

Education, Children and Families Committee

Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30 pm, Monday 7 March 2016

Secondary School Follow Through at Castlebrae Community High School

Item number	6.4
Report number	
Wards	Ward 15: Southside/Newington Ward 16: Liberton/Gilmerton Ward 17: Portobello/Craigmillar

Links

Coalition pledges	PO5
Council outcomes	CO2
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

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Executive summary

Secondary School Follow Through – Castlebrae Community High School

Summary

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), now known as Education Scotland (ES) changed the procedures for inspecting educational establishments as from August 2008. These new procedures also include changes to the follow-through arrangements carried out one or two years after the publication of the inspection report. ES will only return to schools where the inspection report was less than satisfactory. Inspectors will carry out this return visit within one year of the original inspection and will publish a follow-through report.
- In all other instances the responsibility for following up the original inspection will lie with the local authority and authority officers will produce the follow-through report.
- The purpose of the follow-through report is to provide information to parents on the continuous improvement in the school including any area identified for improvement.
- This report advises the Sub-committee of the outcomes of the follow-through visit. ES undertook the responsibility for this follow-through and produced this report (Appendix 1).

Recommendations

- Note the progress made to date from the original inspection in March 2011.
- Note that the Area Lead Officer will continue to work with the City of Edinburgh Council to support the school and to build its capacity for further improvement.

Measures of success

- Castlebrae Community High School is beginning to take positive steps to improve young people's learning, attainment and achievement. Under the leadership of the new headteacher and a new senior leadership team, it is well placed to take forward further improvements.

Financial impact

There are no financial implications contained in the follow through report.

Equalities impact

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

Tracking of pupil performance by gender and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) is undertaken at school level and there are no adverse impacts.

Sustainability impact

None.

Consultation and engagement

Parent, staff and pupil discussions took place during the follow through.

Background reading / external references

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/905/schools-management-and-inspection/1090/school follow through and review reports](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/905/schools-management-and-inspection/1090/school-follow-through-and-review-reports)

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

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Links

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Follow through report – Castlebrae Community High School dated January 20162. Overall evaluations from 2011 report



CASTLEBRAE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT

1. The inspection

In March 2011, HM Inspectors published a report on your child's school. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work and published a letter to parents in April 2012. We visited the school again in May 2013 and published a letter to parents in August 2013. Education Scotland's Area Lead Officer visited the school in October 2014 to observe learning and teaching and discuss progress with school staff and an officer of the City of Edinburgh Council. A further visit took place in November 2015 with a team from Education Scotland and City of Edinburgh Council. We were able to find out how well young people are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This report sets out what we found.

2. Improvements in the quality of education provided

2.1 *How well do young people learn and achieve?*

Areas for improvement from original report:

Improve attainment and achievement.

Overall, there had been improvements in learners' experiences since the last inspection. Improvements had been made to the learning environment and there was a positive climate for learning. Throughout the school, young people were well behaved and relationships were respectful. In most classes expectations of learning and of behaviour were high and young people responded well. Almost all engaged positively and were willing to learn. In most classes they were beginning to show confidence and to take ownership of their own learning, particularly in the senior phase.

Where learning was best, lessons were well planned and well structured. Young people were clear about what they were learning and how to be successful. In a few classes, young people received high quality feedback and had a clear understanding of what they needed to do to improve their learning. In some classes the learning was too teacher led with little opportunity for young people to work collaboratively or to engage meaningfully in active learning. The outstanding practice in some areas of the school should provide a model for planning learning and teaching. The school should continue to ensure that staff challenge their practice and that best practice is shared. This will improve the consistency of learners' experiences.

There were many opportunities for young people to achieve more widely. These included becoming involved in the student led Red Cafe, helping to crew a Tall Ship, and building and racing an electric powered racing car. Young people were looking forward to being presented with achievement ties at assemblies as recognition of their accomplishments.

Following the last inspection, staff had implemented a number of strategies to improve attendance and attainment. These included a clear focus on improving the quality of learning, more opportunities for young people to reflect on their progress with their teachers, and better analysis of data to ensure effective interventions. These approaches were beginning to have a positive impact. Attendance had improved across all year groups and the number of exclusions had reduced. Tracking and monitoring of attainment in the Broad General Education (BGE) was thorough, with a strong emphasis on interrogating the data to gather information on progress made from P7 to S2. Data made available by the school indicated that the majority of young people were working within the appropriate level by the end of S3. Improving attainment in literacy and numeracy should be a priority and should build on prior attainment from the associated primary schools. The school had identified the need to put in place S3 profiles. There was an improving trend in numbers achieving level 4 by the end of S4. In 2015, the number of young people in S5 achieving five or more awards at levels 4 and 5 improved, as did the number achieving one or more Highers. The number of young people achieving these levels in S4-S6 was lower than in schools with young people with similar needs and backgrounds. The school needs to maintain their focus on improving attainment at all stages. The number of young people moving into a positive destination had improved and was well the figures in similar schools. The very good work of school and community staff in this area was a significant strength.

