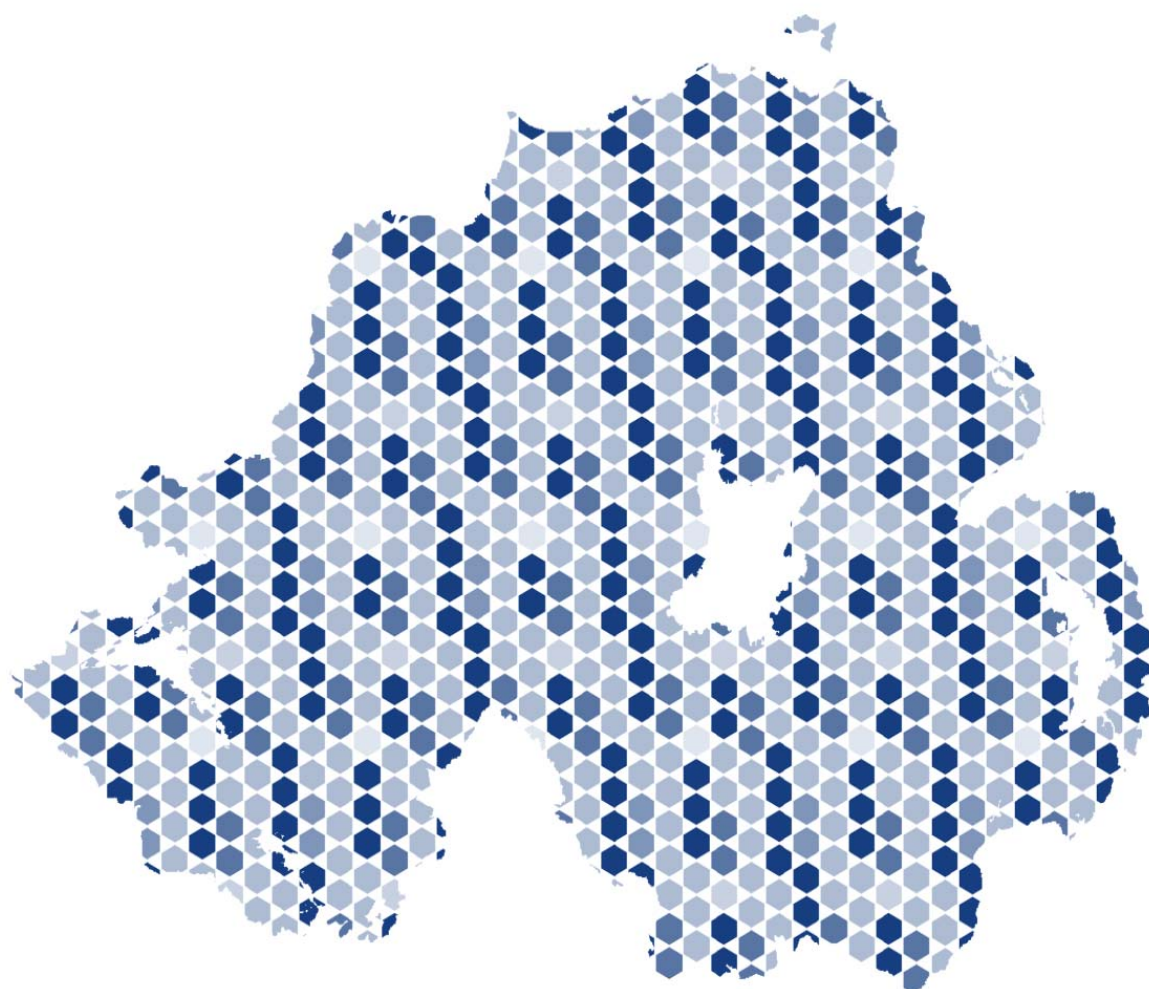


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Rose's High School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in April 2010

CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK	2
3. MAIN FINDINGS	5
4. CONCLUSION	5
APPENDICES	

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

St Rose's High School is a non-selective, girls' maintained school situated on Beechmount Avenue just off the Falls Road in West Belfast. Nearly all of the pupils come from the immediate area. The levels of unemployment and social deprivation in the area are high and 58% of the pupils attending are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 54% of the pupils requiring additional support for their learning. The enrolment has decreased over the past three years and currently stands at 468.

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

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teaching, and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. In addition to meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors), discussions took place with groups of pupils from years 8, 12, 13 and 14, and members of the junior and senior school councils. One hundred questionnaires were issued to the parents, 11% were returned to Inspectorate Services Branch and six of these contained additional written comments. Nearly all of the responses from the questionnaires, and nearly all of the written comments from the parents, were highly supportive of the work of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the care and attention of the teachers to the pastoral needs of their children and to the development of their self-confidence. The very few concerns expressed by the parents were in matters relating to the quality of learning and teaching, in particular the match of work to their child's ability.

