

“Leadership for Learning” focus day – Feedback

Dumbarton Academy

28 November 2013

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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.

## 1. STACS Analysis

- 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.
- It is clearly evident that the ‘ethos of ambition’ is being fostered throughout the school, and being driven consistently by the Head Teacher and SMT.
- Where areas of development are identified, is there a need to ensure that this matches with approaches to PRD taken within the school, and that all development is strategically aligned?
- Peer observation can be a useful tool in sharing practice and encouraging consistency. How do you ensure your system of observation is clearly identifying the sources of performance of identified pupils?
- As gender issues have been identified, staff would be encouraged to take part in a WDC focus group to identify strategies that will redress the balance.
- Following discussion about links with the cluster primaries, HoS/SM/HT could have further discussion about a “Learning Community” model.

## 2. Departmental Focus

- Clear commitment, drive and enthusiasm were shown by the Faculty Head, and the focus on quality improvement was evident. Where performance issues have been identified, the PRD process needs to be effectively applied to demonstrate and support improvement with specific reference to staff meeting the GTCS requirements for registration.

- We know the opportunity exists at department and faculty level to share practice. How do you ensure staff are encouraged to reflect upon the methodologies and quality presented in relation to their own practice in a structured, supported way.

### **3. Raising Attainment**

- The focus on the mentoring programme has demonstrated a positive intervention for a number of pupils in the school, but this does not seem to be systematically applied. The sharing of the data with all staff involved in the mentoring programme could impact positively upon the delivery of the programme in the future.
- Consideration could be given to the role of the Raising Attainment teacher in the Broad General Education, and the potential interventions that could be pursued.
- Where the Raising Attainment teacher is aware of best practice taking place in the school, the SMT should consider how best this information is shared across the school to maximise impact.
- Boys under-attainment is a critical challenge for the school, and it doesn't seem to be fully understood. Some "action research" around this would seem to be urgent.

### **4. View from Students**

- Pupils presented themselves well in a confident, articulate and considerate way, reflecting well on the schools ethos and values.
- A group of boys seemed almost 'resigned' to the fact that girls out-performed boys, stating that boys "just weren't as competitive" in this arena. Further research into the underlying causes of this and potential interventions would be beneficial.
- Learners noted that there was insufficient reward for improvement as opposed to higher attainment. This is a positive challenge for staff!
- Learners noted that they themselves were not sufficiently conscientious in taking up mentoring or study support options available to them. Is this a cultural problem?

### **5. Improvements in Action**

- A number of lessons were observed, which gave a good representation of practices and methodologies in use around the school, which pupils clearly enjoyed and benefitted from.
- The development of a school assessment strategy would benefit from involvement in a WDC wide initiative for the benefit of all schools.