

Standards and Quality Report

Grangemouth High School 2006-2007

The annual Standards and Quality Report is an opportunity for Headteachers to share with parents the attainments and achievements of the previous session and to set out the priorities for the present session.

During session 2006-2007, there were major changes in the school, not least of which was the retiral of my predecessor, Gerry Docherty. During the period following Gerry's retiral and before I took up my appointment, the school was led very ably by Malcom Maciver, Depute Headteacher. With the support of the rest of the management team and the staff, Malcolm kept the school on course with development work outlined in the School Improvement Plan for 06-07 and maintained the drive towards raising attainment and achievement.

The Performance Review carried out by a team from Education Services last November identified a number of strengths, with positive comments being made in relation to a range of quality indicators, including:

- ◆ leadership; staff development; the sharing of information and good practice
- ◆ ethos; happiness of pupils and staff; parental satisfaction; involvement with parents and the wider community
- ◆ support for pupils; transition arrangements; joint working with the Integrated Learning Community and other partners
- ◆ behaviour management; alternatives to exclusion; curriculum flexibility
- ◆ study skills development; health promotion; extra-curricular activities
- ◆ continuing improvement in attainment and achievement

Development needs identified as part of the Performance Review have been included in the School Improvement Plan for 2007-2008. The plan also builds on the previous plan and reflects current local and national priorities, as well as specific development areas identified by the school. Our commitment to the wider education of children so that they develop as well-rounded individuals, capable of playing an active part in society and in their communities, is evident throughout the School Improvement Plan.

The main development priorities for 07-08 are shown below:

- ◆ improving the whole-school approach to learning and teaching
- ◆ developing implementation of the government's Curriculum for Excellence policy
- ◆ engaging pupils, parents and the community in the life of the school
- ◆ continuing to embed the Additional Support for Learning act in our day-to-day work
- ◆ developing a range of citizenship opportunities, including international citizenship

In addition, we will be preparing for the move to the new school, still on schedule for December 2008. Moving an entire school into a new building is a mammoth task at any time, but particularly so during term time, and we will be working towards minimising the disruption to learning and teaching and ensuring that the transition to the new school goes as smoothly as possible.

The attainments and achievements of last session are illustrated in the sections that follow.

Attainment

It is very pleasing to note a continuing upward trend in results at all levels and whilst it is never very wise to draw conclusions from a single year's results, a pattern of improvement over a period of time is a more reliable indicator.

There are many factors which underpin pupils' academic successes and the school has worked hard to create and maintain the conditions that allow all pupils to thrive and to achieve their potential. This work starts while pupils are still in primary school and continues until they leave us at the end of S4, S5 or S6.

In the first place, we have very strong links with our partner primary schools and an excellent transition programme that enables secondary staff to build up detailed profiles of all pupils coming in to S1, and to work alongside P7 teachers to provide curricular and social/emotional support to those who require it. This support continues throughout secondary, and is supplemented in a number of ways, including:

- ◆ ability profiling using standardised tests (Cognitive Ability Testing or CAT) in S1 and S3
- ◆ target-setting with pupils, for example the S3 and S4 Personal Development Plans
- ◆ regular and robust monitoring and tracking of performance
- ◆ targeted learning and study skills programmes, for example in S4 prior to SQA exams
- ◆ a programme of supported study opportunities

Secondly, flexibility in the curriculum ensures that pupils are able to follow courses that are appropriate to their abilities and prior attainments. This flexibility is evident in:

- ◆ the range of courses available at key transition points
- ◆ a "free choice" option form
- ◆ the introduction of alternative routes to accreditation
- ◆ consortium arrangements that allow pupils to follow particular courses at other schools or at Forth Valley College

The school has well-developed systems for target-setting, personal development planning, and study skills training, as well as a range of enterprise and citizenship activities, all of which contribute to creating the right conditions for attainment and achievement.

Statistical analysis of attainment

In analysing our attainment statistics, we compare and contrast our performance with:

- ◆ our own results from previous years
- ◆ results from comparator schools
- ◆ Falkirk Council results
- ◆ national statistics

On all of these measures, our 2006-2007 results are very encouraging indeed, and overall the trends over the past few years show continued improvement.

Some of the key features are shown below, with greater detail on the next page:

- ◆ almost all pupils at this school gain Standard Grade awards in English and Mathematics
- ◆ 95% gain 5 or more Standard Grade awards across all subjects
- ◆ the progression value from Standard Grade to Higher is good – in other words, pupils tend to do better in their Highers than might be predicted

5-14

Our 5-14 results continue to show steady overall improvement. The overall expectation in 5-14 is that most pupils will achieve level E by the end of S2. However, it is difficult to continue to comment on S2 results, as S2 “fast-track” pupils begin their Standard Grade courses early, and therefore are not included in the 5-14 statistics. This also means that there are no local authority averages published for S2.

