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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

Drumcree College
Portadown

January 2007

SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (SSP) FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF DRUMCREE COLLEGE, PORTADOWN, BT62 1QL (523-0256)

The SSP follow-up inspection in January 2006, highlighted the following strengths: the establishment of a new senior management team, the development of school improvement management structures, the involvement of parents and the wider community to support and promote the work of the college, the support of learning mentors to engage with identified underachievers, the dissemination of the existing good practice in the college, the introduction of classroom observation to monitor the use of information and communication technology (ICT), the improved pupil attendance, and the increased use of external and internal data to influence teaching and learning.

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

- to review the current development work of the school to ensure a clear focus on improving classroom practice; and
- to evaluate the impact of curriculum and pastoral development to ensure coherence and relevance for the pupils.

In the interval since the inspection, the following action, which affects the work of the college has taken place:

- the retirement of the Principal after a long-term illness;
- the short-term secondment of an acting Principal and the subsequent recent appointment of a new Principal;
- the reorganisation of some of the curricular roles and responsibilities of the senior management team, co-ordinators and other members of staff;
- the decline in enrolment from 358 pupils to 345 pupils;
- the reduction in staffing from 28 teachers to 26 teachers;
- the increase in the number of pupils with English as an Additional Language; and
- the removal of the Pupil Progress Lesson at the end of the college day.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a follow-up inspection on January 2007. As part of the follow-up inspection process, the college conducted its own self-evaluation of the progress in the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. However, due to the changes in leadership and management since the previous inspection, the college was unable to address fully the areas for improvement.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the previous inspection:

- the initial assessment of year 8 pupils' ICT skills on transferring from primary school;
- the review of school improvement management structures; and
- the development of pupil access to appropriate vocational programmes at key stage 4 and post-16.

The areas which need further improvement are:

- to monitor the effectiveness of curricular and pastoral strategies, to ensure a clear focus on improving classroom practice and the pupils' attainment across the curriculum; and
- to consolidate and develop the roles of the middle management and senior management teams to promote assessment for learning.

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

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