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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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**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**

**St Patrick's and St Brigid's College  
Claudy**

**Inspected: January 2008**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT

St Patrick's and St Brigid's College is situated in the village of Claudy in County Londonderry. The majority of the pupils are drawn from the village and the surrounding local area although a significant number travel from further afield. The enrolment has increased steadily over the past five years to the present figure of 520. The school is regularly over-subscribed. Approximately 26% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and 30% of the total enrolment have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. Over the past three years, approximately 8% of the intake obtained grades A or B in the Transfer Procedure, while around 50% opted not to take the tests.

### 1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels across the school and, in addition, on the provision for English and mathematics. The provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection were also evaluated. In September 2007, the school became a Specialist School for Business and Enterprise. This inspection established a baseline for the school's work in this programme and the appropriateness of the identified targets for improvement. As an additional evidence base for the inspection, lessons were observed in a range of other subjects and inspectors met with heads of departments and co-ordinators from a range of other aspects of the school's provision. The arrangements for Alternative Education Provision (AEP) were also inspected as part of a survey.

### 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 governors and groups of pupils from years 8, 10 and 12.

Approximately 107 questionnaires were issued to the parents; 46% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 19 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires, and the comments from the parents, were overwhelmingly positive and highly affirmative of the work of the school. In particular, the parents referred to the committed and approachable teachers, the motivational leadership of the Principal and the caring ethos throughout the school. The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the very few areas of concern emerging from the parents' questionnaires.

The governors also expressed their strong support for the work of the school. In addition to the strengths identified above, the governors commented on the good standards attained by the pupils and the high regard in which the school is held in the local and wider community.

A majority of the teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with six providing additional written comments. They were very positive about the leadership of and work within subject departments, the supportive role played by heads of year and form teachers and the care and welfare afforded to the pupils. A majority of the teachers who responded expressed concerns about key aspects of leadership and management, particularly at senior management level including the Principal.

In their discussions, the pupils spoke enthusiastically about what they enjoyed in school and the approachable and dedicated teachers. They indicated that they know whom to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their education and well-being.

#### 1.4 PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection has important strengths. The school has procedures in place which implement the guidance outlined in the relevant DE Circulars and has identified appropriately a few areas for improvement which it is currently implementing.

#### 1.5 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION (AEP)

The staff and other professionals are very good at identifying any pupils who would benefit from additional support and take swift action to promote their inclusion and achievements. The school gives very good attention to nurturing these pupils' emotional development, providing a basis for them to learn successfully and feel included. Attendance levels are well above average.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

#### 2.1 EXAMINATIONS AND STANDARDS

The pupils show interest and are motivated to do well in their work. Most pupils in year 12 are entered for five or more subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level. Over the last three years, an average of 45% of pupils achieved grades A\* to C in five or more subjects at GCSE. This strong performance is above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar non-selective schools. More information on the results achieved in public examinations is given in Appendices 4 and 5.

#### 2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Most of the teaching observed was good or better and, on occasions, it was excellent. The characteristics of the good to excellent teaching included well-structured lessons, the identifying and sharing of learning intentions with the pupils, effective oral questioning, practical activities which enabled the pupils to learn through doing and plenary sessions in which the key learning points were reinforced. In the minority of lessons where the teaching was less effective, the work was insufficiently differentiated and the expectations of the standards to be achieved were not high enough. More detailed evaluation of the subjects under focus is provided in Appendix 1.

In the specialism of Business and Enterprise, the quality of learning and teaching is mostly good. Across most of the subject areas in the specialism, appropriate reference is made to the world of work and enterprise to enhance the quality of the pupils' learning experiences. The links in information and communication technology (ICT) to the world of work need to be developed further.

### 2.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal has been in post for ten years. In the time since his appointment he has instigated and led numerous developments which have resulted in significant improvements in all aspects of the life and work of the school, particularly the range of experiences the pupils enjoy and the achievements they gain. He is highly committed to the education and welfare of the pupils, having a professional understanding of their individual circumstances and, through a rigorous monitoring process, a thorough knowledge of their continuing progress. In this work, he is ably assisted by the Vice-principal. In leading the school through the Specialist Schools programme, it will be important that the Principal develops his managerial strategies in ways which will encourage and provide for a more collegial and distributed leadership approach to review, development and improvement.

The Principal and the senior management team (SMT) are committed to developing teaching approaches that will equip their pupils with the employability and enterprise skills necessary to enable them to contribute effectively to the local and wider economy. The school is making sound progress in enhancing its existing links with industry at key stage (KS) 3 and KS4. Progress, however, in meeting the targets for developing links with the wider community has been slower. More action is needed to ensure that links with the wider community are co-ordinated more effectively to meet their aims of the Specialist Schools programme. To this end, the key leadership vacancy in the Specialist School aspect of the school's work needs to be filled as a matter of urgency.

The school development plan (SDP) focuses on the Specialist School programme and the development of the revised curriculum. There is a need to review the priorities, through an inclusive self-evaluative process, to ensure that appropriate cognisance is taken of important aspects of the school's work such as the provision for special educational needs. The SDP does not comply fully with the 2005 DE regulations.

## 3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

### 3.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the strong caring, supportive and spiritual ethos;
- the high standards achieved by the pupils;
- the good and, on occasions, excellent quality of most of the teaching;
- the good provision in mathematics;

- the strong support of, and links with, the parents, governors and the local and wider community; and
- the dedication and commitment of the Principal and all the staff to the education and welfare of the pupils.