Most of the teachers and nearly all of the support staff completed a confidential questionnaire, with 16 providing additional written comments. The staff responded positively on a range of issues including their view that management promote well the care and welfare of the pupils, that the pupils' achievements are celebrated regularly, and that the teachers set appropriate standards for the pupils. While the support staff responded positively on all aspects of the questionnaire, approximately half of the teaching staff who responded raised concerns related to aspects of leadership, internal communication, and staff well-being.

The governors were very positive and talked enthusiastically about their role in the life and work of the school. In particular, they mentioned the pupil-centred ethos, the hard work and dedication of the Principal, Vice-principal and the teachers, and the recent work in further raising the standards which the pupils achieve.

Most of the pupils talked positively about their overall experiences in school, and of the care and support provided by their teachers. There is clear evidence to show that they are aware of what to do and 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, all of the issues emerging from the discussions with pupils and the parents', teachers' and support staff questionnaires. The main elements of these are dealt with in the body of the report.

1.3 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels and, on the provision for English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). The provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and the arrangements for the

inclusion of these pupils in all aspects of school life was also inspected. The provision for pastoral care; the arrangements for child protection; and the school's programme for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) were evaluated; as was the approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. As an additional evidence base, lessons were observed in a range of other subjects.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

Over the last three years the overall results obtained in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations have shown significant improvement. Over these years, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in five or more subjects at GCSE was at or well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. While there was a decrease in 2008, over the past three years, the results have improved from 32% of pupils achieving grades A*-C in five or more GCSEs to 36% last academic year. For similar schools with pupils achieving grades A*-C in five or more subjects at GCSE including English and mathematics, the school is at the NI average; this performance level benefits from the good results in English. The school has already identified the need for improvement in standards in mathematics at GCSE, and the inspection endorses this as a further key priority. There is undue variation, in the performance of individual subjects at GCSE. While a minority of subjects are within or above five percentage points of the NI average, in a majority of subjects, achievement is more than ten percentage points below the NI average and these standards need to be improved.

To ensure that the pupils' subject choices are met most effectively at post-16, the school should continue to review the curriculum provision, learning programmes and activities to make certain that it is most suitably matched to the needs of all the pupils. Consideration should be given within the review, to providing a viably costed wider range of vocational options, within the context of the local Area Learning Community.

More information about the results achieved in public examinations is given in Appendices 3 and 4.

2.2 THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The pupils show a sense of pride in their school and are conscientious in the manner in which they treat their surroundings. They benefit well from the school's strong focus on the progressive development of good personal and social skills. Nearly all of the pupils co-operated well with their teachers and peers during the lessons observed and were motivated to complete their work. The behaviour observed in the corridors and other circulation areas during the inspection was invariably very good.

Just over six-tenths of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or very good. In the most effective practice, the teachers and pupils had appropriately high expectations and the questioning was challenging, giving the pupils opportunities to make a sustained, spoken response. During these sessions, pupils developed well their thinking skills, personal capabilities, and independence, and the teachers provided well-planned opportunities for the pupils to reflect and build upon their learning. The pupils had a good understanding of the intended learning and, in particular, the success criteria associated with

the lesson. In the remainder of the lessons, however, the pace was too slow, the outcomes were unclear or were not met, and there was insufficient challenge within lessons which often drew a passive response. The inspection highlights the need to share and develop the existing very good learning and teaching strategies to all the classes.

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

PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good. The staff team with responsibility for pastoral care give high priority to the emotional health and well-being of the pupils. The strengths of the provision include: the inclusive ethos within the school, the support given to those pupils who are experiencing serious personal issues, the quality of the policies which guide the work in pastoral care, the good progress made in the development of appropriate strategies and merit systems to promote positive behaviour and to improve attendance, the good behaviour of nearly all the pupils as they move about the school freely and with a clear sense of order, and the successful working alongside other agencies and the wider community in support of the pupils.

CHILD PROTECTION

The school has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The provision for CEIAG is good. The school has a well-planned, coherent CEIAG programme which forms an integral part of the school development plan (SDP). It signposts opportunities for the pupils to identify, assess and develop the skills and qualities necessary to choose and implement an appropriate career plan. The pupils participate in a variety of careers visits and activities which reflect and meet their needs. The work-related learning opportunities contribute effectively to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world of work and the employment opportunities available. The CEIAG co-ordinator has identified appropriate areas for development including the need for more relevant, stimulating, up-to-date learning resources in order to ensure the most effective delivery of the programme.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

The provision for special educational needs is good. The support for literacy is very good but there is insufficient support for numeracy.

