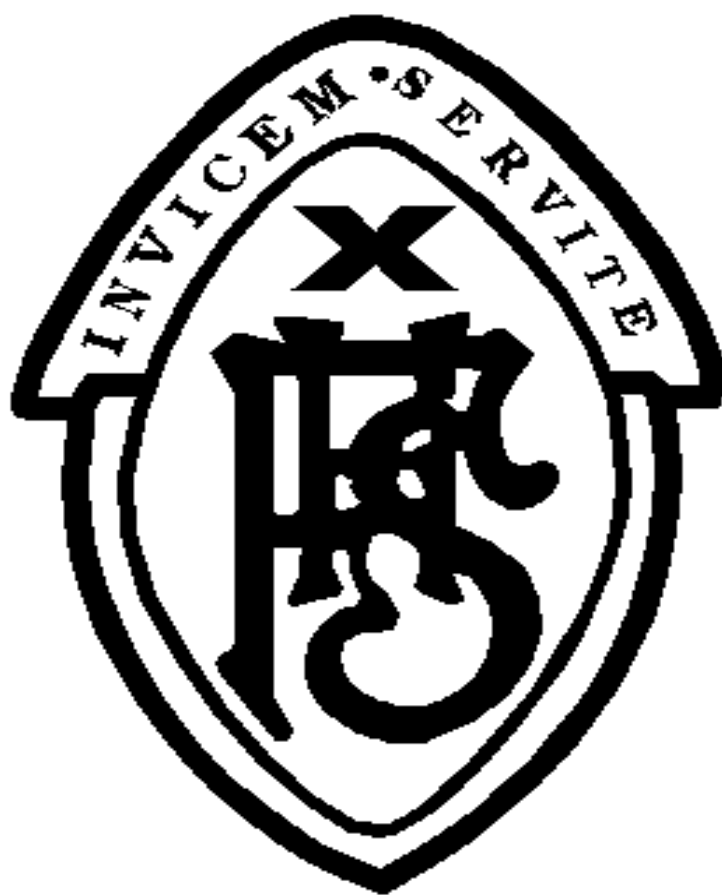
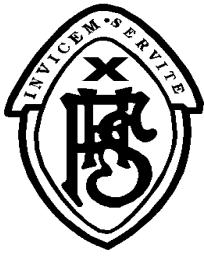


FALKIRK HIGH SCHOOL



**STANDARDS & QUALITIES REPORT
2008-2009**



FALKIRK HIGH SCHOOL

STANDARDS AND QUALITIES REPORT 2008-2009

Introduction

The last year has been a very exciting time in Falkirk High School as we got ever closer to moving into our new school. This was a feature of the school year for both staff and pupils but at times our new school seemed out of reach. Now, at last we arrive at a new beginning having successfully made our move.



This picture demonstrates a blend of old into new and highlights the need to retain the heritage of Falkirk High School whilst writing a new chapter in our history.

It also saw our S3 pupils complete another round of early presentations in SQA exams, whilst a number of our pupils continue to achieve success both locally and nationally in other fields of endeavour.

Raising attainment and Curriculum for Excellence continued to be our major fields of development. We are now ready to pilot our draft framework for S1 pupils.

As in previous years our Parent Council has worked hard to support the school culminating in a very successful "Homecoming" event, whilst our Pupil Councils successfully continue to represent the needs of pupils.

This report set out our improvements and continued development needs in relation to our targets for the session 2008-2009. The targets outlined in the school improvement plan for that year reflect our rigorous self-evaluation and the needs of pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders.

National Priority 1: Attainment and Achievement

To develop effective teaching and learning in order to improve Attainment and Achievement and ensure that our pupils achieve a consistent classroom experience across the school.

