



## Education and Training Inspectorate, Northern Ireland

### Pupils at Risk of Underachieving

#### About ETI

The ETI's key purpose of inspection is to bring about improvement in the interests of all learners. We inspect a wide range of educational and training settings including: pre-school (3-4 years old); primary (4-11 years old); post-primary (11-18 years old), further education and vocational training (16+ years old), teacher education, and youth work.

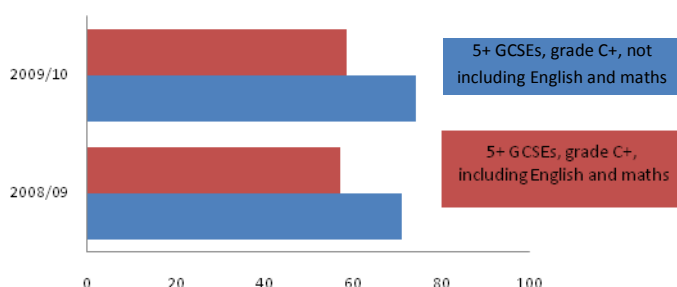
#### About Northern Ireland (NI)

Northern Ireland is emerging from a period of conflict, and is establishing local political accountability through the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Assembly recognises clearly the threat to future prosperity and well-being posed by educational underachievement. In the current three year Programme for Government a range of key targets to address underachievement has been outlined. A recent study highlighted the particular issue of underachievement among protestant young men:

<http://www.dawnpurvis.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/A-Call-to-Action-FINAL-March2011.pdf>

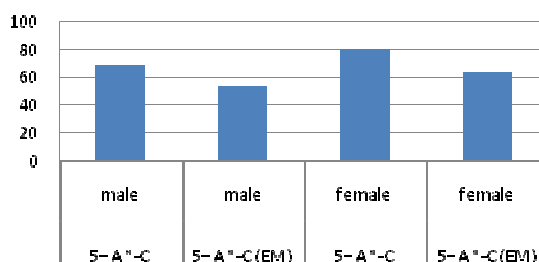
While the PISA 2009 results show that pupils in Northern Ireland achieve reading and mathematics scores close to the average for OECD countries; there are clear areas of underachievement in English and maths, which are illustrated in the following graphs and table:

Graph1: Achievement gap between pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs and 5+ GCSEs, including English and maths, at grade C+ (2009/10)



Note: GCSE=General Certificate in Secondary Education.

Graph 2: Male and female performance on leaving school



Note: EM=English and Maths.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/qualifications\\_and\\_destinations\\_2009\\_10.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/qualifications_and_destinations_2009_10.pdf)  
[http://www.deni.gov.uk/saer\\_2010.doc](http://www.deni.gov.uk/saer_2010.doc)

Table 1: Performance of schools leavers at 16 years old (2009/10).

NI average percentage achieving 5+ GCSEs incl. English and maths, at grade C+	59%
Percentage achieving 5+ GCSEs incl. English and maths from grammar (academic) schools, at grade C+	94%
Percentage achieving 5+ GCSEs incl. English and maths from non-grammar schools, at grade C+	35%
Percentage achieving 5+ GCSEs incl. English and maths, at grade C+, from socioeconomically disadvantaged households	31%

#### Inspection Frameworks

Across the various educational and training phases, ETI has a common approach to evaluation. This common approach is reflected in the two quality frameworks which are shared with schools, colleges and organisations. These are *'Together Towards Improvement'* for the schools sector and *'Improving Quality: Raising Standards'* for the further education and vocational training sector. These frameworks are structured around the following five common key questions :

1. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting learners?
2. How effective are teaching, training, learning and assessment?
3. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the learners and the wider community?
4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?
5. How well do learners develop and achieve?

#### Identifying Underachievement Through Inspection

The inspection of a school, college or organisation draws heavily on key performance data. We analyse statistical information for: attendance; standardised pupil testing; performance in external examinations; number of young people not in education, employment or training; and within the further education and training settings the retention and success rates of learners. Consequently, undue variations in achievement are identified as key areas for improvement.

#### Action To Promote Improvement

Through inspection, the schools, college and organisations are awarded the following performance levels: outstanding, very good, good, satisfactory, inadequate and unsatisfactory. The level awarded takes account of how well the school, college or organisation is meeting the quality indicators relating to each of the five key questions. Schools, colleges or organisations awarded 'satisfactory' or less, enter formal intervention arrangements and must demonstrate improvement within 18 months. The ETI carries out follow-up inspections to monitor and report on their progress.

#### Reporting Findings

The ETI report and publish findings as follows:

- school, college or organisation inspection report;
- themed evaluations and disseminations to the sector;
- biennial report of main findings – 'Chief Inspector's Report'; and
- policy advice and briefings to government departments and committees.

