



PROGRESS ON THE MAIN POINTS FOR ACTION

Bo'ness Academy was inspected in January 2007 as part of a national sample of secondary education. The school received a positive report with a number of key strengths identified.

HM Inspectors identified four main points for action to raise attainment and overall achievement which the school and the authority have addressed jointly.

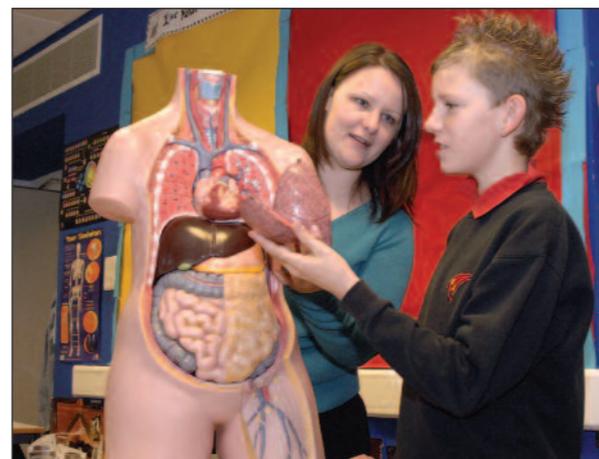
As part of the HMI follow-through process, Falkirk Council Children's Services was asked to evaluate the progress made by the school in taking forward the recommendations and publish a report on progress to parents.

Continuous Improvement

Staff have responded positively to the challenges of improving the school and effective use has been made of professional development time with a particular focus on Assessment is for Learning. The school has been involved in national developments associated with Curriculum for Excellence contributing to the work of Testing the Framework Group.

The school has been involved in an exciting project with Caledonian Produce which has promoted and developed cross-curricular working and links with the world of work. First year pupils have gained new skills and confidence in undertaking this work and have received local and national recognition.

The school has further developed international links with China and this session a Chinese language assistant has been in school working with staff and pupils.



The new District Inspector visited the school in March as part of a series of visits to schools across Falkirk Council.

Attainment

5-14 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has continued to rise over the past 5 years. There is a welcome improvement in SQA attainment of 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 5 with both male and female results rising. Five or more awards at Level 3 show an improvement in the performance of both boys and girls but there is still room for improvement here. In English and maths at Level 3 94% has been achieved with girls achieving 97%, both figures being above national average and within the top 25% of comparator schools.

There was good performance by S6 pupils and particularly of note was the improved performance of girls achieving 3 Highers by the end of S6 and overall results for 1 or more and 5 or more Highers.

The percentage of students achieving 1 or more Advanced Highers in 2008 was the best for some time and was above national average and equalled the figures for the best of the comparator schools.

Action Point 1

Continue to improve the curriculum to meet pupils' needs.

Bo'ness Academy has begun the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. Changes to the curriculum in S1 have allowed 1 period per week to be offered as a choice of courses with each pupil having the opportunity to undertake 2 choices per session. This will be extended into S2 from 2009.

Art and design and the social subjects have been involved with the community in a number of projects including the production of paving stones detailing historical aspects of life in Bo'ness and the making of a film relating to the restoration of the old Hippodrome containing memories and reflections which were presented at the reopening in April 2009.

In order to meet the needs of learners better, Bo'ness Academy has introduced Access 3 courses in English, maths, geography, computing, science and art and Access 2 has been introduced in English.

A number of departments have moved from a diet of Standard Grades to a range of national qualifications. The school continues to develop this area of the curriculum.

There has been an expansion of college based Skills for Work provision and the number of pupils accessing these courses is increasing year on year. Consortia arrangements for S5 and S6 pupils

with other schools and Forth Valley College have been well marketed and reflect pupil need.

Positive Transitions Programme, ASDAN and the Princes' Trust, EXCEL clubs have all impacted positively on pupil attainment and achievement.

Overall, very good progress has been made towards meeting this recommendation.

Action Point 2

Further raise expectation for behaviour and continue to address challenging behaviour.

Following a major review of behaviour management, a new Discipline for Learning policy is now in place with a staged approach confirmed.

A focused programme of continuing professional development has been undertaken by all staff addressing specific learning difficulties and this has impacted positively on behaviour and learning.

Restorative practices are being developed within the school and early indications are that staff are having successful restorative conversations with referrals of a lower order than in previous years. The community Police are very supportive of this development and pupils are indicating that their views are taken onboard by staff.

There is a continuing fall in exclusion figures.

An encouraging start has been made to the development of the role of house tutor to support pupils in pastoral matters including attendance, late coming, option choices and inter-house activities. The school is working towards achieving a greater consistency in practice across the school.

Good progress has been made towards meeting this recommendation.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Action Point 3

Achieve greater consistency in applying revised approaches to improving the quality of pupils' learning across all departments.

The school has developed methodologies and technologies to improve pupil engagement and this has been supported by a whole school continuing professional development programme with sessions on Assessment for Learning over the last 3 years. The education authority in partnership with Stirling University has developed a programme to develop the role of leading teachers. There are 2 leading teachers currently on the staff who are now in their second year of this programme and are involved in developing skills and confidence in staff to utilise interactive whiteboards and various software to enhance teaching and learning. This has led to an increasing number of staff who are now confident users of a range of IT.

Individual staff have improved their skills through continuous professional development and co-operative learning and accelerated learning along with other active learning approaches.

Good progress has been made towards meeting this recommendation.

Action Point 4

Further improve the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and ensure they have an impact on outcomes for learners.

A new policy on monitoring and tracking was issued to staff at the beginning of session 2007/08 and updated for the start of 2008/09. Guidelines were produced for staff in target setting and

procedures established. Senior management team undertakes monitoring which complements the monitoring undertaken by the principal teachers. There is good cross working within the extended leadership team which ensures gaps are addressed. There is a focus at parents' evenings on targets and pupils' performance in relation to them.

Target setting, however, is not conducted across all stages of the school with focus at present on senior pupils.

An early warning system for pupil performance has been devised with interim reports going out to parents to alert them to progress and concerns.

The school continues to have support from the authority to analyse STACS data and implement consequent action plans. There is increasing expertise across the school in this area. A quality assurance programme has been produced to support the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by principal teachers. A three year plan has been devised and agreed providing regular and appropriate timescales for review and evaluation of school policies and procedures.

There is further work to be undertaken by the school in ensuring staff work together and apply appropriate challenge.

Pupils are currently surveyed about a range of activities in school, course option choices, views on behaviour and anti-bullying and the school plans to involve pupils more in self evaluation.

Good progress has been made in addressing this main point for action.

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For further information on this report or the Council's strategy for Raising Achievement please contact the Headteacher or

The Communications Officer
Falkirk Council
Children's Services
McLaren House
Marchmont Avenue
Polmont FK2 0NZ
Tel 01324 506600

Further copies of this report and the original HMI report are available from the school or on the HMI website at www.hmie.gov.uk

Falkirk Council Children's Services are committed to open communication that achieves shared understanding and helps overcome barriers. This leaflet can be made available in other languages, in Braille, large print or on audio tape. Please contact 01324 506600 for further information.



LEARNING TO ACHIEVE
A Strategy for Raising Achievement

Follow Through Report on the Inspection of



Bo'ness Academy
June 2009



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