

Introduction

Our Lady and St Patrick's High School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in October 2004 and the resulting report was published in January 2005. Working with the education authority an action plan was prepared by the school indicating how the main points for action identified in the original HMIE report would be addressed.

Members of the Quality Improvement Unit from West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) visited the school in June to conduct a follow through inspection. They assessed the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work. They also evaluated the progress made in responding to the main points for action, outlined in the original report.

Continuous Improvement

Since the inspection report was published the school had made significant progress in demonstrating continuous improvement. The school had continued to improve aspects of its performance. By the end of S4 the percentage of pupils gaining five or more Standard Grade awards at 1-6 and 1-4 had continued to improve and were well above the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining grades 1-2 had fallen back slightly in 2005 in line with the national average and had increased again in 2006. Overall performance at this stage was above that of similar schools.

By the end of S5 an increasing percentage of pupils was gaining three or more and five or more awards at Higher A-C. Performance was above that of similar schools and above the national average. The proportion of pupils who, by the end of S6 achieved one or more grades A-C at Advanced Higher was also above that of similar schools and above the national average.

Attainment at S1/2 had further improved in English language and mathematics and was well above the authority average.

In June 2005 the school was successful in its application to join the Schools of Ambition programme. The theme of the Schools of Ambition programme was "changing lives through creativity" and the aim was to nurture the dispositions, values and competences amongst the school community to promote creativity. Very good progress had been made in translating this vision into action. A principal teacher was appointed to promote creativity and to develop partnerships across the school in order to enhance many aspects of creativity in the curriculum. Staff workshops had led to a school circular on delivering creativity. The promotion of creativity had been a central theme at meetings of principal teachers.

The school was also involved in partnership working with the Scottish Executive and Careers Scotland in an enhanced resource pilot.

The aim was to improve outcomes for young people and to reduce the proportion of young people who leave school and enter a negative destination. The school was active in embracing this opportunity and had worked hard to improve school leaver destinations.

Leadership development at all levels in the school was encouraged. Some staff had undertaken a Basic Expedition Leadership Award in partnership with Outdoor Education. This had resulted in piloting a leadership course and supporting a creative arts project with pupils participating in the West Highland Way walk linking with a school in Highland Council at the end of the walk. In partnership with creative links staff, the 'Turkey Red' project was a great success.

Progress Towards Meeting the Main Points for Action.

1. *Build on current good practice and improve continuity of learning from primary to secondary across all areas of the curriculum.*

The school had made very good progress on this action point. Across departments differentiated courses at 5-14 levels C-F were produced ensuring a more appropriate curriculum was in place. Primary and secondary staff had engaged in joint planning of a wide range of courses and a new primary/secondary approach to teaching and formative assessment was in place. This had improved the continuity of pupils' learning from primary to secondary through taking greater account of pupils' prior learning. The pace of learning, range of resources, pupil activities and assignments were rigorously monitored and had led to increased pace and level of challenge. A programme of visits to associated primary schools was well established with science, technical and modern studies teachers working in partnership with primary colleagues. This programme will be expanded in 2006 to include the music and art and design departments. Better partnership working had led to an increase in joint activities such as the Global Citizenship Fayre and Careers Day.

2. *Ensure that teachers make more use of ICT in teaching and learning.*

Very good progress had been made in taking forward this main point for action. The school had vastly increased the range of ICT hardware in classrooms to promote more effective use of ICT in teaching and learning.

The skill level of staff was significantly improved through attendance at in-service courses. Through becoming a Microsoft Academy and Assessment Centre staff had received high quality certificated training in a variety of ICT skills including the production of high quality teaching materials. Departmental user groups were established on the internal network OLSP Net to enable greater access to and the sharing of resources. The use of the CPD website and the school internet website was monitored demonstrating an increased staff confidence in the use of ICT.

A pupil network was developed which had allowed staff to place materials on the network that pupils may access, for example, powerpoint presentations and study materials. Pupils were assigned folders on the server to store important assignments. The OLSP website was extended to allow departments to provide important information regarding courses and deadlines.

