



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**

**Foyle College  
Londonderry**

**December 2015**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF FOYLE COLLEGE, LONDONDERRY (242-0229)**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Foyle College<sup>1</sup> in November 2013, when the quality of education was evaluated as satisfactory<sup>2</sup>.

The main areas for improvement were:

- to continue to develop delegated and shared responsibility and accountability for improvement across the full senior and middle management teams in order to build more consistently on the improving standards;
- for all teachers to share widely the most effective approaches in planning, teaching, assessment and learning to provide, more consistently, teaching which has a greater degree of challenge, and learning that is matched more appropriately to the abilities of all of the pupils; and
- to review the design, development and provision of the curriculum and the associated careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) to improve choice and provide more appropriate pathways for all of the pupils.

The school's action plan in response to the inspection took sufficient account of the areas for improvement and informed appropriately the school development plan. The school reports that it has received effective support from the education authority.

Two interim follow-up visits were completed in October 2014 and March 2015 and the follow-up inspection took place in December 2015.

As part of the follow-up inspection, there was an opportunity for parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire. Five percent of parents (36) responded to the online questionnaire, with 11 of them providing additional written comments. A majority of the parents commented positively on: the high quality of the pastoral care provided by staff; the leadership of the school; and the regular reporting on the progress their child was making. Forty percent of the staff (46) responded; their feedback was also positive and they agreed or strongly agreed with almost all of the aspects of the work of the school surveyed. The small number of concerns raised about aspects of the provision were discussed (maintaining the confidentiality of the respondents) with the principal.

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

- pupil enrolment has decreased from 854 pupils at the time of the original inspection to 821;
- the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased from 10.5% to 18.5%;
- the number of pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register has decreased from 229 to 108;
- seven new governors have taken up post;

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<sup>1</sup> The original inspection report can be accessed at: <http://www.eti.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-post-primary/inspection-reports-post-primary-2014/post-primary-inspection-foyle-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.

- the curriculum has been revised at key stage (KS) 4 and post-16 to include more vocational and applied subjects and the number of pupils availing of courses offered within the Foyle Area Learning Community has increased; and
- the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team (SMT) have been reviewed and revised to support the school's improvement agenda.

## Key Findings

- The school has worked strategically, and to good effect, to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. The SMT and staff have developed a more collegial approach to whole-school improvement and have been largely successful in improving the overall achievements and standards of the pupils, particularly at post-16. The members of the SMT provide appropriate support and challenge to all staff.
- The SMT has established clusters of working groups which facilitate well the dissemination of good practice in learning and teaching and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school. Effective systems are now in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision for learning.
- The role of the middle leaders has been strengthened and, appropriately, they now play a key role in the school's processes for monitoring, evaluation and review. As a result, the action planning processes are more rigorous, with academic and pastoral data being used more effectively to set baselines for pupil attainment, inform the nature of support, monitor the progress in learning being made by individual pupils and provide useful information to the pupils on how to further improve their work. This information is shared on a regular basis with parents.
- The quality of the planning, learning, teaching and assessment has improved since the original inspection. Almost all of the lessons observed during the follow-up inspection were effective (good or better), with over one-third of them being very good.
- The individual education plans (IEP) for the pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning guide very well the work of the subject teachers. The regular, meaningful involvement of the pupils in the evaluation and review of the appropriateness of the targets within the IEP provides an effective means by which the school can assess how well the provision is meeting the learning needs of each individual pupil.
- The quality of the provision for science has improved. The main improvements include: the significant review and development of planning for learning, in particular at KS 4, to identify high quality learning opportunities, effective teaching strategies and to ensure steady progression in the pupils' acquisition of science skills, knowledge and understanding; the more active engagement of the pupils in their learning; more regular assessment of the pupils' knowledge and understanding; and the effective use of assessment data which informs well the nature of the support provided for pupils identified as being at risk of underachieving.

- The school has reviewed and changed the curriculum and associated CEIAG to improve choice and provide more appropriate curriculum pathways for the pupils. The pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the options open to them including opportunities provided through vocational pathways. Not all pupils, however, make sufficient use of the range of careers information in school to inform their personal career planning. As a result, there is a need for the senior managers to improve further the coherence of the CEIAG programme to ensure that the pupils' needs are addressed more effectively at the key transition points.
- While there has been a decrease in the percentage of pupils attaining seven or more GCSEs or equivalent examinations, including English and mathematics, at grades A\* to C, the school has demonstrated the capacity to bring about improvement with regard to the number of individual subjects at GCSE level whose three-year average is now above the corresponding NI average. Approximately one-half of the individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A\* to B and approximately two-thirds of individual subjects at GCE A level at grades A\* to C are now above the three-year NI average. To support the raising of the pupils' attainment at the end of KS 4, it is important for the SMT to monitor more closely the appropriateness of the pupils' subject choices and to match the number, type and level of the courses on offer with the needs, ability and aspirations of all of the pupils.
- At the time of the original inspection the percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A level examinations at grades A\* to C was below the NI average; the school had identified correctly that this was a top priority for improvement. The percentage of pupils achieving three or more A level examinations at grades A\* to C has increased significantly by eleven percentage points to 80%, and is now above the corresponding NI average for similar schools.

### **Overall Effectiveness**

The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvements in the interest of all the learners. The follow-up inspection has identified the following area for improvement:

- the need to raise further, and consistently across the subjects, the standards attained by the pupils at the end of KS 4.

The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

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