

“Leadership for Learning” focus day

Clydebank High School – 20<sup>th</sup> November



## Validation points

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Note: The points in this validation summary are intended to provide a helpful response to the reflections and activities arranged on the “leadership for learning” day. This is not an attempt to re-report what was shared on the day, but instead to highlight areas that resonated with the visiting team and to provide useful challenges to your school’s thinking to help with effective school improvement planning.

It is expected that the school will respond to this document with what action it intends to take resulting from these points for consideration.

Results:

- The key messages identified by the school from its own detailed STACS analysis are accurate and show a detailed understanding of the key performance indicators.
- The key positive trends in overall attainment levels were pleasing. The trend in Higher attainment was noted and where there were continuing or significant negative performances, these were identified.
- The focus on your most improved departments was useful, Computing, Geography, Maths etc. Although absolute performance not always where you want it to be, identifying the successful measures was particularly useful. Monitoring, tracking and early warnings, and mentoring all seemed to be a common thread although not the single driver of this improvement. Are these improvement drivers shared with all departments as early as they are known? How are they shared?
- Those subjects struggling for consistency all seemed to be linked by slips in the tracking system. It is clear that this is a strong focus for the next year, it would be interesting to know how deeply embedded the system is? Does it require SMT driving or is it self-sustaining.

Department focus:

- Art department clearly in need of focused attention from SMT. Certainly an appropriate choice for analysis and action.
- Improving actions identified by PT are likely to make a significant difference if applied consistently. Early warnings, sharing of standards within department, tighter planning of prelims and NABS should all make a significant difference and will provide a basis for further improvement later if consolidated.
- Targeting departmental communications such as meeting-quality and communication with parents should help with the way the department is viewed externally and by

parents. Will the department be addressing internal relationships and values to the same extent?

- The 9-point plan was noted and seemed a sound response. To what degree is this a shared plan amongst the department.

### Raising attainment

- The detailed breakdown of strengths and weaknesses in the approaches of so many subject departments is a really strong piece of work and reflects extremely positively on the SMT's knowledge of the school at this fundamental level. There is a question about how confident the SMT is in tackling underperformance where it has identified it?
- The distribution of "RV's" to all staff seems to be really good practice. It at once provides openness about data as well as sharpening the shared focus on improvement. What are the follow through consequences for individual teachers showing repeated negative RV patterns?
- Boys' under-attainment is a major challenge for the school. The root-cause of it doesn't seem to be completely understood. As a result of this, is there sufficient focus on action research and development of academic learning in the field? The trials of single gender teaching are interesting and will of course be helpful in learning about this problem. Is there an opportunity to harness individual staff learning as we move away from training-courses as professional learning and embrace more personal learning and research?.
- The Raising Attainment Teachers are clearly making an impact and their clarity of focus, based on their own analysis was noted as effective.
- The professional learning model across the school is very comprehensively thought through. (Titan Crane sheet) It addresses many different stakeholder groups and maintains a clear focus on raising standards. It will be interesting to see how all teachers evidence their engagement with this thinking and its potential impact through the new PRD process?

### View from students:

- Mentoring generally seen as very effective. Noted that this had improved from last year's targeting model. Inconsistencies in approach were reported however. One mentor was reported as giving homework, where another was reported as "not seeming bothered". Is there a challenge for further improving the training and consistency of mentors?

- Supported study was praised as widely available and an effective support. The same group of students also identified that there was a significant failure of learners in consistently taking advantage of this.
- Learners discussing the Broad General Education reported a positive experience of the early secondary years with interesting interdisciplinary experiences, no motivation dip at the end of S2 noticed.
- Learners comfortable with new national qualifications model. Perhaps tired of teachers passing on their stress and confusion about it however. “You are the Guinea pigs” given as an example of this.

Thanks are very much due to the school for providing a very honest and evaluative day. It was enjoyable hearing such apparent pride in the school from all involved. The determination to be truly self-evaluative came across strongly. All the little touches like the lovely lunches and excellent baking were much appreciated.

Actions:

1. Review the tracking and early warning system to reduce late awareness of issues. This review could include a check on how much information is shared with departments and when?
2. Review SMT actions on identifying persistent underperformance issues. Is sufficient use made of professional standards in securing improvements?
3. Continue to trial approaches and share learning with other WDC schools in addressing boys' under attainment.
4. Review support for mentors to help achieve more consistency of approach where reasonable or possible.