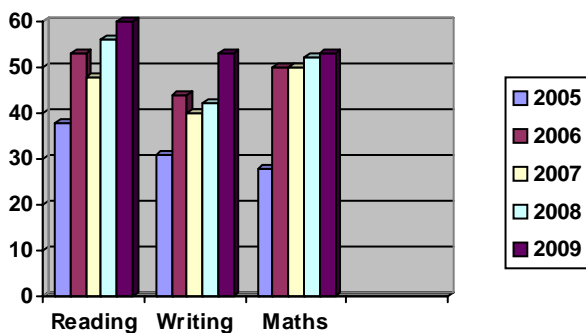
The development of effective teaching and learning is ongoing and will continue to be a feature of improvement in Falkirk High School. A key focus of this has been to achieve consistency of experience across the curriculum and, following on from HMIe's observations across Scotland, to *"reduce the unacceptable variability in the quality of learning and teaching and in order to promote the development of learners' knowledge, understanding, skills and capacities."* (HMIe, "Improving Scottish Education")

Staff across all subject areas have worked to address the consistency of the pupil experience with a focus on Assessment is for Learning strategies. In addition, staff have embedded sharing good practice in faculties and through a programme of whole school meetings. One member of staff commented *"this was an excellent use of time"* whilst another said *"I think the benefits of these sessions are endless."*

S1 Attainment

Comparing P7 data with that of S1 shows that on average pupils at Falkirk High School improve their attainment by more than 0.5 of a grade between P7 and the end of S1 in reading, writing and maths.

**% Attaining Level E by end
Of S1**



The following table highlights a predominantly rising trend in attainment in S1 over the last five years.

S1 pupils interviewing each other as part of their English Literacy Storylining project "TRUCKING"

This was a collaborative project involving both English and Support for Learning departments



Whole School Attainment

Falkirk High is measured nationally against 20 comparator schools, chosen for their similarities to Falkirk High School in relation to their catchment areas. Details of these measures can be found at the end of this report.

In S4, in the current year, Falkirk High ranks at or near the top of its comparator schools list in measures of attainment at level 3. At level four we rank in the top 25% of our comparator schools, whilst at level 5 we remain in the middle group of schools.

Our attainment at level 6 in S5 shows we are in the middle group of our comparator schools in all 3 measures. However this does show a fall from the top to the middle group of schools at 5+ at level 6.

Of ten measures of attainment in S6 we are currently ranked in the top 50% of our comparator schools in all measures and in the top 25% for one of those measures.

In the current year our S3 pupils have performed better than last year in the number of pupils achieving level 3 in English and Maths. They have maintained their performance in two other measures.

Other Achievement

It is important to recognise that pupils in our school have additional opportunities to achieve out with the formality of SQA. *That means continuing to raise standards of attainment for all learners, promoting, developing and recognising broader achievement more explicitly and ensuring that the ways in which we recognise achievement, including formal qualifications, reinforce the purposes of the curriculum.* (HMIe)

Our curriculum represents the best interests and needs of our pupils and provides them with a breadth of experiences that develop their knowledge, skills and aptitudes. One of our senior pupils undertaking the level 2 award in Sports Leadership said this *"has allowed me to develop many different skills this year, like communication, planning and organisation. By being given the opportunity to use these skills during my weekly visits to help with Primary PE classes I am now more confident leading others and know that all these skills will help me in my future"*

A number of our pupils achieved the following:

Award	Number
Duke of Edinburgh Silver Expedition	7
John Muir Trust Discovery Award	16
Ocean Youth Trust Royal Yachting Association Start Yachting Certificate	16
Sports Leaders Awards Level 1	67
Level 2	17
Dance Leaders Award – Level 2	2
Swimming Teachers Award	2
Heartstart Emergency Response	67
HSE First Aid	17
CREST awards (Science)	7
Scottish Maths Council Maths Challenge – Silver Awards	2
Associated Board Royal School of Music Instrumental Awards	9, including 2 merits and 2 distinctions. One pupil passed Grade 7* with distinction
Dynamic Youth Scotland Awards	6

*Grade 5 is the equivalent of performance at Advanced Higher level.

In addition a number of our pupils participated in the UK intermediate Maths Challenge with one qualifying for the UK finals achieving a silver award and another qualifying for the European Kangaroo.

