



*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

Lisnagarvey High School
Lisburn

Inspected: November 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Lisnagarvey High School is a controlled, co-educational 11-18 non-selective school. It is situated in Lisburn and draws its pupils from the town and the surrounding area. The enrolment has fluctuated slightly over the past five years and currently stands at 321. Over the past three years approximately 73% of the intake did not participate in the Transfer Procedure, 26% obtained grades C or D and 1% obtained grades A or B. Approximately 40% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and the school has identified 11% of the pupils as having special educational needs (SEN). Currently there are 14 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).

1.2 THE VIEWS OF THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF, 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 Board of Governors (governors) and groups of pupils from years 8, 12 and the sixth form.

Approximately 140 questionnaires were issued to parents; 44 (31%) were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 20 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 teachers, the good standards in examinations, the quality of the 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 leadership of the Principal and senior management team (SMT), the improving standards achieved in external examinations and the commitment of the teachers and the support staff.

The pupils talked enthusiastically about the variety of extra-curricular activities, the sports facilities and the caring and supportive teachers. From the discussions, there is evidence that the pupils are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety, care and well-being.

Eleven of the teachers completed a confidential questionnaire, with six 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. In particular, all of the teachers indicated that the Principal provides effective leadership. Three members of support staff completed a confidential questionnaire; and the majority of the responses were positive.

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.

1.3 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management at all levels across the school and, in addition, on the provision for mathematics, physical education 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

Over the past three years the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A* to C in five or more subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level has increased to almost 41% which is within five percentage points of the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools. This positive trend reflects the hard work and dedication of the staff to promote improvement within the school. Over the past three years, the percentage of the pupils obtaining General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level grades A to E in two subjects has decreased to below the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools. The school has identified the need to improve the standards achieved by the pupils in external examinations; and in particular to increase the percentage of pupils obtaining grades C or above at GCSE level in at least five subjects including English and mathematics which is well below the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools. The inspection endorses this as a key priority. More details of all of the examination results can be found in Appendix 2.

2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

In a significant minority of the lessons observed, the quality of the teaching was very good or better; in a small number, it was inadequate. In the most effective practice, the lessons were characterised by the purposeful use of learning intentions and success criteria at the beginning of and during the lessons, the good range of teaching strategies used to stimulate and engage the pupils, the creative questioning to extend and consolidate the pupils' thinking skills, and the well-planned and differentiated work that is set in suitable context and builds on the pupils' prior learning experiences and interests. In the less effective practice, the lessons were characterised by the over-emphasis on whole-class activities with limited opportunities for pupils to contribute or engage meaningfully, the lack of pace and challenge, and little or no account taken of the range of abilities within the class.

The school, through its own processes of self-evaluation, has identified the need to disseminate the existing good practice across the school through the sharing of effective strategies for learning and teaching, in order to actively involve and challenge all of the pupils. This key priority needs to focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy.

2.3 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION (AEP)

The school's capacity to ensure its commitment to those pupils at risk of marginalisation is good.

The teachers identify any pupils at risk of falling behind or dropping out of school and take appropriate action to promote their inclusion and ensure they do as well as they can. Care, guidance and pastoral support for pupils are good. The school gives good attention to nurturing these pupils' emotional development, providing a basis for them to learn successfully and feel included. In addition, the school has established effective partnerships with the Lisburn Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and a shared facility with two other local schools.

2.4 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is good. This is demonstrated through the positive working relationships at all levels and the effective leadership of the pastoral care co-ordinator who is supported ably by the pastoral team. In order to improve further the quality of the pastoral care provision, there is a need to consult more with staff, pupils and parents when reviewing pastoral policies, and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the pastoral care provision.

2.5 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding the pupils. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by DE, but the following minor areas need to be addressed. The school needs to develop procedures to ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff receive appropriate child protection training, and to develop procedures to ensure that all staff are vetted.

2.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example the provision of water, healthy breaks in the canteen and links with external agencies. The areas for improvement identified include the need to ensure that the food available in the breakfast club and tuck shop complies with the nutritional standards and to review the procedures for special diets.

2.7 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal has been in post for three years having formerly been the Vice-principal of the school. He has a broad and strategic vision for the school, based on a set of agreed values which are centered on the educational and welfare needs of all the children. Under his effective leadership the SMT and the staff have worked hard to take forward a number of important initiatives. These include the setting up of a faculty system to organise the general learning areas of the curriculum across the key stages, the introduction of self-evaluation through departmental audits and action plans, the reorganisation of the middle management structure to include a consultative committee to manage and review important aspects of curricular and pastoral provision, and the implementation of an intervention programme to raise the pupils' attainment. In addition, the staff has worked hard to establish a good range

of external collaborative links and partnerships which support and extend the school curriculum and underpin the increasing high regard in which the school is held by the local community.

Over the past three years, the number enrolled in sixth form has increased to 51; however, the pupils only have the opportunity to select from a limited range of six GCE A level subjects. It will be important that the management at all levels use the guidance outlined in the DE circular 2005/06 to evaluate rigorously how the financial and educational costs of the considerable investment of staffing and material resources for this curriculum model impinge on the attainment, and the teaching and learning needs of the pupils in key stage (KS) 3 and KS4. 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.