The % of pupils who have achieved **level E by the end of S1** continues to show a year-on-year improvement in both Reading and Mathematics. There is a dip this year in Writing – however, this is reflected in most other schools in the authority and many pupils will overtake level E and level F in their S2 work.

| Percentage of pupils attaining level E by the end of S1 | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| Reading | 53 | 37 | 47 | 50 | 52 |
| Writing | 48 | 31 | 40 | 40 | 37 |
| Mathematics | 16 | 17 | 15 | 30 | 31 |

S3

Our results for fast-tracked classes, which allow pupils to sit Standard Grade English and/or Mathematics at the end of S3, have been excellent for the third consecutive year. Of the 53 pupils presented for Credit/General English, 37 gained a Credit award and 16 gained a General level 3. It is a similar situation in Mathematics, with 27 pupils presented at General/Credit level and 24 Credit and 3 General awards.

S4

Results in S4 have been excellent and represent both a further improvement on the gains made last year and the best results the school has had.

Notable features:

- ♦ this year a massive 80% of S4 pupils (up from 68% last year) gained 5 or more awards at General level or better
- ♦ there was an increase, too, in the numbers gaining 5 or more awards at Credit level, this figure rising from 27% to 29%
- ♦ fast-track pupils who sat Intermediate 2 English in S4 had excellent results, with 10 A passes, 7 Bs, 5 Cs and no fails
- ♦ we have moved from the middle 50% of our comparator schools to the top 25%
- ♦ our S4 results exceed the Falkirk and national averages in most measures and bring us very close to the averages for 5+ Credit awards.

**Please note that these figures include Standard Grade equivalents, eg Access 3, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2, passes in which have the same value as Standard Grade Foundation, General and Credit awards respectively.*

S5/6

The overall improvement continues in S5 and S6, with increases as shown in the percentage of pupils attaining:

- ◆ at least one Higher award by the end of S5 26% (up from 25%)
- ◆ 3 or more Higher awards by the end of S5 14% (up from 13%)
- ◆ 3 or more Higher awards by the end of S6 18% (up from 17%)
- ◆ 5 or more Higher awards by the end of S6 11% (up from 9%)
- ◆ at least 1 Advanced Higher by the end of S6 11% (up from 10%)

In common with most other schools in the area, and in line with national trends, there was a dip in the numbers gaining 5 or more Highers in S5, from 6% to 4%. However, these are pre-appeal results and may very well change following the appeals process.

The results analysis helps us to highlight development areas for the School Improvement Plan and assists faculty PTs in identifying improvement priorities for individual subject areas.

Achievement

As a school, we place a high value on pupil achievements and strive to create opportunities for pupils to achieve, and for us to recognise and celebrate achievements gained both through school activities and in other pursuits.

In terms of the curriculum, we have introduced the Skill Force course to the S3/4 option choices and currently have 20 pupils in S3 and 12 pupils in S4 undertaking this as an alternative to a Standard Grade. The Skill Force course includes nationally-recognised presentation in a number of areas, with last session's S4 pupils gaining certificates and awards as shown:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ASDAN Awards | 7 Gold and 5 Silver |
| Duke of Edinburgh Awards | 9 Bronze |
| St Andrews Ambulance | 12 first aid certificates |
| John Muir (Scotland) | 10 awards |
| Junior Sports Leader | 7 awards |

There are numerous opportunities in the school for pupils to achieve in the widest sense, to develop their citizenship and enterprise skills, and to contribute to their communities, and these all contribute to the Curriculum for Excellence aims of developing pupils as:

- ◆ successful learners
- ◆ confident individuals
- ◆ effective contributors
- ◆ responsible citizens

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities and are able to participate in competitive and leisure sporting events, House challenges, school concerts and shows, musical performances, and educational excursions.

S6 pupils have additional opportunities through the prefect, Captain and House Captain system; the buddy scheme; the committees that organise charity events, discos, the year-book, and the prom; community service; classroom assistance; and organising and assisting at school events.

Individual and school achievements are too numerous to be listed separately, however the pages that follow illustrate some of the highlights of last session.

The Jupiter Urban Wildlife Centre project

This started out as an ambitious environmental project involving ourselves and the cluster primary schools. All P7 and S1 pupils were involved in helping to re-launch the Jupiter Urban Wildlife Centre through re-planting and sampling the activities on offer. Each of the primary schools went on to create its own wildlife garden and all P7 pupils worked towards and achieved level 1 of the John Muir Award. In secondary, a group of pupils (helped by two members of staff) have set up an Eco-club and they, too, have gained the John Muir Award.

