



# Follow-through Inspection Report

## Ashcraig School

January 2007

### The Inspection

Following their inspection of the school in September 2004, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education [HMIe] published a report on standards and quality in Ashcraig School in December 2004. Working with the education authority, the headteacher and staff of the school prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the points for action identified in the original report.

The plan outlined tasks, timescales and resources as well as the criteria for monitoring and evaluating progress and was shared with parents.

A programme of staff development drawn up by the school supported the head teacher and her staff in implementing the action plan. The Education Improvement Service had assisted in this process.

Overall the school and authority had addressed the main points for action highlighted in the HMIe report in a structured and comprehensive manner.

The education authority had been responsible for producing this follow-through report.

### Continuous Improvement

The school had continued to improve and work towards its aim of becoming a centre of excellence for the education of disabled pupils.

Staff had continued to work closely with a wide range of health agencies. Collaborative working with Direct Access [a special project involving health and education] had provided support in the areas of bereavement and vulnerable pupils. The school had continued to expand its involvement with the Department of Child and Family Psychiatry.

During session 2005-2006 the school contributed to national and local initiatives such as: the development of a resource pack on bereavement produced by Yorkhill Hospital; a local authority DVD to illustrate effective working in relation to additional support needs; a SEED resource illustrating good practice in working with parents. An example of good collaborative practice with the Hospital Education Service was made generally available through the Learning and Teaching Scotland web site and was publicised in the Times Educational Supplement.

Staff had extended their expertise in learning and teaching and in adapting practice to meet the needs of the growing number pupils with more complex needs.

The school had continued to develop its considerable expertise in the field of ICT and augmentative communication to promote effective learning and teaching and support for individual pupils.

The school had been active in devising alternative forms of assessment as exemplified by the use of the Clicker software programme in Access 2 mathematics and the range of science assessments verified by the Scottish Qualifications Authority [SQA]. The use of alternative assessment had remained key feature of school practice and had proven very effective in ensuring pupils achieve

at the appropriate level in national qualifications. The school had been involved in a pilot project using electronic examination papers. During the 2005 – 06 examination diet a group of pupils used an electronic format to sit Standard Grade English.

Senior managers had improved practice at the primary / secondary transition stage. Interim individualised profiles for pupils were drawn up and issued to staff pending post placement reviews when fuller information was made available.

The range of partnerships with colleges of further education and work experience providers had been extended.

All staff had been involved in the process of self-evaluation relating both to the action plan and to future planning for improvement. Next session the school will introduce an electronic format for school improvement planning at both whole school and faculty level. This will strengthen the links between these two levels of planning and facilitate evaluation.

The process of professional review and development for principal teachers had been conducted by the headteacher. This process informed a Team Leadership programme drawn up by the authority to address the requirements of these recently appointed posts. The impact of this programme for Ashcraig staff will be assessed by the headteacher in conducting the subsequent round of principal teacher reviews.

To ensure support staff received appropriate training, discussions had been held with the newly formed Training and Development Unit in Education Services. The unit's prime function is to respond to the development needs of support staff. As a result of these discussions the unit had delivered in-service on self-evaluation to support staff early in session 2006 - 07. This event will be followed up by the annual schedule of employee reviews that will lead to the production of a training programme in conjunction with the Unit.

Ashcraig's role within its associated Smithycroft New Learning Community [NLC] had been consolidated and joint training on child protection and a Curriculum for Excellence had been planned for all NLC staff.

Pupils had continued to develop their personal potential through a widening range of inclusive and extra curricular activities.

Liaison with Smithycroft NLC had helped develop the potential of more able pupils. The Your Turn programme targeted pupils in S3/4. The Goals project involved pupils in S5 / 6.

Ashcraig pupils participated in music and drama activities at Smithycroft Secondary and attended the school show.

The school had been involved in an extensive programme of Determined to Succeed activities and pupils had been involved in authority events aimed at pupils both in the mainstream and SEN sectors. In September 2006 a principal teacher was appointed for the development of employability skills.

