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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

Immaculate Conception College
Derry

Inspected: February 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Immaculate Conception College, a maintained, 11-18 co-educational, non-selective post-primary school is situated in the Waterside area of the City of Derry. The enrolment has decreased over the past five years and is currently 239 pupils. The majority of the pupils come from the surrounding area with some travelling from outside the City. Approximately 55% of the pupils are entitled to free schools meals and the school has identified that 22% of the pupils in years 8-12 are on the Special Educational Needs Register. Approximately 6% of the pupils in year 8 achieved grades A to C in the transfer procedure.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on the quality of leadership and management throughout the school and in the subjects of English, science and modern languages. In addition, lessons in other subjects were observed. The school's provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection were also evaluated.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, GOVERNORS, TEACHERS, AND PUPILS

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, 12 and the sixth form. One hundred and eighty questionnaires were issued to the parents; 26% of these were returned to the Department of Education (DE), 19 of which contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that the parents are very satisfied with almost all aspects of the work of the school. The governors expressed their appreciation of the work of the Principal and staff.

Through the teacher questionnaires, the staff acknowledged the quality of leadership provided by the Principal and the good levels of communication between senior management and staff.

Pupils placed a strong value on the strong relationships they had with their teachers. They indicated that they are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors about the responses from the questionnaires and the discussions with the pupils.

There are significant strengths in the quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection.

The school has procedures in place which implement fully the guidance outlined in the relevant DE circulars. The governors, staff, parents and pupils are fully aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of helpful policies which guide the work of the school. Among the strengths are:

- the strong and effective leadership of the Head of Pastoral Care;
- the effective means of promoting the pupils' positive behaviour; and
- the priority given to the well-being of the staff and pupils.

The programme for the promotion of health and well-being is at an early stage. Attention is given to initiatives which encourage the children to adopt healthy lifestyles. There is an increasing commitment to promoting healthy eating and parents are kept informed about this work. The pupils demonstrate a limited understanding of the importance of making healthy life choices. Opportunities are provided for all the pupils to participate in a range of physical activities. Arrangements for the promotion of health and well-being should be incorporated into school development planning in line with current regulations.

1.4 EXAMINATIONS

It is appropriate that the senior management of the school has identified the need to improve the standards achieved by the pupils in external examinations. Over the last three years, the number of pupils obtaining grades A* to E and A* to C in at least five subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education is below the corresponding proportion for similar non-selective schools. In 2006, just 12% of the pupils achieved grades A* to C in at least five subjects which is below the Northern Ireland average for similar schools. In most subjects, the number of pupils achieving grades A* to E has been more than 10% below the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools over the same three year period. Appropriately the improvement of the pupils' attainment in public examinations, have been identified as a priority in the school development plan. The inspection findings endorse this as a key priority.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the good behaviour of the pupils in classes and in circulation areas, and the systems adopted by the school to promote good behaviour;
- the good working relationships and mutual respect demonstrated between staff and pupils which result in an increasing sense of school identity;
- the developing sense of team-work within the teaching staff and the collaborative approach taken when identifying priorities for school and departmental action plans;
- the hard-working staff and their commitment to the welfare of the pupils;
- the high quality of the pastoral provision for the pupils;

- the quality of the teaching observed which was always satisfactory; many lessons demonstrated significant strengths;
- the strong support afforded to the Principal from pupils, staff, governors and the local community; and
- the vision for the development of the school held by the Principal and vice-principal.

The Principal has been in post for just over two years. During that time he has done much to promote a sense of community within the school and with the help of the Vice-Principal has led a number of significant curricular and pastoral initiatives which has done much to enhance the position of the school within the community.

2.2 The areas for improvement include the need to:

- use the quantitative data more effectively to promote improvement in learning and teaching and in attendance;
- review and develop the current curriculum to ensure the pupils' learning needs are fully met and career opportunities are enhanced; and
- improve the standards the pupils achieve in public examinations.

3. **CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the school has a number of 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 the learners.

The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Immaculate Conception College v. Date of Inspection: W/C 19.03.07
 ii. School Reference Number: 223-0254 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Secondary Maintained

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Year 8 Intake	47	29	36	38	31	39
Total enrolment	319	292	263	249	253	239

1.3 Attendance

Year 2005/06	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2005/06	NI Average 2004/05
% Attendance	91.6	87.4	82.1	81.7	84.4	89.3	91.2	87	91

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): iv. Numbers of Teachers involved in Area of Study: (Focused Only) 0

Year 2006/07	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	19	22	23	27	15	8	6	120
Enrolment: Girls	20	14	19	23	28	12	3	119
Enrolment: Total	39	36	42	50	43	20	9	239
PTR	12.19	13.003	15.17	14.643	13.571	72.238	18.285	

1.5 Staying On Rate (2005/06) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	46.6	NI Av Year 13	35.5
Year 14	25.4	NI Av Year 14	N/A

1.6 Leavers Destinations

2004/05	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	35		12	
Another School	0%	8.2	0%	1.1
Employment	26%	10.9	0%	17.5
Full-time Further Education	23%	36.8	0%	21.1
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	92%	44.1
Full-time Training	40%	34.3	0%	5.7
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	6.3	8%	5.6
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	11%	3.6	0%	4.8

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: Immaculate Conception College,
Derry

SCHOOL YEAR: 2006/2007

GCSE	2004	2005	2006
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	67.27	75	72
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	14.55	7.69	6
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	22	15	12

5

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 and GCE A2 subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2005, 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-E			History Science Double Award 1 st Subject	English Literature	Art & Design Drama English French Geography Irish Mathematics Religious Studies Science Single Award 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-E	English Literature Science Double Award 1 st Subject	Art & Design Drama English History Irish Music Sport/PE Studies	Business Studies English Language French Geography Mathematics Religious Studies Science Single Award		

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