



*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**



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**St Francis de Sales Special School
Belfast**

March 2008

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES SPECIAL SCHOOL, BELFAST, BT12 7LU (133-6012)

The focused inspection in St Francis de Sales Special School, Belfast in November 2005 highlighted strengths in, for example, the leadership of the Principal, the school development planning and aspects of the teaching provision. The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to provide regular opportunities for all staff to plan and work collaboratively;
- to review the daily timetable to ensure learning opportunities are maximised;
- to involve all adults in effective interaction with the children; and
- to identify a future role for the school.

In the interval since the last inspection the following changes which affects the work of the school have taken place:

- the staff have availed of relevant and appropriate professional development opportunities; and
- the Board of Governors, in collaboration with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Belfast Education and Library Board, have been involved in identifying a way forward in relation to the location and future role of the provision.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection on 7 March 2008.

The following are the most important improvements since the focused inspection:

- the continuing commitment and excellent leadership of the Principal;
- the high quality of the teaching throughout the school;
- the regular, structured and effective meetings for all staff;
- the strong emphasis on collaborative working between staff and therapists;
- the thorough review of the timetable and the effective snack and lunch time routines to further develop the pupils' social and communication skills;
- the staff's detailed knowledge of each pupil which enables them to promote effectively the pupils' development; and
- the good progress made to date in reviewing and defining the future role of the school.

Since the original inspection, the school has evaluated rigorously the progress made in the areas for improvement. The promotion of a self-evaluative culture throughout the follow-up inspection period has contributed significantly to the improvements made, and has helped the school identify appropriately its priorities for future development. The inspection confirms that, through effective self-evaluation, the school has demonstrated clear evidence of improvement.

Excellent progress has been made in the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are well met. The parents and broader community can have confidence in the effectiveness of the school's response to the findings of the inspection and its capacity for sustained self-improvement in its new role.

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