



*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**



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Fivemiletown College
County Tyrone**

October 2015

FOLLOW-UP TO THE POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION OF FIVEMILETOWN COLLEGE, COUNTY TYRONE, BT75 0SB (521-0097)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection¹ of Fivemiletown College in November 2013, when the quality of education was evaluated as satisfactory². The main areas for improvement were the need:

- to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, notably at key stage (KS) 3, as the school identified in its School Development Plan; the inspection endorsed the urgency of this priority;
- for the senior leadership team (SLT) and governors to establish clear channels of communication and consultation at all levels in order to distribute leadership appropriately and support school improvement more effectively; and
- to develop the role of the school council to provide a meaningful forum for pupils to participate actively in the life and work of the school.

The school's action plans took appropriate account of the areas for improvement and were of a good quality. The school reports that it has received effective support from a range of external services, including the Education Authority.

The ETI carried out two interim follow-up visits during 2014/15, with a follow-up inspection in October 2015.

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

- the school's enrolment has decreased from 444 pupils at the time of the original inspection to 396;
- the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased by six percentage points to just under 20%;
- a number of working groups have been established to take forward the areas requiring improvement;
- the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs has increased by five percentage points to just over 30%;
- the number of full-time equivalent teaching staff has reduced to 24.5.

Key Findings

- A school council has been established which is making good progress and has begun to enhance the pupils' voice in the school.

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

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

- In 2015, the standards attained by the small number of pupils taking GCE A level or equivalent qualifications increased.
- Over the past three years, the standard in public examinations attained by the pupils at the end of key stage 4 has declined. It is a concern that this was not identified by the senior leaders or governors in the school.
- The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE examinations or equivalents at grades A* to C has decreased from 75.4% at the time of the original inspection to 67.7%. There has been a similar decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, from 47.8% to 43.6%. As a result, the school is now performing below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools.
- There is commitment and involvement of almost all staff in appropriate working groups, to take forward the areas for improvement identified both in the original inspection and through the subsequent review of responses to staff and parental questionnaires.
- The good leadership demonstrated by some middle managers and members of the senior leadership team, of a range of action plans through which progress on planned actions is being monitored.
- Appropriately, the school has begun a review of the curriculum, including collaborative links with another school and the local regional further education college, to ensure it is more relevant and better meets the needs, interests and career aspirations of all of the pupils. It is important that this work is built upon.
- Of particular concern is the increasing differential in the performance of boys and girls at all levels in the school in public examinations. Over the past three years, while the performance of boys has declined sharply, this has not been identified or acted upon by the senior leaders in the school. In 2015, for example, only 33% of the boys achieved five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A* to C, which is 25 percentage points below the girls. In the same year, the gap between boys and girls for any five GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A* to C was unacceptably high at 35 percentage points.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils taking GCSE or equivalent qualifications in at least five subjects has decreased from 100% to 87.1%, which needs to be reviewed. Over the same period, the standards attained at GCSE level or equivalent for pupils entitled to free school meals also dropped to significantly below the NI average for similar schools.
- The percentage of pupils attaining three GCE A levels at grade A* - C has increased by 20 percentage points from the original inspection, and the school is now performing above the NI average for similar schools. The number of pupils taking some of the subjects at post-16 is too small and the curriculum choice is too narrow.
- The facilitation of small pupil numbers in too many of the post-16 subjects is resulting in overly high levels of class contact time for teachers and middle and senior leaders.
- The number of pupils leaving school to go on to higher education has halved while the numbers going into further education has tripled.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the follow-up inspection, the school's arrangements for safeguarding young people are unsatisfactory and do not adequately reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In particular, the school needs to:
 - progress with greater urgency its on-going work in revising and updating the safeguarding, child protection and pastoral care policies and procedures;
 - consistently promote positive behaviour through a more effective range of strategies and appropriate reward systems;
 - update and develop further its anti-bullying policy, aligned with an updated positive behaviour management policy;
 - enhance the staff code of conduct in line with the updated policies and procedures; and
 - amend and adjust the personal development curriculum to support the greater development of more positive relationships and a shared understanding of mutual respect amongst pupils and between staff and pupils.

The ETI will monitor progress within *six working weeks* to ensure that appropriate actions to address the important safeguarding issues identified are significantly in hand.

Overall Effectiveness

The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

The follow-up inspection has identified the following significant areas for improvement:

- the need to update policies and personal development programmes related to the care and safeguarding of young people;
- the strategic leadership of the school at the highest level, including clearer and more effective lines of communication;
- more effective evaluation by the senior leaders of the impact of the work done to effect improvement;
- to raise the standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations and in particular to address the declining standards attained by boys and those pupils entitled to free school meals;
- more effective use of the available data to inform the school's development planning and target-setting; and
- to bring coherence to the school development planning³, departmental development planning and the associated action planning processes.

³ The school development plan does not meet the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, and in particular the unviable sixth form provision, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The ETI will carry out a further follow-up inspection within 12-18 months and a report will be published.

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