



PROGRESS ON THE AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Graeme High School was inspected in November 2008 as part of a national sample of secondary education. The school received a very positive report with a number of key strengths identified.

These were:

- Well-motivated and enthusiastic young people
- A very positive ethos in classes and across the school
- Effective support for young people with additional learning needs
- Improving tracking and monitoring of young people's progress to help them achieve
- Systematic and effective arrangements for self-evaluation
- Strong leadership from the headteacher and good support from staff towards improving the school

Her Majesty's Inspectors identified three areas for improvement which the school and the authority have addressed jointly.

Falkirk Council Children's Services were asked to evaluate the progress made by the school in taking forward the recommendations and inform the parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Since the publication of the report in January 2009, there has been very good progress towards the areas for improvement in the HMIe report. The headteacher, Lesley Carroll and her staff are firmly committed to an agenda of continuous improvement and a culture of self-evaluation and reflection.

Progress has been verified through classroom observations, meetings with the headteacher, staff and pupils, and through scrutiny of the school's documentation.

Progress in meeting the recommendations has been monitored and supported by the Quality Improvement Team.

Progress against the three areas for improvement are detailed below.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 1

Continue to develop strategies to raise levels of attainment, particularly at S5/S6

The school engages in a wide range of effective activities to specifically target raising attainment. Target setting is rigorous; pupils' progress is regularly monitored and shared with parents across all subjects. Specific pupil groups are tracked and targeted through a range of support measures.

The School Pupil Learning Council has been involved in shaping the target setting process which included establishing a pro forma to support pupils with their target setting practices.

A significant number of staff work with underachieving pupils and use resources specifically developed by the school to support and enhance strategies. Pupils are offered mentors from the school community which has impacted positively on their progress.

Departments provide effective and extensive programmes of targeted Supported Study and study skills courses are delivered to all S4 pupils.

Senior pupils have their learning and studying styles identified, which they find beneficial when structuring revision techniques. They appreciate teachers' willingness in undertaking supported study and the effort they make to engage pupils e.g. after school as part of a 'pizza night' or staff talking to them at Breakfast Club before they sit an exam.

The school continues to develop a broad range of alternative attainment qualifications including Salon Services, ASDAN, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Junior Sports Leaders, Dance Leaders, Enterprise through Craft etc.

By the end of S4 the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ awards at SCQF level 3 or better has increased from 92% to 94%. The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ awards at SCQF level 4 or better increased from 78% to 79%. This is a rising trend at these levels with the figures above authority average.

The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ awards at SCQF level 5 or better decreased slightly from 35% to 34% but it is anticipated to rise once the SQA appeals are concluded. The figure is in line with national and authority averages as well as comparator schools.

By the end of S6 the percentage of pupils achieving 3+ awards at SCQF level 6 or better improved significantly from 24% to 31% and is in line with authority average. The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ awards at SCQF level 6 or better also significantly improved from 12% to 20% and pupils achieving 1+ award at SCQF level 7 or better increased from 11% to 15%.

Very good progress has been made towards meeting this area for improvement.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 2

Continue to develop the curriculum to meet young people's learning needs more effectively, particularly at S5/6

A Health and Wellbeing programme for senior pupils has been created and established to contribute to the pupils' social, emotional, physical and spiritual well being. This has led to extending the range of external partners and providers connected with the school as well as utilising staff skills and expertise to enhance pupils' experiences. Pupils are involved in the evaluation of the programme and their voice influences the range and style of activities offered. Almost all pupils engage positively with the programme and value the opportunities offered.

Breadth within the curriculum has continued to be developed for example through the Skill Force organisation to help prepare targeted groups for the world of work; award winning links with Cala Homes with pupils in the subject areas of Administration, Art and Design and Design and Technology being supported and offered opportunities such as designing the interior for a teenager's bedroom in a new housing



FURTHER INFORMATION

development's show house; S5/6 Sports Leaders programmes which allow pupils to develop leadership skills and contribute to the community.

In preparation for the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, the school engaged its stakeholders in determining a clear rationale for the curriculum, based on shared values. In-service sessions were designed to focus staff reflections on the range and quality of experiences for learners, the impact of these experiences and the outcomes they achieved. Thus a process of curriculum innovations began to meet the needs of learners and to provide opportunities for choice and specialisation.

The school delivered a range of very successful and innovative interdisciplinary projects. The S2 South African World Cup project enabled pupils and staff to work across departments to explore and celebrate cultural diversity and deepen their understanding of staging such significant international events.

Very good progress has been made in towards meeting this area for improvement

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 3

Provide more challenging work across the school for higher attaining young people

The school has established its vision 'Learning Is Our Top Priority' and focuses on promoting 'teachers for excellence' by improving the learning experiences for pupils and achieving greater consistency of practice.

In conjunction with the authority's Tapestry initiative, the school has formed four Teacher Learning Communities involving the majority of the teaching complement participating in developing Assessment is for Learning strategies and active learning approaches. Staff are very positive about the developments valuing the collegiate approach and sharing good practice.

Assessment information is used to plan and deliver high quality learning experiences for pupils. Approaches are adapted and more challenging opportunities are provided for higher attaining pupils. These include subject champions, ambassadors in sport, pastoral mentors, accelerated year groups, baccalaureate programme, rotary youth leader programme, younger pupils making presentations to senior pupils etc.

Very good progress has been made in towards meeting this area for improvement

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

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Further copies of this report and the original HMIE report are available from the school or on the HMIE 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.

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LEARNING TO ACHIEVE
A Strategy for Raising Achievement

Progress Report on the HMIE
Inspection - Areas for Improvement



**Graeme
High School**

January 2011



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