



*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

**Sperrin Integrated College
Magherafelt**

Inspected: April 2008

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK	2
3.	SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS	3
4.	CONCLUSION	3
	APPENDICES	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Sperrin Integrated College is a grant-maintained, co-educational, all-ability, integrated school situated on the north side of Magherafelt. The school draws its pupils from a wide catchment area, including Cookstown, Kilrea and Antrim. Since opening in 2002 with an intake of 51 year 8 pupils the college enrolment has increased steadily to its current level of 401. Approximately 18% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 24% of the pupils as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels across the school and the provision for English, geography and mathematics. The provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection were also inspected, as was the school's general approach to promoting healthy eating. As an additional evidence base for the inspection, lessons were observed in almost all other subjects.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, GOVERNORS 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 thirty-three questionnaires were issued to the parents; 63% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 31 contained additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated their strong support for the staff and the pupil-centred ethos, and their satisfaction with the range of subject choices. They affirmed the good standing of the school within the community.

Most of the teaching staff responded to the on-line questionnaire and eleven provided additional written comments. In particular, the teachers indicated their appreciation of the ways the school celebrates the achievements of pupils, and the positive working relationships between pupils and teachers. A minority of staff raised concerns about the issue of communication within the school.

The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school; they mentioned in particular the dedication and enthusiasm of all staff, the concern displayed for the welfare of the pupils, the integrated ethos and the effective leadership and commitment shown by the Principal.

In discussions held with the pupils, they reported that they feel safe and secure in the school and are aware of what to do if they have a concern about their well-being. They talked enthusiastically about the support they receive from teachers, their enjoyment of school and the range of extra-curricular activities.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the small number of areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION

The quality of arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is very good. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant DE circulars. The governors, staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's procedures and have had the opportunity to contribute to a range of effective policies which guide the work of the school.

1.5 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The school gives very good attention to promoting health and well-being, including opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. There are effective policies and programmes in place, for example the whole-school audit of healthy eating programmes, the multi-disciplinary health promoting team and meaningful links between home economics and the Refectory, which encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 EXAMINATIONS AND STANDARDS

The first cohort of year 12 pupils sat their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level examinations in 2007. Almost all pupils were entered for at least five subjects at GCSE level and 63% obtained Grade C or above in at least five subjects. These results are well above the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools. More details of all of the examination results can be found in Appendix 3.

2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The quality of the teaching in the majority of lessons observed was consistently good with a small number of lessons being excellent. In the most effective practice the teachers shared the learning intentions at the beginning of the lesson, used a wide range of strategies to engage and motivate the pupils, ensured that the lessons were well structured and took time to consolidate the pupils' learning during plenary sessions. A small number of less effective lessons were observed which were characterised by over-direction by the teacher in whole-class work and lack of appropriate differentiation. More detailed evaluation of the subjects under focus is provided in Appendix 1.

2.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal, ably supported by the senior leadership team, provides effective and realistic leadership based on his vision for the school from its inception to the current situation where there is almost a full complement of staff and pupils. The school is fostering a culture of reflection and self-evaluation to promote improvement and to inform future staff development.

The staff are encouraged to engage in continuous professional development to meet their own needs and interests, and the needs of the school, and benefit from a range of external and school-based learning. Knowledge and expertise gained during courses are disseminated well among the staff. The school values greatly the contribution of its own staff to its programme of school-based training and development.

