



*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

**Lurgan Junior High School
Co Armagh**

Inspected: February 2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Lurgan Junior High School is situated on a spacious site off the Gilford Road in Lurgan. It is a controlled 11-14 co-educational school catering for pupils of all abilities within the Southern Education and Library Board two tier system of post-primary education. The enrolment has remained steady over the past five years. The school has indentified approximately 13% of the pupils requiring additional support for their learning and almost 13% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. In addition, there are 7 pupils with English as an additional language.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels across the school and, in addition, on the provision for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. The provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection were also inspected as was the school's support for pupils requiring additional support for their learning. As an additional evidence base for the inspection, lessons were observed in a range of other subjects.

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

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching staff and support 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 10.

One hundred and thirty-four questionnaires were issued to parents; 75 were returned to the Department of Education of which 38 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires and the comments from the parents, in most cases, indicated their high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. In particular, the parents mentioned the helpfulness of the staff and senior management; the friendly and welcoming ethos and the range of extra-curricular activities. A few parents raised concerns about the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance, (CEIAG).

Thirty-seven teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with 12 providing additional written comments. In addition, 15 support staff completed questionnaires and three provided additional written comments. In the main, the staff responded positively on working relationships within the school and the care and welfare for pupils.

The governors expressed their strong support for, and commitment to the work of the school. In addition, they highlighted the hard work of the staff, the effective leadership of the Principal and the support of the parents for the work of the school.

The pupils talked enthusiastically about the support they receive from the teachers and from the discussions there is evidence that they are aware of who to talk to 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, the few areas of concern emerging from all questionnaires and discussions. Some of these matters are dealt with in the body of the report.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

The pupils are generally well motivated and display a positive attitude to learning. When given the opportunity, they display good levels of skills and attributes in a variety of learning contexts. In keeping with the school's mission statement, the pupils display good understanding of the need to respect themselves and others, and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. The pupils achieve good standards in the end of key stage (KS) 3 assessments, the results are above the Northern Ireland (NI) average at both levels 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science.

As identified by the school and the parental questionnaires, the CEIAG, provision needs to be developed to ensure that pupils can make appropriate choices in year 10.

More details of the examination results can be found in Appendix 4.

2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The quality of nearly all of the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding: a majority was good or very good; a small number of lessons were outstanding and a smaller number of lessons were inadequate or unsatisfactory. In the best practice, effective questioning challenged the pupils' thinking, a variety of learning and teaching strategies were deployed to engage the pupils actively in their learning and the lessons were well structured, paced and consolidated; in addition, the teachers used ICT innovatively to engage the pupils in their learning. In the less effective practice, over direction by the teacher, the setting of low level tasks and ineffective questioning limited the learning of the pupils. As the school develops the quality of learning and teaching further, teachers need to raise their expectations of the pupils' achievement and promote learning experiences for all pupils that are consistently good or better.

More detailed evaluation of the subjects under focus is provided in Appendix 1.

2.2.1 PASTORAL CARE

The provision for pastoral care within the school is good. This is evidenced by the range of extra-curricular activities, effective links with external agencies to support the pupils' needs and the participation of the pupils in the school assemblies. The areas for improvement include the need to develop further the pupils' views and opinions to inform the processes within the school, to revise the rewards and sanctions in consultation with the pupils and to ensure that these are implemented consistently across the school.

2.2.2 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance, issued by DE, although the school needs to ensure all staff are fully aware of the code of conduct.

2.2.3 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity for example, the wide range of physical activities which the pupils engage in both during and after school. The area for development includes the need to ensure that food rewards are consistent with healthy eating messages.

2.2.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

The school places a strong focus on the provision for those requiring additional support for their learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator prepares succinct and informative individual educational plans which are used effectively throughout the school, shared with parents and evaluated and updated biannually. Effective support is given to pupils through withdrawal sessions by a highly skilled teacher and dedicated classroom assistants. Further additional and appropriate support is given by teachers from the English department. The pupils make good, and in some cases, outstanding progress in their literacy skills and value the additional support given to them, working hard to improve their skills. Additional support for numeracy has begun recently in the school and is motivating the pupils to engage more successfully in mathematics.

The school's capacity to ensure its commitment to those pupils at risk of marginalisation is good. The teachers are good at identifying any pupils at risk of falling behind or dropping out of school and take swift and consistent action to promote their inclusion and ensure they do as well as they can. The school gives good attention to nurturing the pupils' emotional development, providing a basis for them to learn successfully and feel included.

2.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The quality of the leadership and management within the school is good. The Principal, who has been in post since 1996, is committed to the process of continuous school improvement and provides clear direction and leadership. The improvement process is linked clearly to a well-constructed school development plan which complies fully with the requirements of the Department of Education (School Development Plans) Regulations NI 2005 Order.

