

West Dunbartonshire Council

Report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services

Children's Services Committee: 16 August 2006

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Council Education Authority: Follow-Through Report on St Columba's High School

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform Members of the follow-through inspection of St Columba's High School, by representatives of Education and Cultural Services and the subsequent report, published by West Dunbartonshire Council in May 2006.

2. Background

- 2.1** Members will recall from various reports to previous meetings of this Committee that West Dunbartonshire Council has been involved with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in relation to the follow-through arrangements following an inspection of a school.
- 2.2** Members may recall that HMIE introduced the new proportionate inspection model in session 2004/2005. Depending on the outcomes of each inspection and particularly HMIE's evaluation of the school's capacity to improve, the decision is made as to whether HMIE or the local authority will carry out the follow-through inspection. The track record of the education authority in supporting and challenging the school's continuous improvement programme is also considered.
- 2.3** Following this evaluation, inspectors judge the extent to which they will engage with the school in formal follow-through arrangements. Some schools are disengaged immediately from HMIE involvement, with the local authority taking responsibility for the follow-through. HMIE will choose some schools, who are to be evaluated by the local authority, for a moderation visit. Some will have HMIE return for the follow-through inspection.
- 2.4** Over and above any follow-through arrangements, inspectors may also revisit some schools to examine more closely their good practice, so that it can subsequently be shared with others.
- 2.5** St Columba's High School was inspected in December 2003/January 2004 as part of a national sample of secondary education. The resulting report was published in April 2004. The report contained information about the key strengths of the school and its capacity for further improvement, and also set out the main points for action. The school was disengaged from HMIE involvement on the final day of inspection. The authority was charged with publishing a follow-through report on the school's progress on the main points for action.

2.6 Subsequently St Columba's High School was selected for a moderation visit by HMle.

2.7 Within 2 years of the date of publication, Education Authority representatives from the quality improvement service visited the school and prepared the follow through report which was then moderated by HMle. Thereafter the report was published by the Education Authority.

3. Main Issues

3.1 After publication of the initial inspection report the school, working with representatives from the authority, prepared an action plan based on the main points for action. The school, with support from the local authority, worked through the action plan over the two year period.

3.2 Quality improvement officers visited the school and evaluated practice in the specific areas outlined in the original report and also commented on other aspects of the school's continuous improvement agenda.

3.3 The main points for action, as identified in the original HMle inspection of the school, were as follows:

1. while taking forward its plans to make major improvements to school accommodation, the education authority should take action to ensure a safe and healthy environment for pupils and staff;
2. staff should take steps to achieve consistency in setting high expectations for pupil achievement and should continue to raise attainment particularly at S1/S2;
3. senior managers should continue to work with departments to establish a more consistently rigorous approach to evaluating and improving learning and teaching; and
4. with support from senior managers, support for learning staff should extend their work with subject departments to enhance the quality of pupils' learning across the curriculum.

3.4 Against these Main Points for Action, the school was evaluated as having made:

- Very good progress on Main Point for Action 1.
- Good progress on Main Point for Action 2.
- Good progress on Main Point for Action 3.
- Very good progress on Main Point for Action 4.

3.5 After a moderation visit to by HMle, they agreed with the above evaluations. They asked additional information to be inserted to the paragraph on continuous improvement as the school had made substantive progress in other areas during the two years since inspection.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The report concluded that good progress had been made, overall, in meeting the main points for action. With the commitment of staff, parents and pupils the school was continuing to improve its overall effectiveness.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Members are requested :

- (a) to note the contents of this report; and
- (b) to congratulate the staff, parents and children of St Columba's High School for their achievement as recognised by the local authority in the follow-through report published in May 2006.

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