

**GRACEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL**

**FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT**

**1. The inspection**

HM Inspectors published a report on the quality of education in Gracemount High School in February 2013. Subsequently the school, with support from the education authority, amended the school improvement plan to take account of the findings of the inspection. An education authority team recently visited the school to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to develop the quality of its education, including the areas identified for improvement and produced a progress report for parents.

This report tells you how well young people are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best.

**2. How well do young people learn and achieve?**

**Areas for improvement from original report:**

*Continue to improve young people's achievements, supporting them to understand their own strengths and needs as learners.*

Almost all young people felt safe and happy in school. They felt that teachers were approachable and encouraged them to achieve. They enjoyed the opportunity to participate in after school clubs, in outdoor activities, and especially in the sports academies. The young people in the focus groups were confident and had a clear idea of the curricular pathways open to them.

Young people had more opportunities to review their learning and evaluate how they learned and there were improved opportunities for them to discuss their progress. The school should now build on this and continue to increase consistency of approaches in all classes. Good work on tracking and profiling should continue.

Young people responded very well to a range of opportunities to achieve. More young people have achieved success in a wide range of nationally accredited awards, including the Junior Awards Scheme Scotland and Saltire Awards. Enhanced intervention for young learners most at risk of not achieving are well received and work with the John Muir award has allowed some specific vulnerable young people to grow in confidence.

Young people in S1/S2/S3 continued to make good progress in their broad general education. In the classes seen, there was emphasis placed on the development of skills including mapping skills, numeracy, and higher order skills such as analysing and evaluating. Pace and challenge in the broad general education could be improved. Tasks and activities were the same for the whole class. Consideration should be given to differentiating through group work. The choice of resources was stimulating and showed that staff made good use of software and apps. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities for depth and challenge as well as an element of choice.

This would encourage them to take more responsibility for their own learning and to be more aware of their own needs as learners.

The new headteacher has introduced a system of *three minute walk throughs*, involving curriculum leaders, as a means of monitoring and sharing good practice. The resulting professional dialogue is intended to move practice forward.

### **3. How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?**

#### **Areas for improvement from original report:**

*Continue to take forward Curriculum for Excellence, including an increased whole school focus on numeracy and health and well-being, with the aim of further improving young people's learning experiences.*

Staff had made positive progress in continuing to develop the curriculum, taking into account *Curriculum for Excellence* guidance. Steps had been taken to create a shared understanding of numeracy levels across the school. Staff had identified, as a priority, the need to build on prior learning from the primary school to ensure that progress is smooth but challenge remains. Progress in skills should be noted in profiles and should form part of learner conversations and learning targets. The senior leadership team had closely analysed results in National Qualifications and have set aspirational targets for departments which will be discussed at forthcoming attainment reviews.

The lead teacher for numeracy across learning had created a tracking database which allows each young person's progress in numeracy to be tracked. Departmental interventions were in place. This work should now be used across the school in other subject departments as a responsibility for all.

All young people in S3-S6 had been issued with an iPad as a tool to assist learning. Although the impact of this initiative had not yet been fully evaluated, initial feedback from staff and young people was extremely positive. Learners whose first language is not English were able to access the curriculum through the translation apps. Staff reported that they were able to address individual learner's needs to a much greater extent. Senior pupils said they were motivated to learn because of their iPad. They were more inclined to complete homework tasks and assessments which they could send directly to their teacher for individualised comments and suggestions on how to improve their work.

### **4. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

#### **Areas for improvement from original report:**

*Increase the effectiveness of approaches to improving the school's performance, taking better account of the views of young people, parents and partners in the community.*

There were significant improvements in the school's approaches to improving the quality of its work. The new headteacher had taken a decisive lead in building an ethos of collegiality, collaboration and partnership working. Curriculum leaders had undertaken a team working and leadership training day and should continue to build on the approaches shared at the event.

All teachers were members of groups focusing on improving learning experiences for all young people. These *Teacher Learning Communities* were well established and provided an effective forum for discussion, sharing good practice, and identifying future learning and teaching priorities. The work of these groups was beginning to have a positive impact in a number of areas, for example, active learning approaches which were becoming embedded. The structure

of the *Teacher Learning Communities* offered all staff opportunities to take on leadership roles across the school. Teachers were increasingly seeking young people's views on learning.

The senior leadership team, working with curriculum and pupil support leaders, have introduced more rigorous quality assurance procedures with teams assigned to groups of faculties, following an agreed calendar of coordinated activities. There was greater emphasis on seeking views of learners and their parents on whole school matters. This was identified as a key whole school improvement priority moving forward.

## **5 Conclusion**

With support from the education authority, Gracemount High School provided a very good standard of education for its young people. The school had progressed well since the inspection and had made appropriate improvements in light of the inspection findings. The education authority will not publish further reports in connection with the 2013 HMIE report.

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January 2015