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 SDP will need to be reviewed in light of the inspection findings.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The main strengths of the school include:

- the good quality of working relationships between teachers and pupils;
- the significant improvement in the standards reached by the pupils taking five or more GCSEs at A*-C;
- the strong commitment of the school to retaining marginalized pupils through innovative and effective projects with other partners;
- the very good or better teaching observed in a significant minority of the lessons;
- the vision and commitment of the Principal who has a strong and effective focus on raising standards; and
- the high priority given by the school to the development of constructive links with the local community.

The areas for development include:

- the wider dissemination of effective learning and teaching strategies to actively engage, motivate and challenge the pupils;
- the sharper focus at whole-school level to raise the standards in English and mathematics, including in public examinations, as identified appropriately by the school; and
- the development of management roles at all levels to focus more specifically on self-evaluation leading to whole-school improvement.

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 and 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

Science

The main strengths of the science department include:

- the very good leadership of the acting head of science, well supported by the other science staff;
- the well-embedded culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement, including the effective use of target-setting both by teachers and pupils to improve continuously the standards reached, including those attained in public examinations;
- the teachers' excellent use of expected learning outcomes allied to associated success criteria, to structure their lessons effectively;
- the comprehensive departmental documentation including detailed schemes of work of an excellent quality for years 8 and 9;
- the very good teaching seen in a large majority of the lessons, characterised particularly by the active involvement of the pupils, their use of a wide range of good quality teacher-produced written resources, and their good record of science work completed; and
- the overall good standards reached in practical and theoretical work, and in public examinations.

Mathematics

The strengths of the mathematics department include:

- the interest shown by most of the pupils in their mathematics and their willingness to co-operate with their teachers and each other;
- the hard-working teachers;
- the quality of the teaching in the lessons observed, just over half of which is good or better;
- the good access and use of resources;
- the leadership of the head of department in terms of teaching and subject expertise; and
- the start to monitoring and evaluating at GCSE level.

The areas for improvement, most of which have been identified in the department self-evaluation, are the need to:

- raise standards at GCSE level;
- provide more consistent challenge and progression in the pupils' work and, in particular, to provide more opportunity for them to discuss and explain their understanding of mathematics; and
- give a higher priority to mathematics at whole-school level in order to promote improved standards.

Physical Education

The strengths of the physical education department include:

- the very good working relationships between the pupils and the teachers;
- the quality of the teaching which is mostly good or better;
- the high level of pupil motivation and engagement;
- the strong commitment of the teachers to the provision of a wide range of activities for the pupils; and
- the extent of the extra-curricular provision.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop further the process of self-evaluation, with a clear focus on the development and dissemination of active learning strategies in order to raise standards further at examination level; and
- continue to review and contextualise planning to support the development of the physical education programme.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

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|------------|-------------|--|--------------|---|
| 1.1 | i. | School: Lisnagarvey High School | vii. | Date of Inspection: W/C 17.11.08 |
| | ii. | School Reference Number: 421-0051 | viii. | Area of Study: Standard Inspection |
| | iii. | Age Range: 11-18 | | |
| | iv. | Status: Controlled | | |

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 8 Intake	45	46	37	34	62
Total enrolment	355	344	314	283	321

Year 2008/09	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	26	14	26	33	25	19	13	156
Enrolment: Girls	36	27	27	27	29	14	5	165
Enrolment: Total	62	41	53	60	54	33	18	321
PTR	18.93	20.5	25.85	19.45	18.4	13.2	16.36	

1.3 Attendance

Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2007/08	NI Average 2006/07
% Attendance	88.5	87.7	81.8	83.7	89.7	94.7	87.6	87	90

1.4 Contact ratio and pupil teacher ratio

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|------|------|--|------|
| i. | Total Number of Teachers: | 27 | iii. | Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): | 0.72 |
| ii. | PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): | 12.6 | | | |

1.5 Leavers Destinations

2006/07	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	56		24	
Another School	9	11.1	0	2
Employment	20	12.4	21	19.5
Full-time Further Education	13	37.2	0	21
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	13	42
Full-time Training	27	30.1	0	6.6
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	7	4.1	25	4.3
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	25	4.9	42	4.6

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: Lisnagarvey High School

SCHOOL YEAR: 2008/2009

GCSE	2006	2007	2008
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	84.29	78.1	81.2
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	28.87	32.43	40.58
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	62.86	65.75	66.67
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2006	2007	2008
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	100	91.67	84.21

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table 1 showing GCSE subject results, 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	Biology French Music Office Technology	Business Studies	Polish Science Double Award 1st Subject Science Single Award Technology and design	Religious Studies	Art & Design Chemistry English English Literature Geography GNVQ Hospitality and Catering History Home Economics Child Devt Information Technology Mathematics Mathematics Additional Sport/PE Studies
GCE A level A-E			Applied Business Studies		Information Technology

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	Polish	Biology	Chemistry Information Technology Mathematics Additional Music	Art & Design English Literature Science Double Award 1st Subject Technology & Design	Business Studies English French Geography GNVQ Hospitality and Catering History Home Economics Child Devt Mathematics Office Technology Religious Studies Science Single Award Sport/PE Studies
GCE A level A-E	Applied Business Studies Information Technology				

Table 3 showing results for Occupational Studies in 2008

	Double Award level 1	Single Award level 1	Double Award level 2	Single Award level 2	No Award
Pupils	12	15	9	4	2
Percentage	29%	36%	21%	10%	5%

Table 4 showing results for Key Skills Communication in 2008

	Achieving level 2	Achieving level 1
Pupils entered (40)	10	10
Percentage	25%	25%

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