3.2 The area for improvement is:

- the need to develop managerial strategies at senior management level in ways which will encourage and provide for a more collegial and distributed leadership approach to review, development and improvement.

#### 4. **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 followed-up by monitoring visits, conducted by the District Inspector.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS**

**PASTORAL CARE**

The strengths of the work include:

- the very caring and supportive ethos which focuses on the pupils' individual progress and personal development;
- the effective methods of communicating with parents;
- the active student council which contributes to decisions within the school;
- the appropriate links with other agencies to support the pupils' individual needs;
- the high level of commitment of the pastoral team to the welfare of the pupils; and
- the development of the pupils' personal responsibilities through a range of pastoral roles for the senior pupils.

The areas for development include:

- the need to consult further with the staff, pupils and parents when revising policies; and
- the need to review and update the training in child protection for the support staff.

**ENGLISH**

The strengths of the work include:

- the good quality of learning and teaching observed during the inspection;
- the clear overview and planning for KS3 and KS4; and
- the departmental plan and subsequent action plans which guide development within the English department.

The areas for development include:

- the need to improve the standards in external examinations; and
- the need to ensure that all the teaching and activities set provide appropriate challenge for the pupils.

**MATHEMATICS**

The strengths of the work include:

- the excellent mathematical environment in the main mathematics classrooms;
- the interest, enjoyment and application of the pupils in their work;
- the much good to excellent teaching, including the good use of resources and ICT;
- the good standards achieved by the pupils in response to the high expectations maintained by the teachers;
- the leadership of the head of department; and
- the detailed planning and good start to departmental evaluation.

## BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

The school has identified appropriate and measureable targets for improvement to demonstrate:

- that Business and Enterprise is an area of curricular strength, which has rising levels of attainment in the majority of the five designated subject areas in the specialism, particularly in art and design and in home economics;
- how the strengths in the specialism have the potential to promote quality learning and teaching, and whole school improvement; and
- how they will use the specialism to develop existing links with other schools, and business and industry.

For the purpose of showing improvement more clearly the school needs to review the targets to demonstrate:

- how more effective use can be made of the experiences of the world of work to enhance the quality of the pupils' learning experiences in ICT at KS4;
- how the establishment of links with other educational institutions, industry and the wider community can be developed to support the implementation of the Specialist Schools programme; and
- how the continued professional development to enhance the teachers' leadership skills and their understanding of current practice in industry, can be managed to support the implementation of the Specialist Schools programme.

### **ACCOMMODATION AND RESOURCES**

In the home economics department there is a need for:

- technical assistance to support the work of the department; and
- improved accommodation to include another fully equipped kitchen, blackout blinds and adequate storage facilities.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- There is a need to install a secure access system to all the school building entrances.
- The drainage on the all-weather football pitch is unsatisfactory and presents a health and safety hazard for the pupils.
- Owing to the school's inadequate facilities for physical education, the pupils are required to walk to and from the Diamond Centre in the village. This entails the crossing of busy roads and presents a constant cause of concern for the school authorities.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Patrick's and St Brigid's College v. Date of Inspection: W/C 28.01.08  
 ii. School Reference Number: 223-0122 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection  
 iii. Age Range: 11-16  
 iv. Status: Roman Catholic Maintained

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 8 Intake	106	99	107	105	102
Total enrolment	540	528	533	534	520

1.3 Attendance

Year 2006/07	8	9	10	11	12	Average 2006/07	NI Average 2005/06
% Attendance	95.7	93.1	94.1	93	92	94	90

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 

33.3
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 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 

0.762
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- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 

15.61
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Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	62	55	55	58	59	289
Enrolment: Girls	40	52	50	44	45	231
Enrolment: Total	102	107	105	102	104	520

1.5 Leavers Destinations

2005/06	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	103	
Another School	59%	8.3
Employment	9%	12
Full-time Further Education	1%	37.6
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training	30%	34.4
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	1%	4.2
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.5

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Patrick's and St Brigid's  
College, Claudy

SCHOOL YEAR: 2007/2008

<b>GCSE</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects</b>	85	92	88
<b>Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects</b>	46	41	46
<b>Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects</b>	75	82	75

**EXAMINATION RESULTS**

*Table showing the GCSE subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2007, 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	Art and Design History Music^ Double Award Science Single Award Science Sport/PE Studies	Home Economics Mathematics	Business Studies French Geography Religious Studies Technology and Design	English English Literature	Information Technology Additional Mathematics^

*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			Art and Design Music	English Literature Information Technology Additional Mathematics Double Award Science	Business Studies English English Language French Geography History Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Mathematics Religious Studies Single Award Science Spanish Sport/PE Studies Technology and Design

^ Denotes subjects which had a total entry of less than 30 over the three years.

**NOTE** – In 2005, 17 pupils undertook a Double Award Applied GCSE in Information and Communication Technology, 12 of the pupils achieved grades A\* to C.

In 2007:

1. three pupils undertook GCSE Sports/PE Studies and achieved a grade C or above;
2. thirteen pupils followed the Growing, Learning and Development (GLAD) programme; eight of the pupils achieved 3 Level 2 Key Skills equivalent to 2 GCSEs at grade B, and four pupils achieved 2 Level 2 Key Skills equivalent to 1 GCSE at grade B; one pupil did not achieve the required standard at either of these equivalences; and
3. twelve pupils followed a Double Award Occupational Studies Course in Construction; two of the pupils achieved a Level 2 standard equivalent to 2 GCSEs at grade B; ten pupils did not achieve the required standard.

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