

Education, Children and Families Committee

Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30 pm, Monday, 8 June 2015

Inspection of the learning community surrounding Firrhill High School

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Item number | 5.3 |
| Report number | |
| Wards | Ward 2: Pentland Hills Ward 7: Sighthill/Gorgie Ward 8: Colinton/Fairmilehead Ward 9: Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart |

Links

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Coalition pledges | PO5 |
| Council outcomes | CO2 |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO3 |

Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

Contact: David Bruce, Senior Education Manager (Community Services)

E-mail: david.bruce2@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3795

Executive summary

Inspection of the learning community surrounding Firrhill High School

Summary

- The publication in 2012 of the Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development moved the focus of Learning Community Inspections to two key drivers:
 - improved life chances for people of all ages, through learning, personal development and active citizenship; and
 - stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities

The guidance provides a clear statement that the purpose of community learning and development (CLD) is to empower people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities through learning. The inspection of learning communities replaced the inspection of local authority community learning and development services in 2008.

- This approach was designed to better recognise the increased integrated partnership working between departments in local authorities, and with other agencies and organisations. Inspection reports evaluate learning community provision from all agencies and organisations, including schools and the voluntary sector. CLD lead the Learning Community inspection but the process places a strong emphasis on partners' joint self-evaluation through their use of appropriate quality frameworks including 'How good is our community learning and development? 2' (2006).
- A Learning Community seeks to address the learning needs of its locality through partnership. It uses the strengths of institutions, public, private and voluntary services, and community groups to enable children, young people and adults to achieve to their full potential. Learning communities use learning to build community capacity, to promote social cohesion, social inclusion, regeneration and economic development.
- Concurrently with inspections of all non-denominational secondary schools, a team will inspect and report on the impacts and outcomes in the Learning Community. Within the scope of the 2012 national Strategic Guidance, this will include approaches to prevention and early intervention, family learning, skills development work in community settings and work to improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. There is a focus on CLD partners' contribution to Curriculum for Excellence in relation to both broad general education and the senior phase. The Learning Community is defined by the catchment area of a

secondary school. A separate, but concurrent report, is produced for the learning community.

- The inspection process also provides Education Scotland with the opportunity to gather evidence on the implementation of the Strategic Guidance across local authorities, collate and compare CLD (Learning Community) inspection reports for all communities across Scotland. These inspections take account of the contributions made to these communities by CLD, 3rd sector partners, specialist provision, early years, schools and other council services.
- This report (Appendix 1) and evaluations (Appendix 2) advises the Sub-committee on the outcomes of the initial inspection.

Recommendations

The Sub-committee is requested to:

- note the findings of the report including the areas where the education authority and the community learning and development partners should continue to improve outcomes within the learning community.

Measures of success

The report identified the following key strengths:

- high quality learning opportunities improving wellbeing;
- skilled volunteers and community groups delivering services which meet learning needs; and
- well targeted provision, often by partnerships, improving lives.

Financial impact

There are no financial implications contained in the ES report.

Equalities impact

There are considered to be no infringements on the rights of the child.

Tracking of participant performance by gender, Black Minority Ethnic (BME) and disability is undertaken at community level and there are no adverse impacts.

Sustainability impact

None.

Consultation and engagement

All Stakeholders contribute to a Learning Community Self Evaluation that is submitted to inspection team. Participants/staff are engaged by inspectors at service delivery level and all contributions are noted and fed into the Inspection process.

Background reading / external references

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports>

Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

Links

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Coalition pledges | PO5 |
| Council outcomes | CO2 |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO3 |
| Appendices | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Inspection report2. Evaluations |

**Inspection of the learning community
surrounding Firrhill High School
Edinburgh City Council
5 May 2015**

Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within the area of Firrhill High School were inspected by Education Scotland during March 2015. During the visit Education Scotland staff talked to children, young people and adults. We worked closely with local CLD managers, CLD providers, partners, paid staff and volunteers. We wanted to find out how well partners are improving the life chances of people living in the community through learning, building stronger more resilient communities and improving the quality of services and provision. We also looked at how well paid staff and volunteers are developing their own practices and how well partners, including schools are working together.

1. How well are partners improving learning, increasing life chances, promoting and securing wellbeing?

Partners provide a wide range of high quality learning opportunities across the community which are improving learning, life chances and wellbeing. Early intervention and prevention programmes are effective in reaching targeted groups. A strong feature of the learning community is the mix of family learning and parenting programmes which enable families to learn together and increase the confidence of parents. Oxfams Sure Start Project has reduced social isolation for families facing challenges who do not have a local support network through the *Family Playtime* service. Parents participating in programmes such as *Incredible Years* and *Raising Children With Confidence* have improved skills, wellbeing and relationships with their children. Partnership groups use data effectively to improve outcomes. Baseline literacy and numeracy standard scores for primary one pupils are used to inform the planning of the increasing number of parenting support programmes in the learning community. Targeting of disadvantaged and minority groups is successfully engaging participants. Trend information shows an increase in members of the Black Minority Ethnic community taking part in Community Learning and Development (CLD) Service provision which is supporting community cohesion.

