of the management structure and the building of staff capacity, which are helping the school to re-focus on improving learning and teaching. While management processes are more formalised, the school acknowledges that there remains too much variation in the effectiveness of middle leadership and this remains an important area for improvement.
- The school is beginning to use quantitative data more effectively to track pupil progress in order to identify learning issues and to intervene appropriately. Going forward, there is more work to be done around understanding and measuring value-added, which will identify and reflect more accurately the progression and performance of the pupils, in line with their ability.
- While improvements have been noted in leadership and management processes, the leadership needs to address any outstanding variations in the effectiveness of key aspects of the provision and ensure there is greater consistency in the quality of the learning and teaching. There is a strong need to increase the pace of change now that the new principal and governors are established in their positions.

## **Conclusion**

The school needs to address important areas for improvement in the interests of all of the learners. The follow-up inspection has identified the following important areas for improvement:

- to increase the pace of the improvement work, in order to improve further the quality of leadership and management at all levels and its impact on pupil experiences, outputs and performance outcomes; and
- to improve the consistency in the quality and effectiveness of the learning and teaching, in order to raise further the standards pupils attain in public examinations and to sustain the improvements noted in this report.

The school continues to face significant challenges and it remains important that the Department of Education, the employing authority, governors and staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school's provision and budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. The ETI will conduct a further follow up inspection in 12-18 months.

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