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*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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Standard Inspection

Dundonald High School
Belfast

Inspected: March 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Dundonald High School is a controlled non-selective co-educational school situated on the Upper Newtownards Road in East Belfast. The enrolment has declined in recent years and currently stands at 380. Approximately 38% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, and the school has identified just over 36% of the pupils as having varying degrees of special educational needs.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on the quality of the leadership and management throughout the school, on the subjects of science and art and design, and on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. The school's provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection were also inspected, as was the school's general approach to promoting healthy eating. In addition, the effectiveness of the arrangements for self-evaluation leading to improvement at a whole-school and subject level was evaluated. As part of the inspection of pastoral care, inspectors observed classes in a range of other subjects.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, GOVERNORS, PUPILS AND TEACHERS

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the teaching staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors), and groups of pupils from years 8 and 12. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were issued to the parents; 14% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and eleven contained additional written comments. Just under 70% of the staff responded to the on-line questionnaire with nine additional written comments.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal and the governors the responses from the parental questionnaires. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that most of these parents appreciated the hard work and commitment of the Principal, senior management and the teachers. The governors expressed strongly their support for the work of the school. Some important overall concerns raised by a few parents, and a significant minority of the staff, about a variety of issues broadly related to management, organisation and communication were discussed with the Principal and the governors, and are commented on in the body of this report.

There are a few strengths in the programme for the promotion of a whole-school approach to healthy eating. For example, the school has gradually introduced three healthier eating days per week for break and lunchtime food provision, and healthier drinks vending. Pupils have the opportunity to attend a breakfast club and an after-school cookery club. There is a developing commitment to promoting healthy eating by means of open night and pupil council activities. Opportunities are provided for all the pupils to participate in a range of physical activities. The pupils demonstrate a basic understanding of the importance of making healthy life choices. An assessment of the nature and quality of the arrangements for health and well-being practices within the school should be included in the school development plan (SDP).

The pastoral work of the school is given a high priority and the quality of the pastoral care provided is good. The school is using the guidelines for the vetting procedures as detailed in the DE Circulars 2006/7/8/9 to guide practice. While the pupils from years 8 and 12 reported that they felt safe and secure in school and they knew to whom to turn in the event of a concern, formal procedures are not yet fully in place which enable the staff to implement completely the guidelines outlined in the DE Circular 1999/10, 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection' and in Circular 2003/13, 'Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order'. This situation needs urgently to be addressed to include the review and communication of both the Child Protection policy and referral system to the parents and pupils, and the provision of related training to be initiated for all staff. The school needs to take steps to improve the attendance figures, which are well below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools.

1.4 EXAMINATIONS

Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A* to E and A* to C in at least five subjects at GCSE is well below the corresponding proportion for similar non-selective schools. In 2006, just over 11% of the year 12 pupils achieved grades A* to C in at least five subjects which is well below the NI average for similar schools. Additionally, the standards achieved in English, mathematics and science at key stage (KS) 3 are below the corresponding proportion for similar non-selective schools. The improvement of the pupils' attainment in public examinations, and of standards in general, has been identified as a priority in the SDP and work is ongoing on this issue. The inspection findings endorse the school's identification of the improvement of examination performance as an urgent priority. More details about the examination results are provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the hard-working teachers;
- the range of extra-curricular activities provided, including the wide range of valuable experiences provided through the 'Prince's Trust XL' programme;
- the contribution of the non-teaching staff, and the classroom assistants, to the life and work of the school;
- the quality of provision in the Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) unit, catering for children who have special educational needs;
- the commitment of the Principal, vice-principals, and the heads of departments to the school;
- the work of the Principal and members of the senior management team in making links with the local community, and raising the profile of the school in the immediate area;

- the good quality of teaching seen in a minority of classes; the quality of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to good;
- the good quality of pastoral support provided for the pupils;
- the positive contribution of the pastoral care team to the welfare of the pupils; and
- the frequent examples of courtesy, good behaviour and positive response from most of the pupils.

2.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve substantially the standards expected and achieved across the school, including the performance in public examinations in nearly all of the subject departments;
- improve the strategic leadership and management, in particular focusing more effectively on improving standards of achievement, a sense of common purpose at all levels, and the degree of collegiality within the school; and
- ensure the school development planning complies more fully with the DE (School Development Plans) regulations (Northern Ireland) of 2005, including the more effective use of performance data and first-hand evidence gained from monitoring, to set targets and improve further the outcomes for the pupils.

3. CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the school has a few strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified important areas for improvement, which need to be addressed promptly if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all the learners. It will be important that the school accesses well-focused support from Curriculum Advisory and Support Service officers from the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) in moving forward on the issues identified in this report.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing these areas for improvement. A follow-up inspection is required.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. There is an urgent need for the SEELB to carry out a health and safety risk assessment of the school premises, including the grounds. There are a number of entrances to the school building which are not secured adequately. Additionally, the school's governors and the senior management in the school are aware of the improvements needed in the state of repair of parts of the school's estate and have made, and are making, requests to the SEELB to resolve this problem.

2. The school premises are presently too large for the school population and, despite the best efforts of the staff, the widespread nature of the school building and surrounds is causing difficulties for supervision of the pupils, both within the main school building and in the surrounding grounds.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Dundonald High School v. Date of Inspection: W/C 05.03.07
 ii. School Reference Number: 4210262 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-16
 iv. Status: Secondary Controlled

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Year 8 Intake	100	90	80	53	51
Total enrolment	570	534	492	434	380

1.3 Attendance

Year 2005/06	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2005/06	NI Average 2004/05
% Attendance	86	84	85	83	85	0	0	84	91

1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:

32

iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):

0.74

ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):

11.9

Year 2006/07	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	24	30	45	57	56	212
Enrolment: Girls	27	23	33	37	48	168
Enrolment: Total	51	53	78	94	104	380
PTR	10.9	9.6	12.8	12.9	12.3	

1.5 Leavers Destinations

2004/05	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	112	
Another School	6%	8.2
Employment	18%	10.9
Full-time Further Education	31%	36.8
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training	30%	34.3
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	11%	6.3
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	4%	3.6

1.6 NAME OF SCHOOL: Dundonald High School

SCHOOL YEAR: 2006/2007

GCSE	2004	2005	2006
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	91	88.4	81.8
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	21	14.7	11.4
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	67	55.8	62.5

9 Within this report, when commenting on examination results of individual subjects, the respective CCEA average is used as a proxy for the corresponding average for all pupils in NI taking that subject.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing the GCSE subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2006, in comparison with the respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

Table 1

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCSE A-C	French		Art & Design	English Literature History	Business Studies Design & Technology English Geography Home Economics Home Economics Child Devt Information Technology Mathematics Music Personal and Social Education Religious Studies Science Double Award 1 st Subject Science Single Award Sport/PE Studies

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCSE A-E		French	Art & Design Music	Information Technology Personal and Social Education Science Double Award 1 st Subject Science Single Award	Business Studies Design and Technology English English Literature Geography History Home Economics Home Economics Child Devt Mathematics Religious Studies Sport/PE Studies

Table showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1.

Table 2

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCSE A-C			Music	Art & Design English Literature Information Technology Science Double Award 1 st Subject	Business Studies Design & Technology English French Geography History Home Economics Home Economics Child Devt Mathematics Personal and Social Education Religious Studies Science Single Award Sport/PE Studies
GCSE A-E	English Literature Science Double Award 1 st Subject	Art & Design English History Home Economics Home Economics Child Dev Information Technology Music Sport/PE Studies	Business Studies Design & Technology French Geography Mathematics Personal and Social Education Religious Studies Science Single Award		

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