

◆ EDINBURGH ◆

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

ST AUGUSTINE'S RC HIGH SCHOOL

FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT

1 The inspection

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) published a report on the quality of education in St Augustine's RC High School in September 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 were learning and achievement, meeting the learning needs of 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 in S1 and S2 continued to sustain good attainment levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Standard Grade and National Qualification results in S4 dipped slightly from last year but pupils were performing as expected and in some cases better than predicted. S5 and S5/S6 results have continued to improve.

There was a notable increase in the number of pupils for whom English is an Additional Language. These young people were progressing well in their learning and achievement.

The school has made good progress in developing an effective electronic whole-school system for monitoring and tracking of young peoples' progress in learning. This involved young people in a quality dialogue with their teachers and parents about their targets, what they needed to do to improve and what their next steps in their learning were.

The school has also made a positive start to tracking the involvement of young people in wider achievement. Last session S1 recorded these achievements and had time for reflection with their form teacher. This session the school has introduced an S2 wider achievement programme which aims to further develop a range of skills for learning, life and work.

Young people were positively encouraged to participate in a wide range of curricular, extra-curricular and whole-school events, all of which enhanced their skills. They clearly described how the school celebrated their achievements through school assemblies and awards ceremonies.

The school has made very good progress towards implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. All S1 and S2 courses have undergone changes designed to reflect national guidelines

ensuring lessons are more stimulating, challenging, relevant and enjoyable. Both health and wellbeing and numeracy across learning have progressed well. A strong focus on literacy across learning involving 'a word of the week' was being replicated and reinforced in lessons across the school. A whole school focus on interdisciplinary learning, such as the Fantasy Gaming initiative was used as a basis for promoting learning across the curriculum. Some departments also engaged with the wider community and partners such as Heriot-Watt University and Hibernian Football Club. Such initiatives have enhanced pupil enjoyment and helped young people to improve their understanding of links between subjects, reinforcing their learning.

2.2 *Meeting pupils' learning needs*

The very positive relationships young people had with each other and with staff continued to be a major strength of the school. The school celebrated the wide diversity of its community and welcomed everyone, creating a very positive learning environment.

Almost all young people were motivated and involved in the learning process and contributed well in lessons. Young people worked well both individually and collaboratively in groups. They listened attentively and answered questions confidently.

Across the school lessons were very well planned. Teachers had increased the range and quality of teaching and learning strategies and these were being applied more consistently across lessons. Young people were taking more responsibility for their learning and were actively involved in the process. Learning was directly related to real life experiences. Teachers made very effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support and enhance presentations and were starting to extend its use to encourage interactive learning.

The practice of peer monitoring activities was recognised by teachers as a mechanism for improving learning across the school. Staff spoke positively of the usefulness of this activity and how it had enhanced their own practice.

The school successfully identified the learning needs of young people with appropriate levels of support. Young people with additional support needs were well supported and were involved in developing and reviewing their educational plans. These plans provided detailed guidance for staff on how to support learners. Young people were clear about their targets for learning. Staff reviewed young people's progress towards reaching these targets on a regular basis. The school took appropriate action when progress was not sufficient.

Young people and parents spoke very positively on how approachable staff were and the way staff provided opportunities for extra support when young people were having difficulties.

2.3 *Leadership and direction*

The headteacher and senior managers continued to provide a very positive lead in the school. They worked effectively as a team to achieve the school values and to continue to meet the needs of learners, as well as creating a culture of continuous improvement.

The school was committed to the development of staff at all levels, encouraging staff to accept leadership roles in working groups, committees, excursions, projects and competitions and to share expertise with other colleagues. Principal teachers have increased their ownership of the improvement priorities and the self-evaluation work of the school. There was a growing culture of staff demonstrating leadership capacity. This was particularly notable in professional development opportunities. A range of staff have delivered and supported in school activities designed to share and improve teaching practice across the school. Sharing good practice has contributed to a consistent understanding of teaching and learning approaches. This had had a significant impact on the consistency of the learners' experiences across the school.

Self-evaluation of the life and work of the school was embedded in everyday practices. There was a clear improvement agenda in which staff were fully involved. There was a greater focus on enhancing learners' experiences. The school had a number of examples of effective self-evaluation strategies in place both at whole school and departmental levels.

The senior young people also accepted leadership roles within the wider life of the school, including helping with paired reading and in-class support. The Senior Prefect Team took responsibility for supporting work in the library at lunchtimes. Other S6 pupils supported younger pupils in subject departments, and regularly liaised with the new S1. This was acknowledged through award schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Community Sports Leadership Award.

There was increasing practice of young people being involved in reviewing the work and life of the school. Their views were listened to and acted upon. The members of the Student Representative Council felt they played an active role in taking the school forward with initiatives such as the St Augustine's Reward system (STAR) which focuses on encouraging pupils to show 'respect' in the wider sense. A range of young people were also involved in focus groups, feeding back on learning and teaching developments.

3 Conclusion

With support from the education authority, St Augustine's RC High School continued to provide a very good standard of education for its pupils. The school had progressed well since the inspection and had made the necessary improvements in terms of the inspection findings. The current improvement plan had had a very positive impact on the work of the school. The leadership and teamwork in the school provided a very good basis for continued improvement. The education authority will publish no further reports in connection with the 2009 HMIE inspection.

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Quality Improvement Officer
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