

St. Colm's High School

Response to: Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process

- Clearly there is a need for rigorous but realistic baselining to measure performance in literacy and numeracy at transfer to Post Primary School supported by other measures of innate ability and progress throughout Post Primary School.
- An objective measure needs to be adopted which teachers, parents and pupils both understand and have confidence in.
- The use of standardised testing is preferable to Key Stage Two results as a measure of progress as the latter is subjective. However, there are issues concerning duplication of standardised tests at both primary and post primary level.
- GCSE achievement should be measured against this baseline of ability/performance to indicate value added.
- Value added should take account of more than just academic results. Value added can be measured in terms of pupil attitude, retention, attendance and should take account of the number of young people with social service involvement, mental health issues and behavioural challenges. It should also take account of parent, staff and Governors attitudes.
- Use of FSM entitlement as a measure of social deprivation is a good indicator in the absence of any other standardised measure.
- Downgrading of some subjects in terms of performance points is discriminatory and unjust and has caused total confusion for staff, pupils and parents. There needs to be clarity about the value of all Level Two subjects and consistency of approach in terms of policy and procedure regarding this.

- Where schools have a high percentage of young people with additional complex needs often the support services required are inadequate or oversubscribed. Funding should be directed to the schools to provide the necessary intensive support on site.
- Need for analysis of alternative approaches and models of good practice of the school inspection process in other countries to be identified.
- ETI support and advice is welcome, but clarification is needed on how the ETI having enhanced powers in the school improvement process will support schools is needed.

Yours sincerely

Cathy McMurray

Principal

St.Colm's High School