Independence skills had continued to be fostered by the use of selected PSE courses in S5/6. The Caledonian Award, which includes a residential stay, offered successful personal development for pupils with more complex additional support needs.

Some pupils had continued to participate successfully in the East Glasgow Youth Theatre. A recent project included working with young people from a Russian orphanage over the summer holiday period to develop a theatrical performance. As well as promoting positive international relationships the project aimed to raise awareness of disability with Russian young people who would not normally have interacted with disabled peers.

The Youth Club in the community facility had continued to be very well attended. In 2006 the school embarked upon the second year of a specially funded Summer Activity programme that linked directly into the Easterhouse Arts Festival.

Over the past two years regular school focused and religious and moral education assemblies had been introduced for pupils at different stages. These assemblies had provided the opportunity for pupils' wider achievements to be celebrated. The school had continued to seek out role models for its pupils. September's assembly had been addressed by a speaker with muscular dystrophy who had walked to both the north and south poles.

## **Progress Towards the Main Points for Action**

The initial inspection report identified six main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

### **Main point for action 1**

#### **Increase the length of the school week.**

*The school and authority have made some progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

The headteacher had liaised with the Head of Service [SEN] on this action point. Currently the school is involved in a review of schools in Glasgow working with children with a physical impairment and the length of the school day will be reviewed as part of this process. The review began in session 2005-2006 and is ongoing. The school will continue to consider the structure of the timetable in order to maximise the opportunities which would be provided by a longer school day.

### **Main point for action 2**

#### **Improve to a consistently high standard the quality of learning and teaching and develop further the pastoral aspects of register classes.**

*The school has made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

The range of alternative augmentative communication [AAC] devices and the number of pupils using them had increased over the past few sessions. To support the needs of pupils using such devices staff training sessions had been organised in October 2005. The training programme was based on an initial audit, conducted in September 2005, of the identified training needs of both teaching and support staff. The training sessions included all aspects of AAC and covered all devices currently used in the school. After initial whole school training, faculties and individual teachers were offered and took advantage of further support by specialist teachers. Regular meetings between Promoting Access to the Curriculum [PAC] faculty staff, senior managers and speech and language therapists had ensured the ongoing identification of staff and pupil training needs – especially in relation to new devices and programmes. Senior managers had monitored continually the effectiveness of learning and teaching for pupils who are AAC users in a variety of situations. The contribution of support staff had been included in this monitoring process. Evaluation had indicated that staff had developed innovative and inclusive approaches to supporting AAC users. The competence and confidence of pupils in using communication devices to access the curriculum had improved and impacted favourably on their learning.

Further training sessions had been given to teaching staff on the effective use of ICT in the classroom. This had led to an expansion of the software programmes used in the school. Staff needs in relation to specific software packages were audited. A substantial part of the whole school CPD training programme for session 2006-2007 had been based on the results of this audit and three workshops, two of which had taken place, were scheduled according to staff development needs and current expertise. Two generic software programmes had emerged as particularly effective. 'Taskmagic' had been used generating different kinds of learning experiences across the curriculum. In conjunction with the SEN ICT service 'Read and Write Gold' had been used for promoting individual access to the curriculum, most particularly in English and modern studies. Additional developments in the appropriate use of ICT had been taken forward within individual faculties.

For example:

- in English, mathematics and science staff had been trained in the use of interactive whiteboards and had incorporated these into routine classroom practice to enhance learning;
- in English and science the potential contribution of Clicker software had been actively explored;
- in the Maths department, a list of internet sites had been updated and issued to staff; the use of ICT in teaching maths had been extended through new Bullet Point software on the network and an increased use of interactive internet software and had been embedded in courses.