The special educational needs of the pupils are sensitively and effectively managed by a committed and hard-working special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) who is very well supported by the Principal and the teaching staff.

The school is committed to ensuring that special educational needs support becomes the collective responsibility of the whole staff and in recent years, the teachers, together with the support staff, received training in aspects of special educational needs. Individual education plans (IEPs) are designed to ensure their manageability, and are used well generally to guide learning and teaching. In class, the support staff who are effectively line-managed and supported by the SENCO are an important element in the special educational needs

provision; in classes, they are well deployed and carry out their roles in a very professional manner; their work makes a significant contribution to the pastoral and academic needs of the pupils. Reading support, including reading partnerships has a positive impact on the pupils' motivation and progress in reading.

The school invests a considerable amount of time and staff support to ensuring the inclusion of all of its pupils, and demonstrates a caring commitment to those pupils who are at greatest risk of marginalisation. There is a strong focus on retaining pupils with challenging behaviour in school, dealing with difficult circumstances both internally and in liaison effectively with the home and external agencies. The school works hard to engage the parents and the community in academic and leisure activities to foster better links with the home and wider community. Additionally, the school maintains contact with pupils educated off-site and their providers, actively pursuing ways of ensuring they have access to examinations, can re-engage with mainstream classes, and access work placements.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through, for example, a popular after-school cookery club caters well for both the pupils and their families, and the lunchtime recreational activities encourage the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

2.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal is hard-working and highly committed to a school improvement agenda. With the strong support of her Vice-principal, and other key members of the senior management team (SMT), she has led the school successfully in recent significant improvements in the quality of the educational provision provided, in particular, the standards achieved by the pupils. Under her direction, the school has developed, in an innovative manner, a strong pastoral focus and an increased emphasis on using benchmarked and other quantitative data on the pupils' academic performance. There is now a need for a further involvement of the SMT, and the middle management, in monitoring and evaluating the provision, in particular, ensuring that necessary adjustments in the learning and teaching are made. In taking forward this work, it will be important for the SMT to develop further their communication with the teaching staff in taking forward whole-school improvement.

Overall, the school has made a good start in implementing arrangements for self-evaluation leading to improvement. It makes effective use of DE benchmarking data to set whole-school targets for improvement in examination results for grades A*-C in five or more subjects at GCSE. As a priority, further use needs to be made of data the school holds on comparisons of subject results at GCSE to similar non-selective schools for target-setting within individual subjects, particularly with a view to raising the standards expected and achieved in a significant minority of subjects.

The School Development Plan (SDP) meets the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 and identifies appropriately the key areas for improvement; these areas are detailed further in comprehensive action plans at department level. It is timely that these priorities focus on the need to consolidate the improvements in the pupils' achievements and raise still further the standards attained in external examinations. Recent audits of learning and teaching within the school identified accurately a number of appropriate areas for improvement, including ICT and the dissemination of the existing very good practice. These areas along with the immediate improvement of the provision in mathematics need to be prioritised within the new SDP.

The Board of Governors is committed to the work of the school and offers very good support to the Principal. They give generously of their time, and are well-informed about the work of the school and the improving standards.

3. **MAIN FINDINGS**

The main strengths of the school include:

- the positive attitudes to learning and the very good behaviour of nearly all of the pupils;
- the arrangements for pastoral care including the strong focus on inclusiveness and support for those pupils experiencing serious personal, social or emotional difficulties;
- the hard-working teachers and the good to very good teaching observed in a majority of the lessons;
- the very good quality of the provision for those pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning in literacy;
- the good quality of the provision in English; and
- the strong commitment of the Principal and Vice-principal who have a clear focus in working with their colleagues on developing strategies for school improvement.

The areas for improvement are:

- the need to provide learning programmes and activities which match better the needs of all the pupils, in particular to provide a greater degree of challenge in a significant minority of lessons, with a view to improving further the standards attained by the pupils; and
- the need to improve the inadequate provision and standards in mathematics.

4. **CONCLUSION**

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the organisation is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE SUBJECT AREAS UNDER FOCUS

English

The quality of provision for English is good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the quality of the teaching, all of which was good or better;
- the good standards achieved in public examinations;
- the good quality of the pupils' extended writing and the high levels of presentation across the year groups;
- the detailed departmental schemes of work and the teachers' individual planning which meet the needs of all the pupils in English;
- the very good support provided by teachers in the department for those pupils identified as having additional needs in literacy; and
- the head of department's strategic leadership and effective analysis of data to promote improvement.

The area for improvement is:

- the need to continue to focus on raising standards further.

