



*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

**Dunmurry High School
Belfast**

Inspected: February 2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Dunmurry High School is a controlled, co-educational 11-16 non-selective school. It is situated on the outskirts of Belfast, south of Dunmurry village. The school draws its pupils mostly from the surrounding locality but also from the centre of Belfast. Over the past two years the school has received 42 pupils from Balmoral High School which closed in 2008. The school enrolment has fluctuated slightly over the past five years and currently stands at 318. Over the past three years 71% of the intake did not participate in the Transfer Procedure, 27% obtained grades C or D and 2% obtained grades A or B. Approximately 39% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and the school has indentified almost 30% of the pupils as having special educational needs (SEN). Currently there are two pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).

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

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the teaching and support 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 and 12.

Approximately 100 questionnaires were issued to parents; ten (10%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and five 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 commitment of the teachers and the caring supportive learning environment.

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

Eleven (41%) teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with four providing additional written comments. Most of the teachers who completed the questionnaire expressed their satisfaction with the work of the school and their full support for the effective leadership of the Principal. Overall a minority of the teachers identified poor communication as an issue within the school and expressed concerns about aspects of discipline. Four members (44%) of support staff completed a confidential questionnaire; the majority of the responses were positive.

During the discussions with pupils, they spoke positively about their experiences in school, but in particular a minority of pupils expressed concerns about the behaviour of other pupils towards them in the circulation areas within the school.

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

1.3 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels across the school and, in addition, on the provision for English, geography 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.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

When the quality of teaching is good or better, the pupils are keen to learn, well-motivated and achieve good standards across the ability range. Most pupils in year 12 are entered for five or more subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level, but there is undue variation in the standards achieved by the pupils across the subjects; the majority of subjects are more than ten percentage points below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for non-selective schools.

Over the past three years the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A* to C in five or more subjects at GCSE level has increased from 24% to almost 32% which is over ten percentage points below the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools. Over the same period the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A* to C in five or more subjects including English and mathematics has increased from 15% to almost 21% which is between five and ten percentage points below the NI average for non-selective schools.

The school has identified the need to use more effectively analysis of pupil performance data from internal and external assessments to identify and implement appropriate intervention strategies to address the undue variation in the standards achieved by the pupils at key stage (KS) 4. The inspection endorses this as a key priority. More details of all the examination results can be found in Appendix 3.

2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The quality of teaching was good or very good in the majority of the lessons observed; in a small number of lessons it was outstanding; and in a small number of lessons it was inadequate.

In the most effective practice, enthusiastic teachers displayed and mediated meaningful learning intentions to motivate pupils and direct their learning. These lessons were well paced and planned, with an appropriately high level of challenge to extend the more able pupils. Active learning strategies, and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) resources when accessed, enhanced teaching and supported the pupils' learning. Within the Nurture classes there were well-chosen opportunities for connected learning and evidence of effective deployment of classroom assistants.

In the less effective practice, there was an over emphasis on teacher direction, with too narrow a range of strategies to engage pupils more actively in their learning. There was also limited evidence of marking for improvement, extended writing and structured discussion; consequently, opportunities to develop oral and written literacy skills were not fully exploited. In these lessons the pupils became increasingly restless and their motivation and interest declined.

2.3 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION (AEP)

The school's capacity to ensure its commitment to those pupils at risk of marginalisation is satisfactory. The teachers are developing the capacity to identify any pupils at risk of falling behind in their work or dropping out of school. The school implements a range of interventions to promote pupils' engagement with learning, for example extended work experience, counselling, Vocational Enhancement Programmes, outreach support and use of external agencies.

2.4 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The teachers work hard to ensure that the pupils participate actively in lessons and make progress in their learning. The introduction of Nurture classes provides a very supportive environment for some junior pupils and helps them to settle into their new school. There is a need for greater co-ordination across the curriculum in planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning for pupils with special educational needs. In particular, there is a need for effective individual education plans (IEPs) supported by specific, measurable targets that are linked appropriately to specific learning needs.

2.5 PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral work of the school is given priority and the provision for pastoral care within the school is good. This is demonstrated through the caring and supportive ethos; the further enrichment of the pupils' learning experiences through the Extended Schools Programme and the individual and secure support provided through the Nurture groups for pupils in years 8 to 11.

2.6 CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people and these arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by DE, but the following area needs to be addressed: the school should continue to review its policy and procedures for the management of positive behaviour to include, as a matter of urgency, the experiences of the pupils in the circulation areas.

2.7 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example the promotion of drinking water and a popular breakfast club. The area for improvement identified includes the need to provide pupils with opportunities to inform and influence whole-school healthy eating programmes.

2.8 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal sets a positive tone for the school through her interest, care and support for the pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. She is committed to promoting high standards and has a strategic overview of the strengths in the school's provision and the aspects which need improvement. The Principal is ably supported by the Vice-Principal and the other members of the SMT. The SMT are committed, hard-working and function well as a cohesive and supportive team.

The school development plan (SDP) sets out agreed priorities for improvement and complies fully with the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations Northern Ireland (NI) 2005 Order.