The involvement with the Jupiter Garden led to a second project, this time to design and produce large murals to decorate the entrance to the visitor centre. All S1 pupils were invited to submit drawings; 33 of these were selected for the final judging; and 10 pupils had their designs chosen for the murals. These were then painted onto large boards by senior pupils and are now in place at the centre. Our involvement in this project was featured in the *Scottish Wildlife Magazine* and in the BBC series *Around Britain*, and the final drawings were put on display in the Scottish Parliament building and in government offices. The project also featured in a *My Future's in Falkirk* event held last June.



Celebrating Success Awards

One of the school's major achievements of last session was winning the Community Involvement and Partnership category in Falkirk Council's Celebrating Success Awards. The award was made on the basis of the previous session's school show *As You Were*. This show was a huge undertaking that involved a lot of research and careful work to replicate war-time clothing and appearance and create an authentic back-drop for the performance. It was an extremely popular event, not only with parents, but with the whole community, as shown in the numerous letters received by the school afterwards. The award recognised both the involvement of the community in putting the show together and the contribution the show made to the community.

We have submitted an entry for this year's awards, in the environment category, for last session's Jupiter project (described above) and are delighted to have short-listed.



Health Promoting Schools

The school gained recognition as a Health Promoting School following an assessment last March. We were delighted to be the first secondary school in the Forth Valley Health Board area to be recognised, and aim to upgrade our level 2 status to level 3 this session.

This award recognises the school's commitment to health education and to health promotion both within the curriculum and in the school generally. In putting together the evidence to support our submission, we had to show that the school is committed to developing and improving the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of our pupils and staff and to working in partnership with others to impact on the health and well-being of the wider community. The judging criteria go far beyond the obvious indicators such as healthy eating and exercise, and include the ethos of the school, the use of resources, equality and fairness, the wider curriculum and inclusion.

A selection of other school achievements

- ◆ The Senior Girls Choir sang at the Council's Remembrance Service last November
- ◆ 20 pupils gained awards at the UK Intermediate Mathematics Challenge in February and 42 pupils gained awards at the UK Junior Mathematical Challenge in April
- ◆ S1 pupils took part in a 3-day Technology Challenge in March, an activity that was nominated for a Forth Valley Partnership Award
- ◆ S2 pupils were involved in the Red Book Awards
- ◆ The school featured in the BBC series "A Scottish Education"
- ◆ There was an educational trip to London, run by the Music staff
- ◆ We held study skills and teambuilding weekends for S4 and S6
- ◆ 450 pupils in S1-S4 took part in a range of activities as part of our Rewards Day
- ◆ We had a Christmas concert that included pupils from the cluster primary schools
- ◆ In June, we hosted a visit from a group of pupils and teachers from Poland
- ◆ The school show, The Wizard of Oz, played to a full house for 3 nights in June

A selection of individual pupil achievements:

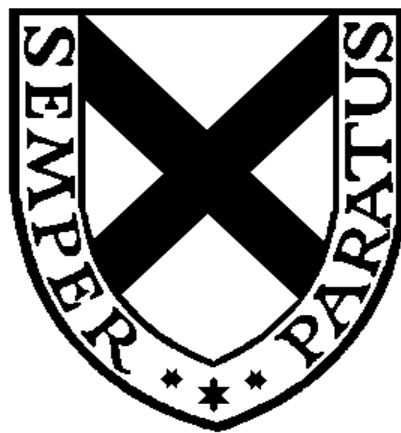
- ◆ Kirsty Wood and Amber Tully won prizes in the Scottish Space School Programme, and spent a week at the Space Camp at Strathclyde University
- ◆ Lisa Sutherland was the first ever Grangemouth High School, pupil to be selected to play at national level in football
- ◆ Logan Niblo won a national competition to design an anti-sectarian poster
- ◆ Ramsay Elfendi reached the finals of the Scottish Schools Swimming Championships
- ◆ Dean McLachlan won the silver medal (karate) at the Scandinavian open
- ◆ Sam McLeod won gold for his weight in the Jim Watt Scottish Novice Boxing Tournament
- ◆ Numerous other achievements in sporting events

The continuing overall improvement in attainment, and the wide range of pupil achievements, are an indication not only of the hard work put in by both staff and pupils, but also of the support we have from parents and the success of a number of initiatives put in place by the school to support and challenge pupils at all levels.

I am pleased to be able to publish such a positive report, and look forward to building on our successes in session 2007-2008.

Maralyn Brown
Headteacher

GRANGEMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL



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