2.2 *How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?*

Areas for improvement from the original report:

Provide more coherent and consistent learning and teaching to meet better the needs of all young people.

Improve arrangements for religious observance.

Overall in lessons, tasks and activities were well planned. Attention was required to ensure that pace and challenge was appropriate to the needs of individuals and groups of learners. More opportunities for differentiation within the classroom should also be planned.

The school had further developed its use of digital technology in learning. All young people had been given an iPad. These were well used in a few classes with scope for further development as a tool to enhance and support learning.

Close working relationships with community partners underpinned the work of the Student Monitoring Group which was a strong forum for supporting the social, emotional and wellbeing needs of the most vulnerable young people. Administrative support ensured that communications were accurate and up to date. Child plans were in place for clearly identified groups of young people. These plans were discussed and updated regularly. The nurture group provided a calm, reassuring and safe environment for a small number of young people. Staff across the school valued the support provided by the nurture group. The breakfast club provided a well needed positive start to the day for a few young people. This was run by highly committed members of staff. Other staff across the school also recognised the need for this type of support and many provided breakfast on an informal basis for individual learners. This attention by staff to the health and well being of the young people in their care was widespread across the school.

Staff continued to revise and improve aspects of courses offered to ensure they provided learning which would lead to successful outcomes for learners. There was lack of progression in some areas of the curriculum due to the relevant National Qualifications not being offered. Teachers need to plan consistently for the development of young people's literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. There was a need to review approaches to the delivery of PSE in order to meet the needs of all young people, especially in S3 and S4.

Young people enjoyed their learning in the BGE. They felt they had some choice in their learning, for example, how to present their work in English, what activity to do in physical education (PE)

and what topics to research in social studies. They looked forward to the range of activities planned beyond the classroom such as the forthcoming visit to Columba 1400 for S2 with a focus on developing leadership skills. Most participated in at least one lunchtime or after school club from the wide range available. They felt safe and happy and knew who to go to if they required support.

Partnership working was becoming embedded in the curriculum and enhanced the provision of engaging courses to meet a wide range of needs, particularly in the senior phase. Edinburgh International Festival and Edinburgh College supported National Qualifications in creative arts, photography, dance, and engineering. Film Studies was supported by Screen Education Edinburgh. The school continued to work well with business partners to help young people to develop their employability skills through work placements and careers advice.

Changes had been made to the curriculum to meet the needs of the immediate cohort. A longer term strategy now needs to be put in place to ensure that the curriculum is coherent from S1-S6. There is a need to plan for a smooth transition from the BGE to the senior phase in order to provide a progressive and meaningful curriculum. Transition from primary to secondary had been strengthened through a programme of cluster training events and greater links with staff in the associated primary schools. This stronger cross sectoral working had improved the transition experience of the young people moving into the secondary school.

Suitable arrangements had been put in place to address the requirements for Time for Reflection. An excellent assembly was held to mark Remembrance Day. Senior students commented on how proud they were of the S1 students who presented at the assembly.

2.3 *How well does the school improve the quality of its work?*

Areas for improvement from the original report:

More effective use of self evaluation, together with partners, to improve the school.

The school had been through a number of changes in leadership since the original inspection. The recent permanent appointment of the headteacher had given much needed stability to the leadership of the school at senior management level. She had gained the confidence of the young people, the staff, and the community. Under her leadership, and with very strong support from her deputies, the school was beginning to have a clearer direction and a clearer sense of shared purpose. A comprehensive quality assurance calendar had been put in place to evaluate the quality of the school's work. Where this was implemented rigorously, staff showed increased confidence in evaluating their work and were able to set realistic but aspirational targets for young people. However, in some faculties, self evaluation did not result in challenge to bring about improvement. The curriculum leaders' forum provided an effective vehicle for challenge and professional dialogue. Discussion in this group had resulted in a wider range of self evaluation approaches being put into practice across the school. The senior leadership team now needs to ensure that clear expectations in relation to self evaluation processes and expected actions are in place across the school.

Pupil voice was an increasing strength. Young people felt they were consulted on many whole school issues, for example on the curriculum and on the future introduction of key adult time. They were involved in the recruitment of the new headteacher. Commendably, the headteacher had interviewed every young person as part of the school's commitment to improvement. The deputy headteacher had also held individual interviews with every young person and their parent/carer as part of the iPad relaunch. Overall, parental engagement continued to be a challenge. The few parents who did engage were very committed to the school and to its future in the community.

3 Conclusion

Overall, the school had taken some steps to address the areas for improvement in the original inspection. Young people, parents and staff are positive about these steps. With the arrival of the new headteacher, the school is ready to take forward further improvements. Education Scotland will continue to work with the City of Edinburgh Council to support the school and to build its capacity for further improvement. The Area Lead Officer will maintain contact with the school to monitor its progress.

Sharon Muir
Quality Improvement Officer
January 2016

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Castlebrae Community High School.

Improvements in performance	Weak
Learners' experiences	Satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	Weak

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	Satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	Weak

HM Inspector: Alistair Kirkwood
15 March 2011