



QUEENSFERRY COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Follow through report on the HMIE inspection

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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

1 THE INSPECTION

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) published a report on the quality of education in Queensferry Community High School in March 2009.

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

Young people were friendly, well behaved and engaged enthusiastically with the work in their classes. They

felt safe and believed that they were treated with equality, fairness and respect.

By the end of S2 the majority of young people had achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics and the number exceeding appropriate levels had been increased. Attainment by the end of S4 and S5 had continued to improve. It was now above the national average and, in most indicators, better than in schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. The school had recognised the need to sustain, and where appropriate improve, the school's overall attainment at S6.

The school had continued to develop opportunities for wider achievement which included an extensive range of sporting and cultural teams and clubs, music and drama activities, school trips and residential experiences. The school had actively encouraged participation in these opportunities and continued to extend the scope of these activities to develop the skills and confidence of their young people. Learners were very positive about the wide range of opportunities available and clearly described how the school recognised their achievement through assemblies, celebrations and a range of awards. The school was beginning to track this more systematically.

The school had developed better approaches to monitor learning and teaching and ensure improvements for learners across the school. This included sharing classroom experience, staff working together to share good practice and an annual programme of departmental reviews. The school had systems in place to track and monitor attainment and progress across the school including target setting for S5 and S6 and a developing programme of personal learning planning for pupils in S1. The school recognised the need to continue to develop this and make more effective use of electronic systems to gather and use this information.

The headteacher and depute headteachers had successfully involved all staff, young people and parents in planning a wide range of positive steps to develop the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. All S1 courses have undergone changes designed to reflect national guidance and make them more stimulating, challenging, relevant and enjoyable. Teachers were also engaged in planning and delivering a number of interdisciplinary learning opportunities. The school had recognised the need to continue to develop and formalise these opportunities. Plans were in place to ensure all young people received two hours per week of good quality physical education.

2.2 Meeting pupils' learning needs

In almost all lessons, learning tasks and activities were well matched to the needs of young people. Young people worked

confidently both individually and in groups and were increasingly involved in discussions about the purpose of their learning and what they needed to do to improve. At all stages the pace of learning was appropriate.

Class teachers were aware of the barriers to learning faced by young people and took appropriate steps to address these. Pupil support and support for learning staff made a valued and effective contribution to supporting young people. Young people with additional support needs were clear about their learning targets.

Staff had high expectations of what young people could achieve and the quality of young people's work. Young people were proud of their school and working relationships around the school were very positive.

The school had increased the range of courses and opportunities to ensure that the needs and aspirations of all young people were addressed and that they could develop skills for life and skills for work. The introduction of further national qualifications at Access 3 level and Intermediate 1 level and the provision of curricular programmes such as the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) initiative, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and a number of vocational college courses had increased the choices available to young people.

2.3 Leadership and direction

The headteacher provided outstanding leadership for the school community. He

had been very successful at sharing his vision for the school and engaging staff, pupils and parents in delivering it. His strong leadership of the school's recent involvement in the Schools for Ambition initiative had ensured significant improvements in many areas including the school ethos, the young people's learning experiences and how the school engaged with the local community. He had supported and challenged staff very well and successfully promoted the development of leadership across the school.

The deputy headteachers were very committed to the school and bringing about improvement. They had supported staff well and were becoming increasingly effective at sharing good practice across their link departments and the school to improve young people's learning.

Almost all staff participated in working groups and had contributed to the school's success in taking forward key improvement priorities in learning and teaching, the curriculum and self-evaluation. Staff had willingly taken on leadership roles in working groups and in other areas of school life. Commendably, the school had provided a number of in-house leadership training courses at various levels for staff and pupils alike.

A wide range of opportunities were provided for young people to take on

leadership responsibilities at different stages in their school life and many of these, for example, sports leadership, led to opportunities for accreditation. Job descriptions had been created for heads of school and heads and deputy heads of house and these had helped the young people to focus their commitment and involvement in school activities and allowed them to develop their organisational and decision-making skills more effectively. Senior students had organised a very successful range of school activities and provided a very good role model for younger students.

3 CONCLUSION

With support from the education authority, Queensferry Community High School provided a good standard of education for its pupils. The school had progressed well since the inspection and had made the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. The current improvement plan had had a major 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 2009 HMIE report.

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