



*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

**St Patrick's High School
Lisburn**

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	4
	APPENDICES	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

St Patrick's High School, Lisburn is situated at the western edge of the town and draws its pupils from Lisburn, Glenavy and Crumlin. It is an eleven to 18 co-educational maintained post-primary school with three moderate learning units. The enrolment has fluctuated slightly over the past five years. Over the past three years, approximately 52% of the intake did not participate in the Transfer Procedure, 39% obtained grades C or D and 9% obtained grades A or B. There are 28 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The school has indentified approximately 20% of the pupils requiring additional support for their learning and almost 26% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

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 science. 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 a range of other subjects. A summary of the main findings for the subjects under focus is shown in Appendix 1.

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

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.

Approximately 130 questionnaires were issued to parents; 41 (32%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 21 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires, and the comments from the parents indicated their strong satisfaction with the work of the school. In particular, the parents mentioned the supportive and approachable teachers, the good standards of education the pupils receive, the quality of pastoral care and the high standing of the school in the community.

The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school; they praised, in particular, the school ethos, the leadership of the Principal and senior management team (SMT), the improving standards achieved in external examinations and the hard-working teachers and support staff.

In discussions held with the pupils, they talked enthusiastically about what they enjoy in the school and the approachability of, and encouragement from, the teachers and support staff. They indicated that they know whom to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their work or their safety and well-being.

Almost 90% of the teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with eleven providing additional written comments. The responses were very positive and provided evidence of a caring and supportive ethos among the staff and their commitment to the school. All of teachers indicated that the Principal provides effective leadership and there is good communication between senior managers and staff.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and a representative of the governors, the few areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions.

1.4 PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care and child protection in the school is very good.

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 effective policies which guide the work of the school.

1.5 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The school's programme for the promotion of health and well-being has strengths, which include a healthy eating and lifestyle policy and the vending of water. There is a developing commitment to encourage the pupils to eat healthily and be physically active. The areas for improvement identified the need to:

- include an assessment of the nature and quality of the arrangements for health and well-being practices in the school development plan (SDP) to comply with statutory regulations; and
- co-ordinate health education and healthy eating within the school more effectively.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 EXAMINATIONS AND STANDARDS

Over the past five years there has been a steady increase in the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A* to C in at least five subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). This positive trend reflects the hard work and commitment of the staff to promote and sustain improvement. Over the past two years, the average percentage for pupils obtaining grades A* to C in at least five subjects at GCSE was 43% which was just above the Northern Ireland average for similar schools. In 2006 and 2007, all of the pupils entered for General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level obtained grades A to E in three subjects. The school, through its own processes of self-evaluation, has identified the need to improve the standards achieved by the pupils in external examinations. The inspection endorses this as a key priority. More details of all of the examination results can be found in Appendix 4.

The sixth form was established in 2004 and over the past three years the number enrolled has been low and the retention rate has fluctuated significantly. It will be important that the school uses the guidance outlined in DE Circular 2005/06 to monitor closely the situation regarding this investment of human and material resources as well as the breadth of the provision that it will be able to offer.

In addition the careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provision and the sixth form curriculum need to be reviewed in order to ensure that the pupils can access a wider range of appropriate career pathways.

2.2 THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of the teaching in most of the lessons observed was good or better and, in a minority of the lessons, it was excellent. In the most effective practice, the use of real life contexts made the learning relevant to the pupils; good planning ensured that a range of strategies were used to engage the pupils actively in their learning; learning intentions were shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson and consolidated at the end of the lesson, and the teachers used open-ended questioning to promote the pupils' thinking. In the less effective practice, the lessons were characterised by over-exposition by the teacher, limited opportunities for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and activities which lacked pace and challenge. More detailed evaluation of the subjects under focus is provided in Appendix 1.

2.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The quality of the leadership and management of the school is good. The Principal, who has been in post for five years, provides effective leadership and has a clear strategic vision for the school. He has developed a collegial leadership system to organise and manage the needs of the school which is evidenced by the willingness of many members of staff to be involved in collaborative working arrangements focused on school improvement. Within this effective structure he has established clear lines of communication between himself, the SMT, the staff, parents and governors. The Principal is supported ably by the hard-work and commitment of the Vice-principal, and senior teachers who lead and manage important curricular and pastoral initiatives that have promoted improvement and developed an increasing culture of self-evaluation throughout the school.

The SDP sets out agreed priorities for improvement but needs to be developed further to comply fully with the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations Northern Ireland (NI) 2005 Order.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 The main strengths of the school include:

- the inclusive ethos and respect for diversity which permeates the school;
- the improving standards attained by the pupils in public examinations;

- the visionary and purposeful leadership of the Principal, ably supported by the Vice-principal and SMT, which has brought about significant improvement in the provision for learning;
- the collegial and dedicated staff who are strongly committed to continuous improvement;
- the quality of the teaching which was good or better in most of the lessons observed and, in a minority of the lessons, excellent; and
- the good focus on the development of active learning strategies to make the learning relevant and interesting for the pupils.

