

1 THE INSPECTION

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) published a report on the quality of education in Portobello High School in April 2007. 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 about the quality of education provided by the school since the original inspection. It also comments on the progress made in the agreed areas for improvement.

The main areas of focus are on learning and achievement, meeting the learning needs of the pupils and leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

2 IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

2.1 Learning and achievement

Across the school pupils were making good progress. They had continued to improve standards in English and mathematics in national qualifications.

In some other subjects pupils were performing significantly well at all stages. There had been improving pupil performance in S5/S6 and overall the school continued to remain in line with similar schools across the country.

Strategies to identify and support pupils who were at risk of underperforming had been effectively implemented and this had successfully impacted on an increased number of pupils gaining awards.

There were more regular and focused meetings to review and discuss pupils' progress and attainment in departments with senior managers strongly involved. This provided closer analyses of pupils' progress, raised expectations and had helped staff and pupils to respond appropriately and proactively to any changes required. A new learning and teaching policy had been produced which was supportive of classroom practice.

There were very good opportunities for pupils' wider achievements and contributions where they were strongly encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the opportunities offered and music, arts and sports clubs were well attended.

Recent vocational course choices included hairdressing and construction which had led to increased pupil self-esteem, knowledge and confidence.

The school had won an Edinburgh Standard Life award 2008 for their contribution and work in 'Health Promoting Schools'. Pupils, parents and the community were all involved in this partnership approach. Excellent practice had continued through achievement of the 3rd Green Flag award in the Eco schools programme.

Pupils moved purposefully around the school and they were clear about expectations for their work and behaviour. The House system was effective in promoting positive attitudes and motivation and building teamwork. There were very good opportunities for pupils' involvement in decision making and creativity. Pupils contributed confidently to these discussions and initiatives.

The new curriculum was beginning to develop and be implemented through new approaches to learning and teaching and an active staff teaching group shared approaches with others. The new approaches were being implemented in most classes and pupils were aware of the new strategies being used. The literacy and numeracy working groups were developing good practice and the collaborative working was beginning to impact positively in classroom practice.

2.2 Meeting pupils' learning needs

Staff had high expectations of pupils. They knew pupils' abilities well and lessons were well paced and brisk. There had been very good development of information communication technology

(ICT) in classrooms across the school and computer technology was used effectively in lessons. Teaching staff, generally, used clear explanations and instructions and pupils were actively involved in their learning.

Effective questioning was developing to further engage pupils in their learning and to help them reflect on what they had learned. Tasks provided challenge and deeper understanding of learning.

The school was very good at identifying and providing appropriate support for pupils with additional needs. The support for learning staff worked very effectively across the school to ensure needs were met.

Teachers engaged very well with pupils in their learning. They shared the purpose of lessons and what they expected pupils to learn; they encouraged and valued pupils responses and developed discussions with pupils all of which stimulated and motivated pupils in their learning.

2.3 Leadership and direction

The headteacher demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to improvement. She had a very good consultative and collegiate approach and involved senior managers effectively in sharing commitment to improvement.

The school vision and values promoted equality, diversity and inclusion and this was clearly demonstrated in practice throughout the school. Learning was a central focus

of school improvement and was communicated to all staff and pupils.

Staff had worked enthusiastically to implement more systematic tracking of pupils' progress and evaluation of their work. They had included pupils in discussions about their progress and learning and meeting their set targets.

There was a supportive and collegiate work environment where senior managers promoted opportunities for staff, pupils and partners to take responsibility, share information and be involved in new initiatives. Pupils were encouraged to express their views and celebrate their achievements. Parent and community views were regularly sought and feedback was used effectively to inform any changes.

A positive climate to develop self evaluation had been established and the school was now moving forward with increased consistency and with more rigorous and systematic approaches to further improving the quality of learning and teaching.

3 CONCLUSION

With support from the education authority, Portobello High School provided a good standard of education for its pupils. The school had progressed well since the inspection and had made the improvements to security in light of the inspection findings. The current improvement plan

had had a positive impact on the work of the school. The teamwork in the school provided a very good basis for continued improvement. The education authority will not publish further reports in connection with the April 2007 HMIE report.

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February 2009

PORTOBELLO HIGH SCHOOL

Follow through report on the HMIE inspection

FEBRUARY 2009

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