



*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

**The Royal School
Armagh**

November 2006

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOCUSED INSPECTION OF THE ROYAL SCHOOL ARMAGH (542-0263)

The two-part focused inspection in November 2004 highlighted strengths in the excellent relationships between the staff and the pupils, the distinctive school ethos, the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection, the good quality of the majority of the teaching, the forward-thinking and effective leadership of the Headmaster and senior management team and the good start made to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The inspection also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to provide a greater variety of teaching approaches and learning experiences for the pupils;
- to match better the work in lessons to the ability levels of all of the pupils;
- the further development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and the increased use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support subject learning; and
- the need for all departments to focus on learning and teaching strategies in order to improve pupil outcomes.

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

- there has been a strong focus on staff development related to effective teaching and learning;
- the school has sought tailored support from officers of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the Southern Education and Library Board, which has been well-focused and delivered to good effect; and
- there has been a significant investment in ICT resources, in particular interactive whiteboard technology.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a follow-up inspection on 15 November 2006. The school's development plan has been adjusted appropriately in light of the inspection findings.

The following are the most important improvements since the two-part focused inspection:

- the more effective use by most teachers of a greater variety of strategies for teaching and learning;
- improved awareness of, and match of work to, the pupils' ability levels across a majority of the subject departments;

- more effective and consistent planning at department level for the integration and development of the pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills;
- the more informed, confident staff, and the increasingly collegial approach to improving teaching and learning;
- the strategic use and integration of the range of current initiatives, such as Performance Review and Staff Development and the revised curriculum, as effective drivers for whole-school improvement; and
- the significantly improved embedding of ICT to enhance and enliven teaching and learning;

Since the inspection, the school evaluated rigorously the progress made in the areas for improvement identified. The promotion of a self-evaluative culture throughout the follow-up inspection period contributed well to the improvements made and helped the school identify its priorities for future development. The follow-up inspection findings confirm that, through effective self-evaluation, the school demonstrated substantial evidence of improvement. The Inspectorate recommends that the process for self-evaluation now in place is developed further, particularly at head of department level.

Good progress has been made in addressing the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. A few minor areas for improvement remain and the school's progress in these will be followed up by the District Inspector.

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