3.2 The areas for development include:

- the need to ensure more consistently that the agreed monitoring and evaluation strategies are followed through rigorously to promote improvement for all pupils; and
- the need to review the CEIAG, provision and the sixth form curriculum in order to provide a wider range of appropriate career pathways for the pupils.

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 FOR THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

Pastoral Care

The strengths of the provision include:

- the very caring and supportive pupil-centred ethos;
- the excellent relationships which are evident throughout the school;
- the positive behaviour of the pupils and the school's policies and procedures to support this;
- the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities provided for the pupils; and
- the excellent work and support provided by key pastoral staff throughout the school.

Science

The strengths of the provision include:

- the quality of teaching which was always good and often very good;
- the strong focus on improving the pupils' learning through practical investigations which relate to everyday life;
- the pupils' participation in extra-curricular science activities and competitions which has increased their interest in science and their motivation to learn;
- the work in class which is suitably matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils;
- the active learning approaches which are well used to help pupils of differing abilities to understand scientific concepts and ideas; and
- the GCSE examination results which are good and have improved steadily over the last three years.

English

The strengths of the provision include:

- the behaviour, motivation and general attitude of the pupils; they believe they can achieve;

- the hard-working and committed teachers and their high expectations of the pupils;
- the standards achieved in the key stage (KS) 3 and KS4 examinations;
- the very effective leadership of the head of English and the collegiality within the department; and
- the literacy rich environment, including the library.

The areas for improvement are:

- the need to review and revise action plans and schemes of work to include more self-evaluation; and
- the need to develop ICT to further improve standards.

Mathematics

The strengths of the provision include:

- the interested and co-operative pupils;
- the hard-working and collegiate mathematics department;
- the quality of teaching which ranges from sound to good;
- the good contexts for learning and the use of appropriate resources;
- the generally good standards achieved at GCSE level; and
- the start in tracking performance and monitoring and evaluating.

The area for improvement is:

- the need to provide greater progression and challenge in the pupils' learning experiences.

ACCOMMODATION

- The school needs to carry out a comprehensive risk assessment.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Patrick's High v. Date of Inspection: W/C 28.04.08
 ii. School Reference Number: 423-0165 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Maintained

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year 8 Intake	34	46	65	49	71
Total enrolment	329	302	318	302	320

1.3 Attendance

Year 2006/07	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2006/07	NI Average 2005/06
% Attendance	91.5	88.6	86.6	84.3	89.9	90.2	87.8	89	90

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:

26

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

0.75

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):

12.3

Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	41	37	41	41	24	6	4	194
Enrolment: Girls	30	17	28	21	21	7	2	126
Enrolment: Total	71	54	69	62	45	13	6	320
PTR	13.83	10.3	13.06	13.81	12.55	14.34	4.9	

1.5 Leavers Destinations

2005/06	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	41		24	
Another School	2%	8.3	4%	1.6
Employment	15%	12	46%	18.5
Full-time Further Education	15%	37.6	13%	20.8
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	29%	44.9
Full-time Training	49%	34.4	0%	6
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	2%	4.2	0%	4.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	17%	3.5	8%	3.3

1.6 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Patrick's High School, Lisburn

SCHOOL YEAR: 2007/2008

GCSE	2005	2006	2007
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	76	81	87
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	25	48	38
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	68	77	85
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2005	2006	2007
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	0	24	17
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 3 A2 levels	0	100	100

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table 1 showing GCSE subject results, over the three years ending in June 2007, in comparison with the respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

	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	Business Studies History Motor Vehicle Studies Religious Studies	English Home Economics Mathematics Media Film and TV Studies Music Single Award Science	Double Award Science 1st Subject Sport/PE Studies	Art and Design Information Technology Spanish	Geography Technology and Design
GCSE A*-C	Business Studies English History Music		Media Film and TV Studies Religious Studies Single Award Science	Mathematics	Art and Design Double Award Science 1st Subject Geography Home Economics Information Technology Motor Vehicle Studies Spanish Sport/PE Studies Technology and Design

Table 2 showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1.

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCSE A* - E	Double Award Science 1st Subject	Art and Design English History Home Economics Information Technology Media Film and TV Studies Music Spanish Sport/PE Studies	Business Studies Geography Mathematics Religious Studies Single Award Science Technology and Design	Motor Vehicle Studies	
GCSE A* - C			Art and Design Information Technology Music	Double Award Science 1st Subject	Business Studies English Geography History Home Economics Mathematics Media Film and TV Studies Motor Vehicle Studies Religious Studies Single Award Science Spanish Sport/PE Studies Technology and Design

Table 3 showing results at A – E for the past two years in vocational A levels.

	2006	2007
Double Award ICT	100%	100%
Leisure and Recreation	100%	N/A
BTEC National Biology	100%	100%
Health and Social Care	N/A	100%

© 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.