Information and Communication technology (ICT)

The quality of the provision for ICT is satisfactory.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the strong commitment by senior management of curriculum time and good resources for ICT;
- the satisfactory quality of the pupils' ICT experiences and capabilities; and
- the evolving provision of better opportunities for the pupils to extend their skills in ICT by experiencing contemporary, creative technologies.

The areas for improvement are:

- the need for more effective arrangements for the management and co-ordination of ICT at middle management level;
- the need for a broader and more challenging range of ICT experiences for all of the pupils; and
- the need for higher quality of learning and teaching with and through ICT.

Mathematics

The quality of the provision for mathematics is inadequate.

The strengths of the work include:

- the good relationships between the teachers and the pupils in the majority of the lessons observed;
- the enthusiasm and ability of the pupils to engage in learning and work collaboratively when given the opportunity; and
- the good start made to using quantitative data to track the progress of individual pupils.

The areas for improvement are:

- the need to improve the inadequate standards achieved by the pupils, particularly those in public examinations;
- the need to improve the provision for most pupils in mathematics by ensuring that the learning and teaching strategies are matched to their abilities, needs and interests; and
- the need for the head of department to focus sharply on agreeing, monitoring and refining the departmental strategies required to effect improvement in the provision for, and the standards achieved in, mathematics.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- A Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) Property Services Survey of St Rose's High School over 5 years ago assessed the condition of the school windows and reported that the existing provision was insufficient. In terms of Health & Safety both internal and external windows need to be upgraded so that if a window breaks, it breaks safely.
- The school's fire alarm and detection system need to be upgraded and extended in order to meet safety requirements; an issue which was highlighted in a comprehensive Fire Risk Assessment of St Rose's High School which was carried out by BELB/CCMS in 2007/08.
- The school does not have automatic door hold open/closing devices in the corridors.
- The common room area for year 13 and 14 pupils within the school building is of an inadequate size.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Rose's High, Belfast v. Date of Inspection: W/C 26/04/10
 ii. School Reference Number: 123-0130 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Roman Catholic Maintained

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Year 8 Intake	92	65	84	77	52
Total enrolment	573	549	530	501	468

1.3 Attendance

Year 2008/09	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2008/09	NI Average 2007/08
% Attendance	90.4	90.9	86.5	86.3	87.9	91.1	92.3	89	90

1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:	33.8	iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):	0.692
ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):	13.64		

Year 2009/10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Girls	52	75	81	61	92	66	41	468
Enrolment: Total	52	75	81	61	92	66	41	468
PTR	0	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	60.4	NI Av Year 13	40.9
Year 14	23.3	NI Av Year 14	26.5

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2007/08	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	47		65	
Another School	17%	11.3	0%	1.7
Employment	11%	8.7	23%	18.6
Full-time Further Education	11%	41.8	20%	22.4
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	8%	42.8
Full-time Training	49%	30.3	22%	4.9
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	4.4	5%	5.6
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	13%	3.5	23%	4

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: St Rose's High School, Belfast SCHOOL YEAR: 2009/2010

GCSE	2007	2008	2009
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	93	99	97
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	32	24	37
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	20	15	11
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	74	60	66
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2007	2008	2009
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	26	19	16
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	100	95	95

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing the GCSE and GCE A2 subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2009, 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	Double Award Science 1 st Subject		Art & Design Polish Sport/PE Studies	History Motor Vehicle Studies Office Technology	Business Studies Design and Technology Drama English English Literature French Geography GNVQ Media Studies Home Economics Child Devt Information Technology Mathematics Religious Studies Single Award Science Spanish
GCSE A*-E		Motor Vehicle Studies	Art & Design Double Award Science 1 st Subject Office Technology Polish Sport/PE Studies	Design and Technology Drama English English Literature Information Technology Single Award Science	Business Studies French Geography GNVQ Media Studies History Home Economics Child Development Mathematics Religious Studies Spanish

	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
GCE A Level A-C					Art & Design English Literature History Media Film and TV Studies Religious Studies

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	Polish		Art and Design Drama English Literature GNVQ Media Studies Information Technology	Design and Technology Double Award Science 1 st Subject Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Office Technology Religious Studies	Business Studies English French Geography History Home Economics Child Development Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Single Award Science Spanish Sport/PE Studies
GCSE A*-E	Art and Design Double Award Science 1 st Subject Drama English Literature Information Technology Polish Sport/PE Studies	Design and Technology English French Geography GNVQ Media Studies History Home Economics Child Development Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Office Technology Religious Studies Single Award Science Spanish	Business Studies Mathematics	Motor Vehicle Studies	
GCE A Level A-C		Art and Design Drama English Literature History Media Film and TV Studies Religious Studies			

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