The school's structures and processes for improvement have many strengths. There are very good opportunities for consultation about the school development plan (SDP) within the school community. The SDP is reflected well in departmental action plans. Effective policies and programmes are in place to support a positive learning environment. There is, however, a need to bring together all relevant necessary documentation, which is held in other places, in order to meet fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the inclusive pupil-centred ethos;
- the arrangements in place for pastoral care;
- the majority of the teaching observed which was consistently good with a small number of lessons being excellent;
- the good results achieved by the pupils in the key stage (KS) 4 public examinations;
- the vision and the leadership of the Principal ably assisted by the senior leadership team; and
- the good start made in the development of a culture of self-evaluation and reflection to promote improvement.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is very good. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents and local community can have confidence in the school's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

Pastoral Care

The strengths of the work include:

- the inclusive pupil-centred ethos;
- the effective arrangements in place for pastoral care;
- the support system in operation for those pupils experiencing personal difficulties;
- the leadership and commitment of the Vice-principal and other key staff for pastoral care;
- the active Pupil Council which contributes to decision making within the school; and
- the opportunities provided to celebrate the pupils' achievements.

English

The strengths of the work include:

- the behaviour, motivation and general attitude of the pupils;
- the effective promotion of the three attainment targets, in particular oracy and thinking skills;
- the standards achieved by the pupils in GCSE examinations;
- the quality of the teaching which was always good or very good;
- the very effective leadership of the Head of English and the collegiality within the department; and
- the literacy rich environment, including the library.

Geography

The strengths of the work include:

- the very good working relationships between teachers and pupils;
- the stimulating learning environment which promotes learning and celebrates achievement in geography;

- the effective team-work within the department resulting in a culture of reflection and a strong commitment to improvement;
- the introduction of strategies to promote marking for improvement; and
- the commitment to promoting and co-ordinating environmental education across the whole school.

The area for improvement is:

- the need to use a wider range of teaching strategies to actively engage and challenge the pupils.

Mathematics

The strengths of the work include:

- the good standards achieved by the pupils at KS3 and GCSE;
- the variety of teaching strategies and learning activities that are used effectively to motivate and engage the pupils actively in their learning;
- the effective use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning mathematics;
- the very good progress that has been made in reviewing the year 8 scheme of work;
- the commitment, hard work and collegiality of the teachers within the department; and
- target setting for individual pupils based upon available data.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Sperrin Integrated v. Date of Inspection: W/C 21.04.08
 ii. School Reference Number: 326-0303 vi. Area of Study: Standard
 iii. Age Range: 11-17
 iv. Status: Grant Maintained Integrated

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 8 Intake	66	64	80	82	83
Total enrolment	117	181	241	323	401

1.3 Attendance

Year 2006/07	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2006/07	NI Average 2005/06
% Attendance	94.3	93.9	92.7	95.7	93.9	0	0	94	90

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:

31.5

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

0.72

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):

12.7

Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	47	45	40	29	29	11	N/A	201
Enrolment: Girls	37	37	40	35	37	14	N/A	200
Enrolment: Total	84	82	80	64	66	25	N/A	401
PTR	15.0	14.7	14.3	12.3	11.3	6.8	N/A	

- 1.5
- Staying On Rate (2006/07)
- (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

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

1.6 Leavers Destinations

2005/06	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	0		0	
Another School	N/A	8.3	N/A	1.6
Employment	N/A	12	N/A	18.5
Full-time Further Education	N/A	37.6	N/A	20.8
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	N/A	44.9
Full-time Training	N/A	34.4	N/A	6
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	N/A	4.2	N/A	4.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	N/A	3.5	N/A	3.3

APPENDIX 3

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: Sperrin Integrated College,
Magherafelt

SCHOOL YEAR: 2007/2008

GCSE	2005	2006	2007
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	0	0	98
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	0	0	62.96
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	0	0	81.48

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing the GCSE A-C performance in 2007, 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	Art & Design* Double Award Science 1 st Subject English English Literature French German* History* Learning for Life and Work Mathematics Music* Single Award Science Sport/PE Studies	Home Economics	Geography Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Office Technology*		Technology and Design

* Denotes subjects which had a total entry of less than 15.

Table showing the spread of the NI subject results 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			Art and Design Music	Double Award Science 1 st Subject English Literature Information Technology	English French Geography German History Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Learning for Life and Work Mathematics Office Technology Single Award Science Sport/PE Studies Technology and Design

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2008

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.