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**Department of Education  
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

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

**Newry and Kilkeel Institute  
of Further and Higher Education**

**December 2006**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE AREA INSPECTION OF NEWRY AND KILKEEL INSTITUTE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

In March 2005 the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out an inspection of Newry and Kilkeel Institute of Further and Higher Education (Institute) as part of a pilot of the new model of inspection which was designed to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of education and training across the greater Newry area in meeting the needs of learners, employers and the community. As part of the pilot, a number of local schools, both selective and non-selective, were also inspected. The inspection in the Institute focused on the provision for students on their first or second year of a full-time post-16 course in a number of vocational areas across the Institute. It also focused on the provision by the Institute for pupils under the Key Stage 4 Flexibility Initiative (now included within the Vocational Enhancement Programme).

The original inspection identified that the quality of post-16 education and the links established with partnership schools, had many strengths. These strengths included the quality of the provision for school pupils under the Key Stage 4 Flexibility Initiative and Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP), the good or excellent quality of the learning and teaching in the majority of curriculum areas, the quality of support provided for students with particular learning difficulties or disabilities and the standards achieved by the students including their ability use their initiative, to plan and manage their work and to work effectively with others. The report also highlighted areas for improvement that needed to be addressed. These included:

- the further development of the Institute's links with post-primary schools and their employing authorities;
- the curricular leadership in business studies and information technology (IT);
- the effectiveness of the provision for the key skills and wider key skills across the Institute including the dissemination of good practice, the analysis and interpretation of data and the quality assurance of the provision; and
- the provision for the referral to an independent counselling service, for students with particular personal problems.

In the interval since the inspection, the Institute prepared a detailed response and action plan to address the main issues identified in the report. The following changes, which have benefited the work of the Institute, have taken place:

- the appointment of a VEP co-ordinator at senior lecturer level, whose responsibilities include the development of a flexible and innovative VEP curriculum and supporting marketing strategy;
- the broadening of the range of vocational qualifications provided by the Institute

available to schools within VEP;

- the participation of the Institute with three local schools, in the pilot of the Pre-apprenticeship Programme;
- the extension of links established with the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) through, for example, the use of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service, in providing professional development for Institute staff, the good links established with local careers teachers and the start made in establishing links with the SELB Entitlement Framework Development Officer;
- the provision of the wider key skills of 'improving own learning and performance' and 'working with others', within all full-time further education courses;
- the provision of the essential skills within all full-time courses;
- the participation of the Institute in the essential skills information and communications and technology pilot programme; and
- the Institute's engagement of the services of an independent counselling service which provides telephone and face-to-face support for students with particular personal problems.

The Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection in December 2006 and the following are the most important improvements, which have taken place since the inspection:

- the significant increase in VEP provision which has resulted from the widening links established with almost all of the post-primary schools in the greater Newry area;
- the introduction of an effective curriculum framework for the provision of the essential skills, across the Institute;
- the curricular leadership in the curriculum areas of business and IT, including the improved links with industry and participation in the Lecturers Into Industry scheme, and the establishment of a programme of guest speakers and a comprehensive programme of industrial visits;
- the implementation of a programme of staff development to improve the quality of learning and teaching in business and IT;
- the strategies used to raise student awareness of software engineering, computing and business related careers; and
- the use by students of the independent counselling service, which is regularly monitored and reviewed by the Assistant Director, Student Services.

A few areas are in need of improvement:

- a review of the roles and responsibilities, at all levels of management, within the essential skills provision;

- a better balance between the gathering, analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the essential skills and key skill provision; and
- opportunities for all full-time students to achieve accreditation in the key skill of IT.

The follow-up inspection confirms that the Institute has made very good progress in addressing the key issues identified in the original inspection report. The Inspectorate is confident that the actions implemented by the Institute will result in sustained improvements in the quality of the provision.

Yours sincerely

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