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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**

#### **Markethill High School**

**Inspected: November 2006**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 CONTEXT**

Markethill High School, a controlled co-educational non-selective post-primary school, is situated in the town of Markethill, County Armagh. The pupils come from the town itself and the surrounding rural area within a radius of approximately 12 kilometres. The enrolment is currently 451; approximately 9% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and the school has identified 8% of the pupils as being in need of additional educational help with their learning.

The current accommodation mitigates against the effective delivery of aspects of the pastoral and educational programmes; the Department of Education (DE) is presently carrying out an economic appraisal.

### **1.2 FOCUS**

The inspection focused on leadership and management at whole-school level and also in the subjects of English, modern languages and science. The inspection also considered the school's pastoral care provision, including child protection.

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

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the completion of questionnaires by a sample of parents, as well as meetings with the Board of Governors (BoG) and with groups of pupils from years 8 and 12. Prior to the inspection, confidential questionnaires were sent to 117 parents; 27% of the parents responded, with 62% taking the opportunity to write additional comments. Twenty teachers also completed confidential questionnaires. The BoG spoke highly of the school, highlighting the hard work of the staff, the excellent standards, the support for pupils and the commitment and dedication of the Principal. The pupils reported that they feel safe and happy within the school and know whom to turn to in the event of a concern. The responses to the parental questionnaire were very affirmative, indicating the high regard with which the school is held within the community. The very few concerns raised through the written comments were discussed with the Principal and the BoG. The teachers' responses to their confidential questionnaire also indicated high levels of satisfaction with the school. The inspection findings confirm that the confidence expressed in these aspects of the school's work is well placed.

### **1.4 THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION**

There are many strengths in the quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant (DE) Circulars and has identified appropriately a few minor areas for further development within its pastoral programme.

### **1.5 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

The school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has many sound features. Attention is given to the development and implementation of programmes which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. There is a developing commitment to

promoting healthy eating and opportunities are provided for all the pupils to participate in a range of physical activities.

## 1.6 EXAMINATION RESULTS

The pupils achieve excellent standards in examinations. Their performance at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level is well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for non-selective schools. Over the previous three years, there has been a sustained improvement in the proportion of year 12 pupils achieving Grades A\* to C in five or more subjects and, in 2006, almost three-quarters of the year 12 pupils attained this standard. In almost all subjects at Grades A\* to C in GCSE, the performance was over ten percentage points above the respective NI averages. More details about the examination results are provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### 2.1 Strengths of the school include the:

- very caring and supportive ethos;
- exemplary behaviour of the pupils;
- high quality of the pastoral care provision;
- support and involvement of the parents, BoG and the wider community;
- pupils' participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities;
- quality of the teaching observed, which was good or better on most occasions;
- provision for modern languages and science and aspects of the work in English;
- high quality of the additional education needs provision;
- excellent standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations;
- hard-working and committed teaching staff;
- contribution made by the support staff to the pupils' well-being and their learning experiences;
- thematic approach to aspects of cross-curricular learning in key stage 3;
- progress made on whole-school development by the recently established working groups; and
- strong and effective leadership provided by the Principal and the Vice-principals.

2.2 Areas for improvement include the:

- need to build on the start made to self-evaluation to ensure more rigorous monitoring and review, with a particular focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and linked to a more appropriate school development plan; and
- clarification and development of the leadership roles of the senior teachers.

### 3. **CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified minor areas for improvement, which the school has the capacity to address.

The school's progress on the areas for improvement will be monitored by the District Inspector.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- There are solid doors in the interview room and a small number of classrooms.
- There is no emergency cut-off switch in one science laboratory.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

- The quality of the accommodation mitigates against positive learning experiences in some aspects of the curriculum.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Markethill High v. Date of Inspection: W/C 06/11/06  
 ii. School Reference Number: 521-0083 vi. Area of Study: Standard  
 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	94	96	96	88	83
Total enrolment	477	481	472	471	451

1.3 Attendance

Year 2003/04	8	9	10	11	12	Average 2005/06	NI Average 2004/05
% Attendance	95.7	95.1	94.6	91.9	95.5	95	91

1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:

29.6

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

0.814

ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):

15.24

iv. Numbers of Teachers involved in Area of Study: (Focused Only)

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Year 2005/06	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	44	47	49	58	43	241
Enrolment: Girls	39	40	43	37	51	210
Enrolment: Total	83	87	92	95	94	451
PTR	15.7	15.5	16.1	14.1	15.1	

1.6 Leavers Destinations

2003/04	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	87	
Another School	7%	8.2
Employment	8%	10.9
Full-time Further Education	64%	36.8
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training	18%	34.3
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	2%	6.3
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.6

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: MARKETHILL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL YEAR: 2006/2007

<b>GCSE</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects</b>	88.35	90.36	97.87
<b>Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects</b>	60.19	66.27	73.4
<b>Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects</b>	84.48	85.54	90.43

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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*

	<b>More than 10 percentage points above</b>	<b>Between 5 and 10 percentage points above</b>	<b>Within 5 percentage points</b>	<b>Between 5 and 10 percentage points below</b>	<b>More than 10 percentage points below</b>
GCSE A-C	Business Studies, Design & Technology, English, English Literature, French, Geography, History, Home Economics, Home Economics Food, Information Technology, Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Motor Vehicle Studies, Music, Personal and Social Education, Religious Studies, Double Award Science 1 <sup>st</sup> Subject, Spanish, Sport/PE Studies	Art and Design	Single Award Science		GNVQ Construction and the Built Environment

GCSE A-E	Business Studies, Design and Technology, French, Geography, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Motor Vehicle Studies, Personal and Social Education, Religious Studies, Single Award Science	Design and Technology, English, GNVQ Construction and the Built Environment, Information Technology, Additional Mathematics, Music, Spanish, Sport/PE Studies	Art and Design, English Literature, Home Economics Food, Double Award Science 1 <sup>st</sup> Subject		
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*Table showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1.*

**Table 2**

	<b>100% - 96%</b>	<b>95% - 86%</b>	<b>85% - 76%</b>	<b>75% - 66%</b>	<b>65% - 0%</b>
GCSE A-C			Additional Mathematics, Music	Art and Design, English Literature, GNVQ Construction and the Built Environment, Information Technology, Double Award Science 1 <sup>st</sup> Subject	Business Studies, Design & Technology, Design and Technology, English, French, Geography, History, Home Economics, Home Economics Child Development, Home Economics Food, Mathematics, Motor Vehicle Studies, Personal and Social Education, Religious Studies, Single Award Science, Spanish, Sport/PE Studies
GCSE A-E	English Literature, Double Award Science 1 <sup>st</sup> Subject	Art and Design, Design and Technology, English, GNVQ Construction and the Built Environment, History, Home Economics, Home Economics Child Development, Home Economics Food, Information Technology, Additional Mathematics, Music, Spanish, Sport/PE Studies	Business Studies, Design & Technology, French, Geography, Mathematics, Personal and Social Education, Religious Studies, Single Award Science		

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