



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Dundonald High School
Belfast**

March 2009

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF DUNDONALD HIGH SCHOOL, BELFAST, CO ANTRIM, BT16 1TH (421-0262)

The standard inspection in March 2007 highlighted strengths including the hard-working teachers, the good quality of the pastoral support provided for the pupils, the good behaviour and positive response from most of the pupils and the quality of provision in the Moderate Learning Difficulties unit. In the following key areas, the inspection identified the need to:

- improve substantially the standards expected and achieved across the school, including the performance in public examinations in nearly all of the subject departments;
- improve the strategic leadership and management, in particular focusing more effectively on improving standards of achievement, a sense of common purpose at all levels, and the degree of collegiality within the school; and
- ensure the school development planning complies more fully with the Department of Education (DE) (School Development Plans) regulations (Northern Ireland) of 2005, including the more effective use of performance data and first-hand evidence gained from monitoring, to set targets and improve further the outcomes for the pupils.

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

- the appointment of a new Principal in September 2008;
- the re-structuring of the senior leadership team (SLT);
- the relocation and refurbishment of the home economics and the art departments;
- the use of a questionnaire survey under the previous Principalship to evaluate the introduction of learning intentions and success criteria;
- the effective support from Curriculum Advisory and Support Service officers from the South Eastern Education and Library Board ;
- the use of an attitudinal survey to gain the views of the staff; and
- the increase from 10%, in 2006 to 15% in 2008, in the percentage of pupils gaining grades A*-C in five or more subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection on 20 and 21 March 2009 and four monitoring visits in the interim period.

The action plan produced by the school in response to the inspection findings was of a very good quality and was adjusted appropriately in light of feedback given by the Inspectorate during the monitoring visits.

The school's development plan (SDP) has been adjusted in light of the inspection findings. The SDP meets the statutory requirements as set out by DE.

Satisfactory progress has been made in the some of the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection; however, there is undue variation in the standards achieved by the pupils across the subjects; the majority of subjects are more than ten percentage points below the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools.

The following are important improvements since the standard inspection:

- the restructuring and expansion of the mentoring programme for pupils;
- the introduction of revision classes together with departmental summary booklets;
- the increase in parental involvement;
- the improved working relationships between the SLT and staff;
- the introduction of a reading partnership programme;
- the introduction into Year 8 of a pilot programme of linguistic phonics;
- the good or better quality of the majority of the teaching in the lessons observed; and
- the overall improvement in discipline including a review of the School's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Since the inspection, the school evaluated the progress made in the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection. The Inspectorate recommends that the processes for self-evaluation are developed to focus more strongly on self-evaluation as a means to bring about improvement.

Important areas still remain for improvement:

- the need to build on the improvement in standards expected and achieved across the school, including the performance in public examinations;
- as identified in the SDP, the need for management at all levels to make more effective use of performance data and evidence gained from monitoring to set targets and improve further the outcomes for the pupils; and
- the need to improve the attendance record for all years.

In some of the areas inspected the quality of education provided by this organisation is satisfactory; however, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in five or more subjects including English and mathematics at GCSE remains inadequate.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the remaining area for improvement

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