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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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**Department of Education**  
**Department for Employment and Learning**  
**Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

**Belfast Royal Academy**

**November 2006**

## **FOLLOW UP TO THE INSPECTION OF BELFAST ROYAL ACADEMY (142-0028)**

The focused inspection in modern languages highlighted strengths in the pleasant and often good-humoured atmosphere observed in many of the lessons; the well-motivated and well-behaved pupils; the well-organised and conscientious teachers; the significant minority of effectively sequenced lessons covering more than one skill and the many lessons which were conducted at a brisk pace. Other strengths included the extensive use of the target language by some teachers who explained difficult phrases in the target language, using mime, visuals, drawings and symbols to convey meaning and to assist comprehension; the effective use of a range of visual resources in a minority of lessons to promote extended oral use of the language and provide a stimulus to written work; the examination results and the size and disposition of the rooms within the department, and the quality of several of the language displays.

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

- the monitoring of the extent to which departmental policy and recommended practice are being implemented;
- the development of a greater shared understanding of what constitutes good practice and the dissemination of the existing good practice across the department; and
- the provision of a wider range of learning experiences for the pupils, with less emphasis on low-level textbook exercises which involve little productive use of language.

In the interval since the inspection, the following change which affects the work of the school has taken place.

- a new head of department was appointed and took up post in September 2005.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection on 24 November 2006.

The following are the most important improvements since the focused inspection:

- the new head of department has undertaken a series of classroom observations in order to monitor more fully the work of all the teachers in the department and to ensure that a greater degree of consistency of approach has been adopted in important areas of practice;
- under the guidance of the head of department, the teachers have discussed their teaching approaches, including the use of the target language in lessons and the promotion of more extended oral and written responses from the pupils. As a result of these discussions, the teachers have produced a departmental document which lists the key elements of good practice; in addition, the teachers have compiled a useful file of extended writing tasks to be used in lessons;

- the sixth form pupils are encouraged to engage in further reading with the increased availability of language magazines in the school library; and
- the teachers are reviewing currently the suitability of the tasks they offer to the pupils to reduce the over-reliance on the textbook; they have researched alternative information and communication technology (ICT) sources to supplement or replace low level, textbook activities.

Good progress has been made in the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection.

In the areas inspected, the school has major strengths in its educational and pastoral provision. There are no significant areas for improvement. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are well met.

The parents and broader community can have confidence in the effectiveness of the school's response to the findings of the focused inspection and its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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