National Priority 2: Framework for Learning

To develop our management structure to support the delivery of effective teaching and learning and the development of a flexible curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence to meet the needs of our pupils.

We have enhanced our management and leadership structures through the temporary appointment of 8 quality improvement coordinators. This enriches the experience of staff, builds a reservoir of management and leadership skills, provides increased rigour to our improvement agenda and offers a broader base for our strategic planning.

One faculty head commented that *"the role of QIC had brought a new energy to the faculty putting additional time and effort into the role to assist with the management and leadership of the faculty and in particular the development of Curriculum for Excellence."* whilst one of our QIC's said of their experience so far that *"since becoming a QIC the dimension of my job has changed in a positive light. By having extra responsibilities I have been given the opportunity to develop my leadership qualities, gain experience and have an insight as to how a management structure operates. This opportunity will hopefully allow me to advance further along my desired career path"*

In restructuring the management team and providing development opportunities for all staff we focused on ensuring agility and drive to constantly rethink, reinvigorate, react and reinvent. This has ensured that we have been able to respond positively to rapid changes in education including the curriculum and the increased awareness of how learning takes place.

In addition, 2 teachers successfully completed the Falkirk Council CPD programme "Learning to Lead", whilst five have agreed to lead Teacher Learning Communities. A considerable number of staff continue to participate in whole school working groups.

Our major focus has been preparing for the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. This has encouraged staff to work together across the school and in faculties to begin developing coherent, integrated learning experiences to meet the Experiences and Outcomes set out in Curriculum for Excellence.

After an extensive consultation process plans are in place to pilot two over-arching school learning themes in 2009-2010 with S1 pupils. Staff participated in in-service time dedicated to the development of Curriculum for Excellence and subsequently prepared detailed plans on how each would contribute to the whole school overarching learning themes and developed appropriate cross-curricular projects.

Significant time and effort was dedicated to preparing for our transition to the new school. This culminated in a very successful evening of nostalgia in which staff and pupils, past and present, and the local community attended.

Finally, we are working towards becoming a restorative school where our ethos is underpinned by secure relationships developed using restorative practice. All staff have participated in working towards this goal with a large proportion undergoing additional professional development work. 3 Members of staff have completed training as trainers in restorative practice to support the wider school staff. One of

them commented that "at this early stage there has been a positive reaction to restorative approaches from both staff and pupils."

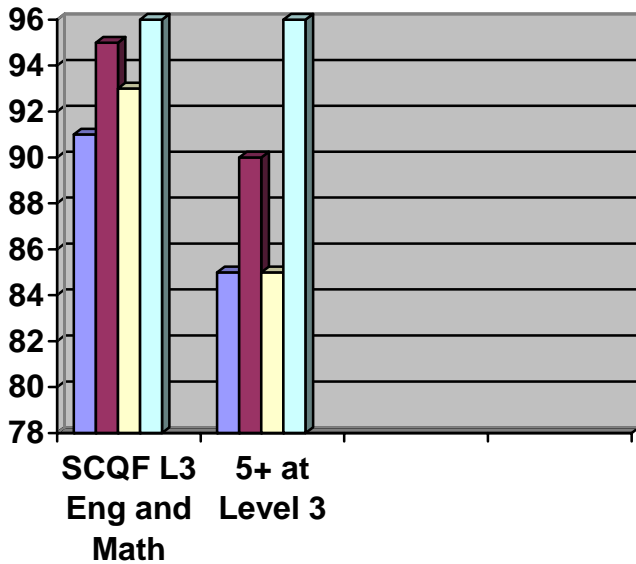


Our poster to promote our shift to restorative practice embedded within the values of Falkirk High School

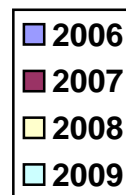
National Priority 3: Inclusion and Equality

To ensure that Falkirk High School offers effective and integrated support to all pupils through our role as an integrated learning community removing barriers to ensure maximum attendance and improvement in attainment of our most vulnerable young people.

