

**Collegiate Grammar School**

**INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE AND  
THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS**

**RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR WRITTEN EVIDENCE**

**FROM THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE COLLEGIATE GRAMMAR  
SCHOOL, ENNISKILLEN**

The Board of Governors of the Collegiate Grammar School, Enniskillen welcomes the opportunity to express their views on the issues for consultation.

The Governors believe that, if Inspection Reports are to provide a fair and accurate picture of each school's performance and command public confidence, attention must be given to the range of data sets used and to the wider issues influencing performance within those data sets. For example, the current practice of assessing a grammar school by performance in individual subjects at GCSE A\*-B against the Northern Ireland benchmarking average does not take account of the hidden and wider factors influencing that performance across all the schools. A crucial factor is the individual school's curriculum policy which may vary considerably from school to school. Is it fair and accurate that the performance of a school which has universal entry, for example, in English Literature or a Modern Foreign Language is measured against schools which do not operate the same policy and enter a reduced number of candidates for the same subjects on the basis of their ability? A negative judgement made on the school's performance without taking account of the contextual factors of curriculum policy does not accurately reflect the school's performance. It also runs the risk of encouraging a purely outcome driven culture where the priority, indeed necessity, is to maximise the school's performance against the benchmarks rather than to ensure a rich and varied curriculum facilitating the possibility of wide range of curricular pathways at post-16 study.

It is also important that account is taken of the wide range of value-added data which most schools are currently using which indicate more accurately the pupils' holistic achievement and the school's ability to meet the needs of the pupils in the widest sense. A careful analysis of this data will often show that the school is achieving much more than is evident from the data the Inspectorate collects.

We also note that there appears to be significant variation in the evaluation of data and in the tone and balance of the comments made in Inspection reports: it is crucial that there is consistency of reporting.

Finally we have grave concerns that schools' and the public's confidence in the Inspection process, including the Formal Intervention process is seriously compromised by the link made between ETI Inspections and the Area Planning process in the current DE consultation on the proposed changes to the Formal Intervention process. If ETI is to exercise its primary function of effecting school improvement and if they are to have the scope to make fair and balanced judgements

relating to a school's performance they must be and they must be seen to be independent of any other process. In the Memorandum of Understanding between ETI and DE published on the ETI website it states clearly in paragraph 3 that ETI's professional evaluations about quality and standards will be made and published independently of DE. The direction of travel which underlies the consultation on the Formal Intervention process represents a significant and serious deviation from the independent role on which ETI has rightly always prided itself.

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