Space was allocated to other resources such as guidance on study techniques and links to other learning sites. The librarian had offered good support to the school through working with departments to identify and bookmark useful sites to enable easier and more rapid access to appropriate online materials thus promoting independent interactive learning. Study techniques and other materials to support learning were broadcast on OLSP TV.

The increased use of ICT in the classroom had enhanced learning and teaching and enabled pupils across the stages to progress in a range of curricular areas. The school had won first place in the Scottish Education awards for using ICT in learning.

3 *Provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.*

Very good progress had been made with this point for action. Study skills support materials were created to encourage personal responsibility and independent learning. Collegiate time was allocated to develop staff expertise. Personal learning planning was piloted at S3 and had been rolled out to all year groups. Parent workshops on personal learning planning and study skills had taken place.

The implementation of a range of assessment strategies had also created more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. There was greater evidence that classroom activities promoted independent learning. Further opportunities were identified through engaging pupils at Our Lady and St Patrick's High School and Primary 7 pupils in a design project that will culminate in a fashion show in May 2007. The school had established links with BBC and Scottish Power learning to further develop OLSP TV to support independent learning across the curriculum. Pupils had received technical training in all aspects of TV production. Strategies to promote the self-discipline and accountability of pupils had also been developed through identifying and targeting pupils and the expansion of the mentoring programme.

4. *Address the accommodation issues identified in this report.*

The school and the authority had made some progress with this action point. A new façade to the front elevation on the ground floor had resulted in the creation of new internal areas for pupils to gather at breaks. Significant improvements were made to floor coverings and lighting. The home economics department was successfully refurbished. Many parts of the school were repainted.

Progress in the Inspected Departments.

All the inspected departments had taken effective steps to address the recommendations of the report.

In the English department focused planning and curriculum development, including the introduction of clear timelines, had increased the pace of work in S3/S4. The needs of all pupils presented for Higher had been met through the careful organisation of pupils and the production of an appropriately challenging assessment calendar. Since 2004, the proportion of S5/6 pupils achieving A-C grades at Higher had continued to increase while the proportion of pupils achieving level D or no award had decreased in 2006.

All pupils presented for Advanced Higher in 2006 achieved an A-C award. There was good evidence of the department's capacity to continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and achievement.

In the mathematics department, staff had attended training on questioning skills and *Next Step Reporting*. As part of the continuing development of formative assessment the use of praise had been reflected on and discussed. Practice in the department was regularly monitored to ensure consistency. First year pupils were allocated to a teaching group based on their prior level of attainment. The recently re-structured S1 classes promoted an increased rate of progression from prior levels of attainment. The department had successfully implemented new courses, which contained extension materials and enabled pupils to make good progress in their coursework. The use of graphic calculators in Standard grade for S3 had been consolidated and extended into S4.

In modern languages the department had increased opportunities for oral practice at all stages through the use of choral practice, CD and MP3 files for vocabulary learning. Teaching approaches were reviewed to ensure a more appropriate balance between whole class, group and individual teaching. This had resulted in the promotion of resource based learning opportunities, peer assessment, mind mapping, and paired and group working. A comprehensive range of activities had been introduced to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn independently. This included learning logs, course information posted on classrooms and corridor walls, the use of CD's and I-pod's and improved teacher feedback on speaking and writing. At S5/6 the proportion of pupils achieving A-C grades at Higher French and Italian showed an improving trend.

In geography, differentiated course material for a wide range of 5-14 levels had been developed in order to take greater account of prior learning. Course provision at S1/2 was reviewed to meet the learning needs of all pupils and to establish more effective cross curricular links with citizenship. Additional resources had been purchased.

A more integrated and coherent system for pupil support had been implemented. In an audit of multi-agency support groups across all secondary schools good practice in the full involvement of parents and pupils was identified in Our Lady and St Patrick's High school.

A number of aspects of the PSHE programme were improved to include more relevant material on citizenship, health and exercise, study skills and personal learning planning.

Overall the school had made significant progress on all the points for action since the original report. The school was continuing to progress these developments and further improve the very good quality of education provided.

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