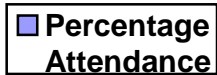
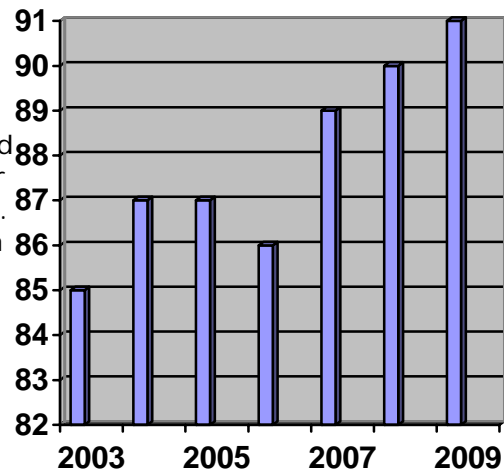
We have worked hard to ensure that we support all pupils and in doing endeavour to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils attain SQA recognition for their work. The following graph shows a significant improvement in the last year.



In the current year Falkirk High lie joint 2nd in the authority for the number of pupils achieving English and Maths at Level 3 and clear 2nd for 5+ at Level 3, out performing the authority average in both measures.



Relevant courses, quality learning and teaching and improved attendance have all contributed to the clear improvement in attainment at level 3 and above. Overall attendance this year has now broken through the 90% barrier and shows a rising trend.



National Priority 4: Values and Citizenship

To ensure we provide pupils with the necessary skills to be active and responsible citizens by providing clear and progressive opportunities throughout our curriculum, and by giving pupils the opportunity to influence decision making.

Pupils from across the school came together to participate in World Culture Day. This event was planned, organised and delivered by our International Education pupil forum and was highlighted by Falkirk Council as an area of good practice in our recent Citizenship audit. They noted that *"school staff are willing to allow pupils to develop and lead on particular projects e.g. World Culture Day. This is indicative of the trust they have in their pupils."* In addition, whilst we continue to develop our strong relations with our partner school in Malawi our IE forum is now working to develop links with schools in France, Spain, Poland and South Africa.



Pupils exploring the stalls of our World Culture Day "Market Place".

Our pupils have significant opportunities to develop as citizens and leaders including participation in our pupils' council. Falkirk Council noted that our *"Pupil Council is highly valued by all pupils and staff. It is seen quite clearly as a successful forum for sharing ideas and action being taken by the school management team where possible."*

In addition our pupils have opportunities to develop as leaders through their involvement in Sport and Dance Leaders awards programmes, Duke of Edinburgh, John Muir Trust and the Ocean Youth Trust.



Senior pupils developing their skills to work as part of a team with the Ocean Youth Trust.

This was one of a number of opportunities available to our pupils to develop valuable life skills.

Parents' opinions continue to be valuable to us and to this end we have sought to consult parents on their opinions on a range of topics relevant to our school and its pupils including our S4 programme and the options process. As a result of our extensive consultation with parents of existing and upcoming pupils, the pupils themselves and staff Falkirk High has returned to a more traditional uniform with blazers routinely worn for the first time in many years.



The Launch of our new school uniform will give our pupils a greater sense of identity with the school.

National Priority 5: Learning for Life

To develop leaders for the future, with enterprising attitudes and ensure our pupils have the confidence, skill and knowledge to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Our increasing drive to develop Enterprise in Education saw a number of our pupils achieve an SQA award for Enterprise last session, a first for Falkirk High School. Our Enterprise programme was recognised as showing "a good range of opportunities, across all four strands of *Determined to Succeed*."(Falkirk Council) In addition, we have again increased our number of business partners from 25 to 29.

Our Health immersion day helped our senior pupils develop the skills and knowledge to make healthy lifestyle choices. Our breakfast club continued to prove a popular choice for increasing numbers of pupils whilst the opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities continue to increase. These opportunities extended to staff who regularly attended their own Aerobic class in school.

The Coming Year

All staff and pupils are excited about our move into our new school and are ready for the new challenges this brings. In addition to building upon our current successes our focus will be on how best we can make use of our excellent new facilities for both pupils and staff ensuring that their experience matches their state of the art working environment.