Across the community large numbers of children and young people are actively involved in their learning at sports groups, uniformed organisations, community centre programmes and school extra-curricular activities. Participation is improving wellbeing. Children and young people gain confidence, self-esteem and are enjoying developing new and core skills. Sixty five children in Oxfams Primary School *Feels Like Friday* group, which is part of the Youth Music Initiative, are developing their creative skills in music. The 500 plus children and young people attending scout groups held in the learning community are increasing their social, communication and team working skills. The girls group developed jointly by the Army and Dunedin Canmore Housing Association is beginning to address the issue of relationships and sexual health identified as a priority by participants. Young people in S6 at Firrhill High School increase the safety and wellbeing of children from cluster primary schools by delivering Bike Ability level 1 and 2 through the Sports Leadership programme. Increasing numbers of young people are gaining Duke of Edinburgh's awards through Firrhill High School. The young people value the breadth of opportunities this provides with the expeditions in particular enriching their learning experiences. Children and young people are supported effectively to deal

with periods of change in their lives. Almost all 120 children who go through the Primary 7 Transition programme have reduced anxiety about going to high school. Children and young people whose families serve in the military and live at the local Dregghorn Barracks are supported well to deal with change. One to one, group and peer support enable children and young people to cope with situations such as moving to another school. Young people identified as being at risk of a negative destination through the 16+ Partnership are supported effectively to progress onto learning and employment opportunities which met their individual needs. Almost all of the young people from Firrhill on activity agreements in 2014 either progressed onto a positive destination or continued to engage in the programme.

Learners of all ages are enthusiastic, engaged in their learning and feel valued and supported. Learning opportunities increase social inclusion and wellbeing across the community and for some participants they are life changing. Well targeted provision for those with disabilities or facing mental health challenges is improving life chances. Young women with learning difficulties are building networks, increasing their ability to identify safe friendships and learning new skills through participating in the *The Friends Group*. Trainees at Redhall Walled Garden are developing coping strategies to support their mental and physical wellbeing. They are increasing their skills through horticulture voluntary work placements. Older adults with health problems including dementia and their carers feel supported by provision which addresses their specific life needs. Adult learning provision is well focussed meeting the varied needs of participants from this diverse community. Adults participating in community based adult learning have increased wellbeing and are developing skills which meet their needs. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners are more confident and included in the community as a result of joining a combined literacy and ESOL group. The group enables all participants to learn from and about each other which increases understanding across cultures and supports community cohesion. Working age adult learners and older adults, increase their confidence to use information and communication technology (ICT) through participation in a range of co-ordinated opportunities across the learning community. For some this enables them to seek work and access benefits. For others it supports their social networks and enables them to feel better connected and included. Well attended activities for older adults contribute to them staying active, eating well and having good social links. Members of the Yap and Yarn knitting group in Oxgangs Library actively support each other and this is reducing their isolation and for a few enabling them to sustain their independence.

High numbers of committed volunteers increase learning opportunities across the community. The majority of the 200 plus coaches at Colinton Corridor Community Sports Hub are volunteers. These coaches support over 3000 participants to increase their wellbeing through taking part in sport annually. Volunteers are valued by partners. Many volunteers have access to training provided by partners which meets their learning needs and increases their capacity to provide services. Community groups and voluntary organisations are delivering services and working with service partners to improve provision across the learning community and wider neighbourhood partnership area. Oxgangs Care helps reduce isolation and maintain the independence of frail, elderly adults and those with mental health issues in the community very effectively. A large group of adults aged 18 to 70 volunteer at Oxgangs Care to run activities and a befriending service for older adults and carers.

Local volunteers work alongside staff to deliver diverse and busy programmes within local community buildings which foster community spirit and reduce isolation. A substantial number of volunteers at the Oxfords Neighbourhood Centre support the delivery of programmes. This enables hundreds of local people to take part in social and educational activities every week. The Management Committee of Pentland Community Centre are instrumental in ensuring the building is a hub for the community delivering programmes six days a week for people of all ages. The committee attracted funding of £180,000 to improve the fabric of the building. Community activists in the area are influential and are involved in decisions about the community. The Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership has well established systems and structures to actively engage community groups and the wider community in the identification and planning of local priorities. Issues prioritised by community representatives are included in the Neighbourhood Action Plan and public services take action to respond to them. This includes targeting of the work of Community and Environmental Wardens to areas and issues identified as priorities by community representatives.