The inspection confirms that the school has identified appropriate educational and pastoral areas for future development and improvement as evidenced by the self-evaluation proformas completed by the school departments prior to the inspection and by the associated action plans incorporated within the SDP. These important areas which include raising standards, improving poor attendance, using DE benchmarking data to set challenging targets and reviewing the curriculum at KS4 to meet the changing nature of the school intake need to be prioritised within the SDP in light of the inspection findings.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The main strengths of the school include:

- the caring and supportive ethos;
- the hard-working and committed teachers, well supported by classroom assistants;
- the quality of the teaching in the majority of the lessons observed;
- the provision of Nurture classes to support pupils;
- the commitment and leadership of the Principal to promote improvement; and
- the Extended Schools Programme and links with external agencies.

The areas for development include:

- the need to improve standards in public examinations;
- the need for management at all levels to use more effectively the analysis of pupil performance data to review learning and teaching, and to identify and implement appropriate intervention strategies and IEPs to raise the standards achieved by the pupils across the curriculum; and
- the wider dissemination of effective learning and teaching strategies, including the use of ICT resources, to engage actively, motivate and challenge the pupils.

4. **CONCLUSION**

In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

SUBJECT SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Geography Department

The main strengths of the Geography department are:

- the good working relationships between the teachers and the pupils;
- the responsive pupils;
- the effective use of resources to stimulate the pupils' interest and engagement; and
- the hard work and commitment of the teacher in charge.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the need to improve pupil achievement in public examinations; and
- to develop further the departmental schemes of work to give greater emphasis to real and relevant local and global issues and build on pupils' interests.

English Department

The main strengths of the English department are:

- the hard-working and dedicated teachers;
- the good working relationships between teachers and pupils;
- the quality of leadership in the department;
- the good start made to planning for the revised Northern Ireland curriculum; and
- the timely review of practice which the department is undertaking.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the need to improve examination results at GCSE; and
- the need to develop more widely the use of ICT in teaching and learning.

Science Department

The main strengths of the Science department are:

- the quality of teaching which is always good and often very good; a wide variety of teaching approaches are used well to help pupils of differing abilities understand scientific concepts and ideas;
- the teachers' systematic supervision of the pupils' work; good records are maintained and used to monitor progress;
- the marking of the pupils' written work which is sometimes annotated with comments indicating ways of improving presentation and accuracy;
- the working relationships between the teachers and the pupils;
- the GCSE examination results which are improving steadily over time; and
- the good beginning which has been made in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: **Dunmurry High School** v. Date of Inspection: **W/C 23.02.09**
 ii. School Reference Number: **421-0194** vi. Area of Study: **Standard Inspection**
 iii. Age Range: **11-16**
 iv. Status: **Controlled**

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 8 Intake	52	44	75	45	53
Total enrolment	305	300	326	318	318

Year 2008/09	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	25	27	37	41	32	162
Enrolment: Girls	28	21	43	26	38	156
Enrolment: Total	53	48	80	67	70	318
PTR	10.79	9.98	12.47	12.43	11.53	

1.3 Attendance

Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	Average 2007/08	NI Average 2006/07
% Attendance	88.5	84.4	89.2	80.4	88.1	86	90

1.4 Contact ratio and pupil teacher ratio

i. Total Number of Teachers:

27.6

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

0.73

ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):

11.52

1.5 Leavers Destinations

2006/07	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	79	
Another School	9%	11.1
Employment	22%	12.4
Full-time Further Education	9%	37.2
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training	52%	30.1
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	9%	4.1
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	4.9

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: Dunmurry High School SCHOOL YEAR: 2008/2009

GCSE	2006	2007	2008
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	76.47	90.54	85.96
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	23.53	25.68	31.58
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and mathematics	14.74	18.92	21.05
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	57.35	66.22	66.67

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table 1 showing GCSE subject results, at A* to C over the three years ending in June 2008, 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*-C	Music	Double Award Science 1st Subject	Art & Design Single Award Science	Business and Communication Systems French	English Geography Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Information and Communication Technology Mathematics Learning for Life and Work *Religious Education Sport/PE Studies Technology and Design
GCSE A-E		Geography Music Single Award Science	Art & Design Business and Communication Systems Double Award Science 1st Subject French Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Sport/PE Studies Technology and Design	Mathematics	English Information and Communication Technology Learning for Life and Work Religious Education

* denotes GCSE short course

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*-C			Information and Communication Technology Music	Art & Design Double Award Science 1st Subject Technology and Design	Business and Communication Systems English French Geography Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Learning for Life and Work Mathematics Religious Education Single Award Science Sport/PE Studies
GCSE A-E		Art & Design English Home Economics Home Economics Child Development Information and Communication Technology Music Business and Communication Systems Double Award Science 1st Subject Sport/PE Studies	French Geography Learning for Life and Work Mathematics Single Award Science Technology and Design		Religious Education

Table 5 showing results for Occupational Studies Double Award Level 1 in 2008

Occupational Studies Double Award Level 1	
Number of pupils entered	16
Percentage of pupils achieving Level 1	50%

Table 6 showing results for Leisure and Tourism Double Award

Leisure and Tourism	2007	2006
Number of pupils entered	20	26
Percentage of pupils achieving A* - C	35%	57.5%

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