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**Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Standard Inspection

**Friends' School
Lisburn**

Inspected: October 2005

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Friends' School is an 11-18 co-educational voluntary grammar school situated in spacious grounds in the City of Lisburn, County Antrim. The enrolment has increased slightly in recent years and is currently 971: approximately 1.5% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Over 97% of the pupils in year 8 obtained a grade A in the Transfer Procedure. The accommodation has been much improved, altered and extended and there are now plans for more extensive new buildings.

1.2 FOCUS

The inspection focused on leadership and management and on the developments in self-evaluation throughout the school. Specialist visits took place in geography and technology and design; in addition, lessons were inspected across all areas of the curriculum. The schools provision in information and communication technology (ICT) was inspected. The inspection included a focus on the school's pastoral care provision and arrangements for child protection.

1.3 THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, GOVERNORS, PUPILS AND TEACHERS

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the completion of questionnaires by a sample of the parents, as well as meetings with the Board of Governors, and with groups of pupils from across years 8, 10, 12, 13 and 14. Prior to the inspection, confidential questionnaires were sent to 156 parents and 61.5% of the parents responded, with over 50% taking the opportunity to write additional comments. Twenty-eight teachers also completed confidential questionnaires. The responses from the questionnaires, the written comments from the parents and discussions with governors and teachers, indicated, in nearly all cases, very strong satisfaction with the work of the school. In particular, they mentioned the high esteem with which the school is held in the local community, the supportive and caring ethos in which the individual worth of each pupil is clearly valued and the effective communication within the school and with the parents. The pupils reported that they felt happy and secure in the school. The inspection findings confirm that the confidence expressed in these aspects of the school's work is well placed. The few matters raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the Principal. The school is implementing the procedures outlined in the Department of Education (DE) Circulars 1999/10 "Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection" and 2003/13 "The Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order" and has identified areas within its pastoral programme for further development.

1.4 EXAMINATION RESULTS

Overall, the standards achieved by the pupils across the subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level are very good. In 2005, 97% of the pupils achieved grades A* to C in at least seven GCSE subjects. In 2005, at GCE A level, 74% of the pupils achieved grades A to C in at least three subjects. These GCSE and GCE A level results are well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for selective schools. Almost all of the pupils achieved grades A to E in at least three GCE A level subjects. Over the previous three years, in the majority of

subjects, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A to C at GCE A level was above five percentage points of the corresponding NI average in just over half the subjects. More details about the examination results are provided in Appendices 3 and 4.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 The strengths of the school include:

- the excellent quality of pastoral care and the high level of commitment of the pastoral care team;
- the commitment of all the staff, including the ancillary staff, to ensuring that the pupils experience a caring educational environment;
- the commendable efforts made by the staff in the integration of pupils with special needs into the life and work of the school;
- the outstanding behaviour of the pupils;
- the positive and professional tone set by the Principal and her clear and effective leadership and management, based on her knowledge of and vision for the school;
- the effectiveness of the communication between the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Principal, and their promotion of high standards of achievement;
- the good use of the analysis of quantifiable data by the Principal, SMT and heads of departments to develop policies and strategies, and to set targets for improvement including examination success;
- the good quality School Development Plan (SDP) and the increasingly effective linking of the SDP with the subject development plans;
- the quality of learning and teaching which is consistently sound and generally good;
- the strong involvement of the Board of Governors in the life and work of the school and their strong support for the school's programme of development;
- the high level of support by parents for the school and its high-standing in the local community;
- the very good start made to self-evaluation with a strong focus placed on the use of quantitative data to effect improvement; and
- the high achievements of pupils in public examinations.

2.2 Areas for improvement include:

- the dissemination of the existing good practice across the school particularly, through the sharing and reviewing of the range of strategies for learning and teaching at departmental level, in order to further challenge the pupils; including the further embedding of ICT to support teaching and extend learning.

3. CONCLUSION

This school has many strengths in almost all aspects of its educational and pastoral provision; the very few areas for improvement need to be addressed if the school is to meet as fully as possible the needs of all of the children.

APPENDIX 1

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The inspection in technology and design has identified a number of accommodation and health and safety matters, which have been brought to the attention of the Principal and school authorities.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Friends' School, Lisburn v. Date of Inspection: W/C 24.10.05
 ii. School Reference Number: 442-0050 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Grammar Voluntary

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Year 8 Intake	143	142	144	145	142
Total enrolment	949	957	963	970	971

1.3 Attendance

Year 2004/05	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2004/05	NI Average 2003/04
% Attendance	96.2	96.7	96	94	96.6	96.2	94.2	96	95

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:

61.7

 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):

0.74

- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):

15.7

Year 2004/05	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	68	82	72	66	74	56	47	465
Enrolment: Girls	74	63	73	79	68	74	75	506
Enrolment: Total	142	145	145	145	142	130	122	971
PTR	24.3	25.4	25.5	20.5	21.3	16.3	18.1	

1.5 Staying On Rate (2004/05) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	88.7	NI Av Year 13	90.1
Year 14	85.3	NI Av Year 14	86.4

1.6 Leavers Destinations

2003/04	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	23		125	
Another School	17%	18.3	0%	0.9
Employment	0%	7.7	0%	4.7
Full-time Further Education	83%	58.2	9%	9.4
Full-time Higher Education	0%	0%	90%	82.1
Full-time Training	0%	10	0%	0.9
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	1.8	0%	1.2
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	4	1%	0.9

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: Friends' School, Lisburn

SCHOOL YEAR: 2005/2006

GCSE	2003	2004	2005
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	96	97	97
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	99	99	99
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2003	2004	2005
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	70	72	74
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 3 A2 levels	96	98	98

Within this report, when commenting on examination results of individual subjects, the respective CCEA average is used as a proxy for the corresponding average for all pupils in NI taking that subject.

APPENDIX 3

TABLE 1 showing GCSE and subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2005, 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		Business Studies, French, Geography	Art and Design, Biology, Chemistry, Design & Technology, Economics, English, English Literature, German, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Music, Physics, Double Award Science 1 st Subject, Spanish	Religious Studies	Sport/PE studies
GCE A Level A-C		Biology, Chemistry, English Literature, French, Home Economics, Music, Politics, Religious Studies	Art & Design, Business Studies, Economics, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Spanish	Further Mathematics	German, History
GCE A Level A-E			Art & Design, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, German, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Physics, Politics, Religious Studies, Spanish		

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	Biology, Chemistry, Drama, English, History, Mathematics, Music	Art & Design, Business Studies, Design & Technology, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, German, Home Economics, Additional Mathematics, Physics, Religious Studies, Double Award Science 1 st Subject, Spanish, Sport/PE Studies	Single Award Science		
GCE A Level A-C		Art & Design, English Literature, French, Geography, German, History, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Politics, Religious Studies, Spanish	Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Economics, Home Economics, Physics		
GCE A Level A-E	Art & Design, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, German, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Physics, Politics, Religious Studies, Spanish				

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