There is a developing culture of self-evaluation at senior management and middle management level. The school has identified the need to develop a more robust monitoring and evaluation role of middle managers in order to improve further the quality of learning and teaching. The Inspectorate endorses this as a key priority.

3. **MAIN FINDINGS**

3.1 The main strengths of the school include:

- the good standards achieved by the pupils in the end of KS3 assessments;
- the quality of the teaching which was good or better in a majority of lessons observed;
- the pastoral support for the individual needs of pupils under the leadership of the Vice-principal for the pastoral curriculum;
- the strong focus on those pupils who require additional support for their learning;
- the innovative work in ICT; and
- the good leadership provided by the Principal.

3.2 The area for development is:

- the need to raise the teachers' expectations of the pupils' achievement and promote learning experiences for all pupils that are consistently good or better.

4. **CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is generally good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FOR THE SUBJECTS UNDER FOCUS

English

The strengths of the provision include:

- the standards achieved by pupils in the end of KS3 assessments;
- a strong departmental ethos and good working relationships between staff;
- the quality of teaching, all of which was at least satisfactory and a majority of which was good or better;
- the acting head of Department's promotion of classroom observation and the sharing of good practice;
- the department's contribution to raising standards in English for pupils requiring additional support in their learning; and
- the good start made to incorporating effective learning and teaching strategies into departmental schemes of work.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- promote a more consistent approach, across the department, to marking for improvement; and
- incorporate more challenging or extension work in order to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.

Information and Communication Technology

The strengths of the provision include:

- the high value recently placed by the school on the development of the pupils' and teachers' ICT skills, underpinned by significant investment in resources, in particular time for co-ordination, innovation and change management;
- the improving range of opportunities for the pupils to develop and apply ICT skills, with an increasing and appropriate emphasis on contemporary applications, and access by the pupils to learning from outside school;
- the impressive development of the pupils' interactive multimedia and wider broadcasting skills and experiences, including live streaming;

- the enthusiastic, innovative and supportive leadership of ICT across the school; and
- the evolving uptake by subject departments of opportunities to further embed ICT into planning for, and delivery of, learning and teaching.

The areas for development include:

- the implementation of a suitable and consistent whole-school learning platform as a vehicle to underpin the development and further embedding of ICT across the curriculum, support the usage of the interactive whiteboards and further improve the continuity of learning outside school; and
- the need for appropriate assessment and accreditation opportunities for the pupils in ICT.

Mathematics

The strengths of the provision include:

- the positive working relationships between the teachers and the pupils;
- the good standards achieved by the pupils in the end of KS3 assessments;
- the quality of teaching, a majority of which is good;
- the opportunities for the pupils to engage collaboratively in their learning through group and paired work;
- the good progress in reviewing schemes of work; and
- the hard-work and commitment of the head of Department and members of the departmental team.

The area for improvement is:

- to develop further the culture of self-evaluation within the department as a vehicle for promoting improvement in the provision and sharing good practice.

APPENDIX 2

SUFFICIENCY AND CONDITION OF THE ACCOMMODATION

- The technology and design suite needs updated.
- The school requires a base room for the support for those pupils requiring additional learning support.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There are no view panes in the doors of the classrooms.
- The limited car parking facilities.
- There is a lack of disabled access within the school building.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Lurgan Junior High v. Date of Inspection: W/C 17.02.09
 ii. School Reference Number: 521-0271 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-14
 iv. Status: Controlled Secondary

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 8 Intake	202	222	244	207	224
Total enrolment	671	661	675	670	677

1.3 Attendance

Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2007/08	NI Average 2006/07
% Attendance	94.3	93.3	89.8	0	0	0	0	92	90

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:

0

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

0

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):

0

Year 2008/09	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	112	92	126	0	0	0	0	330
Enrolment: Girls	112	117	118	0	0	0	0	347
Enrolment: Total	224	209	244	0	0	0	0	677
PTR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

- 1.5
- Staying On Rate (2007/08)
- (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	-	NI Av Year 13	N/A
Year 14	-	NI Av Year 14	N/A

1.6 Leavers Destinations

2006/07	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	0	
Another School	N/A	N/A
Employment	N/A	N/A
Full-time Further Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training	N/A	N/A
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	N/A	N/A
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	N/A	N/A

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table 1 showing the Key Stage 3 results for English and mathematics over the previous three years ending in June 2008, in comparison with the Northern Ireland (NI) averages for all post-primary schools.*

Table 1

KS3	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below
Level 5 and above	English Science	Mathematics		
Level 6 and above		English Mathematics Science		

*The school's results in 2006-07 and 2007-08 are based on teachers' assessments.

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