Whilst partners successfully support many community improvements there remain areas which require further development. Partners do not yet have a clear picture of the total learning offer and overall participation levels across the Firrhill community. This limits their capacity to fully identify gaps and collectively meet needs. There is a need to enhance the consistent analysis and use of performance data between partners. This would support planning for improvement. Young people would further recognise their progress and learning if partners work together to track their achievements. This tracking would also enable partners to identify and meet the needs of young people who are not participating. There is a need to increase opportunities for learners of all ages to gain awards and qualifications to recognise their achievements. The community would benefit by providing young people with more opportunities to contribute to local and area decision making and to take on leadership roles. Partners now need to explore whether all volunteers and community groups receive sufficient support including opportunities to network.

2. How well are partners working together and improving the quality of services and provision?

Partners work together well within formal partnership groups and more informally. This improves the co-ordination, outcomes and quality of learning provision and services across the community and wider area. Several partnership groups are improving the targeting and impact of provision very effectively. Partners in the Children's Services Manager's Group (CSMG) work together effectively to implement strategic priorities at a local level. By learning more about each other's roles CSMG partners have quicker and more flexible responses to local issues. This is improving outcomes for children and families. The School Cluster Group successfully sources funding to provide specialist support workers for army children, young people and families. Partners communicate with stakeholders effectively. They use a wide variety of methods including leafleting, websites and signposting of each others provision to provide local residents with information about local plans and learning opportunities.

A variety of methods are used effectively by partners to include stakeholders in the evaluation of programmes. CLD staff are increasing the systematic evaluation of each area of their work. Every literacy participant in adult learning activities run by CLD has an individual learning plan. Regular reviews of these plans support staff and learners to work together to identify learning aims and progression. CLD and team improvement plans link to national and community planning outcomes appropriately. Partly as a result of this CLD workers are clear how their work contributes to wider priorities. Workforce development opportunities support staff and volunteers to improve their practice. The Health and Wellbeing Action group of the Pentland Neighbourhood Partnership identified the need to respond to the high figures of domestic violence and abuse across the wider area. Partners and community activists are now trained to recognise signs of domestic violence and abuse. They are more confident to refer people onto specialist services. Multi-agency Getting It Right For Every Child training enables staff and volunteers to gain confidence in their role in supporting children. Nearly all who attended this training have improved practice including being better able to identify the needs of children and young people.

Partners now need to build on their strengths by addressing key areas for improvement. Enhanced systematic, joint self-evaluation will enable partners to better understand the impact of provision. This will aid collective planning for the future delivery of services. Partners would benefit from developing a clear shared vision for learning in the community.

This inspection of learning and development in the learning community surrounding Firrhill High School found the following key strengths.

- **High quality learning opportunities improving wellbeing**
- **Skilled volunteers and community groups delivering services which meet learning needs**
- **Well targeted provision, often by partnerships, improving lives**

We discussed with partners how they might continue to improve their work. This is what we agreed with them.

- **Enhance the use of performance data and shared evaluations to understand and improve impacts**
- **Gain a clearer understanding of the learning offer across the community to support planning for improvement**

4. What happens at the end of the inspection?

There are some improvements needed, but because partners have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, and communities are achieving well, we have ended the inspection process at this stage. We will monitor progress through our regular contact with the local authority. Our Area Lead Officers along with the education authority will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress.

Alona Murray
HM Inspector
5 May 2015

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for this learning community can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/othersectors/communitylearninganddevelopment/FirrhillHighSchoolLCEdinburgh.asp>

If you would like to receive this report in a different format, for example, in a translation you can contact the administration team on 01506 600381.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us, addressing your letter to The Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston, EH54 6GA.

Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

Crown Copyright 2015.

Education Scotland

Quality indicators help CLD providers, partners and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the learning community. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How Good is Our Community Learning and Development?* (HGIOCLD?). These were revised and updated in 2012. Updated versions can be found at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/about/cldinspections/guidance.asp>

Education Scotland evaluates four important quality indicators to help monitor the quality of learning communities across Scotland. Here are the results for the learning community surrounding Firrhill High School.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Improvements in performance | good |
| Impact on participants | very good |
| Impact on the local community | very good |
| Improving services | good |

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgments made by inspectors.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| excellent | outstanding, sector leading |
| very good | major strengths |
| good | important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| satisfactory | strengths just outweigh weaknesses |
| weak | important weaknesses |
| unsatisfactory | major weaknesses |

A copy of the full report is available on the Education Scotland website www.educationscotland.gov.uk.

Alona Murray
HM Inspector
05 May 2015