



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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**Department of Education
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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

Drumcree College

Inspected: January 2008

SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (SSP) FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF DRUMCREE COLLEGE, PORTADOWN, CO ARMAGH, BT62 1QL (523-0256)

In January 2007 the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) visited Drumcree College to monitor progress of the follow-up inspection carried out as part of the SSP. The follow-up inspection highlighted strengths in the following areas:

- the initial assessment of year 8 pupils' information and communication technology skills on transferring from primary school;
- the review of school improvement management structures; and
- the development of pupil access to appropriate vocational programmes at key stage 4 and post-16 level.

The inspection also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to monitor the effectiveness of curricular and pastoral strategies, to ensure a clear focus on improving classroom practice and the pupils' attainment across the curriculum; and
- to consolidate and develop the roles of the middle management and senior management team (SMT) to promote assessment for learning.

In the interval since the inspection the following action, which affects the work of the college, has taken place:

- the preparation of a self-evaluation report, by the SMT, to address the areas for improvement;
- the introduction of monthly action plans to assist staff in addressing the areas for improvement;
- the formal assessment of pupils on a regular basis;
- the staff training in the School Information Management System (SIMS) assessment and attendance modules to record and track pupil performance;
- the staff training in the Year 11 information system (YELLIS) to baseline pupil performance and to measure the value added;
- the decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving a grade C in at least five subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) from 33.33% in 2006 to 25.70% in 2007;
- the review of the behaviour management system and the reintroduction of the time out centre for pupils with challenging behaviour;
- the access to a counselling service for pupils;
- the additional withdrawal support provided for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language;
- the use of learning mentors to support pupils with SEN;

- the monitoring of classroom management strategies by the Principal and SMT; and
- the preparation of departmental evaluation reports by heads of department on the quality of teaching and learning.

In January 2008, the Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection. The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the previous inspection:

- the effective use of SIMS assessment and attendance modules to record and track pupil performance;
- the good start in the use of YELLIS to baseline the pupils' performance to quantify progress through value added measures and to set realistic targets for improvement;
- the developing culture of self-evaluation and the collaborative working arrangements promoted throughout the school; and
- the clear focus on defining the roles and responsibilities of the middle management and SMT to monitor and evaluate classroom practice and whole-school improvement.

The area which requires further improvement is:

- the need to evaluate the results from the curricular and pastoral strategies in order to select and implement those strategies which will promote improvement in the pupils' attainment across the curriculum.

The follow-up inspection findings confirm that the college has demonstrated some evidence of improvement, but some areas for improvement remain to be addressed more rigorously. The Inspectorate recommends that the processes for self-evaluation are developed to focus more strongly on self-evaluation as a means to bring about improvement.

The Inspectorate will continue to monitor the work of Drumcree College to ensure that the improvements which are needed are implemented.

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