

27 November 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

**Wester Hailes Education Centre
The City of Edinburgh Council**

In April 2010, HM Inspectors published a report on your child's education centre. We subsequently returned to the centre to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another report in May 2011. Recently, as you may know, we visited the centre again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff how the centre has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in March 2010 and at aspects of the centre's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out how well young people are now learning and achieving and how the centre is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Across the centre, young people's learning and achievement continue to improve and have improved significantly since the original inspection. Young people benefit more often from learning experiences that motivate and involve them in their learning. The daily mentoring groups help to ensure that young people are clearer about both their learning targets and the next steps in their learning. As a result, young people are now more positive about learning and continue to benefit from very strong relationships with staff. At times, staff do too much for young people. There is a need to continue to give young people more responsibility for their own learning.

There is now a stronger focus on young people's achievements. This helps learners to develop and understand their own set of skills and abilities. Young people now contribute very well to the broader life of the school and community. Attainment by the end of S4 improved significantly in 2012 and is showing positive signs of improvement overall. Attendance continues to improve. The number of young people moving into employment, training or further education is improving and is now closer to the national average. The centre is aware that attainment, overall, is still below national averages and below that of schools serving young people with similar needs and backgrounds. Staff are aware of where attainment needs to improve and are taking very positive steps to bring about change and improvement.

How well does the centre support young people to develop and learn?

The centre continues to support young people well to develop and learn. Young people benefit from a broad range of learning experiences from S1 to S6. The centre now works effectively with a range of partners to ensure young people are engaged and involved in meaningful learning. Staff know young people very well and give particular attention to groups of learners at risk of missing out on their education. Most learning tasks and activities are set at the right level of difficulty. However, at times, teachers' expectations of what young people can learn and achieve are too low. As a result, learning is not always brisk or challenging enough for a few learners.

How well does the centre improve the quality of its work?

The centre's capacity for improvement has strengthened considerably since the original inspection. The headteacher has introduced a more rigorous approach to identifying strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation is much more focused on improving the quality of learning, teaching and achievement. Staff are more involved and more committed to identifying the centre's strengths and weaknesses. There is scope for greater involvement of young people in identifying what would improve learning and teaching. The centre is very well led and senior managers enjoy the confidence of staff and young people. The headteacher has a clear vision for the centre and has made significant improvements in the short time she has been in post. The centre is very well placed to continue to improve.

What happens next?

The centre has made significant progress since the original inspection. The quality of learning and teaching has improved and attendance continues to get better. As a result, attainment is improving. The centre is aware of the need for further improvements in attainment. It now has the capacity for further improvement and is in a strong position to deliver better results for its young people. We will make no further visits in connection with the inspection report of May 2010.

Douglas Hutchison
HM Inspector

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.