The Promoting Access to the Curriculum [PAC] faculty has developed its role in overseeing other technology accessed by individual pupils. 75% of the school's pupils benefit from Individual Access to Technology [IAT]. Weekly monitoring meetings with all staff involved in IAT and Occupational Therapy had ensured that technology had been appropriately maintained and there had been continuity in pupils' learning. Every 'IAT' pupil is part of a mentoring group and has been assessed by a member of staff in the IAT team. Pupils had their usage of the technology monitored and its impact in the classroom evaluated.

The PAC faculty had also produced a policy for effective learning and teaching in the school. This had been supplemented by a good practice booklet that deals with effective learning and teaching strategies to support pupils with a range of needs. These strategies are based on both educational research and good practice in Ashcraig and will provide benchmarks for the future monitoring of learning and teaching. The good practice booklet will also provide the basis of a training programme for the induction of new staff.

To improve the consistency in the quality of learning and teaching, the use of formative assessment had been taken forward in the school and linked to existing courses. Staff had been involved in training sessions at whole school and subject specific level. Subject departments have introduced strategies to respond to specific points highlighted by HMIe.

As examples:

- In English, to ensure an appropriate pace of learning, the planning process had been analysed and revised and pupils' progress had been more closely monitored; timed tasks had been set for pupils; turn taking had been brought in to make lessons more interactive and involve all pupils; review at the end of lessons had been established and there had been initiatives to introduce pupils to peer and self assessment;

- in mathematics, courses and resources had been audited and developed for all 5-14 levels with comprehensive guidance for teachers; aspects of formative assessment had been introduced with a focus on sharing learning intentions and questioning;
- similarly, in science there had been focused development on the use of questioning, feedback and sharing of learning intentions with pupils; written feedback had been given to pupils undertaking Intermediate 2 Biology; a homework unit in which teacher comments were the only feedback for pupils had been piloted and will be evaluated;
- in modern studies a proforma had been used to provide pupils with regular feedback; learning intentions and success criteria had been shared in pupil friendly terms; paired and group work had become an embedded feature of teaching practice.

Areas of good practice identified to date through the school's quality assurance procedures had indicated that developing practice in teaching approaches across the curriculum had impacted positively on pupils' learning.

The pastoral care team had introduced a number of strategies to develop the pastoral aspects of register classes. Registration groups, with a maximum of eight pupils, had been formed and have been meeting for ten minutes in the middle of the morning. Register teachers had been assigned to remain with the same group throughout their school career. This arrangement had given a first level care and welfare responsibility to register teachers, supported their "knowing and being known" role and the development of positive relationships with the pupil groups.

A programme of suitable topics and activities to be covered during registration had been drawn up for each term. Initial training in how to approach these topics had been offered to all staff. The programme of topics and activities is specific to year groups and intended to enhance the existing PSE programme. This programme will be evaluated and refined for future sessions.

Principal teachers of pastoral care had visited the registration groups on a regular basis to provide support and a point of contact for both teachers and pupils. In addition, a "cause for concern" referral had been introduced to support good communication between principal teachers and register teachers.

Principal teachers had met with registration teachers on inset days. It is planned to hold termly meetings and to introduce a CPD framework for registration teachers to enhance their pastoral role.

Principal teachers had developed their role in assuring quality through their daily visits to registration classes. These visits had allowed for the monitoring of pupils' experiences and teaching and learning in personal and social education [PSE]. To contribute to evaluation the team had produced annual reports on pastoral care and PSE. The annual evaluation meeting with senior management had been informed by the foregoing.

**Main point  
for action 3**

**Improve approaches to identifying and assessing pupils' needs and arrangements for managing individualised educational programmes, Records of Needs and Future Needs Assessments.**

*The school had made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

To revisit the school's approach to individual assessment a steering group comprising the headteacher and a group of staff undertook an audit of pupils' additional support needs and

attainment levels. This illustrated both the complexity of needs and the wide range of attainment within the school. The steering group had identified pathways through the 5-14 and national qualifications frameworks for differing groups of pupils and also mapped out potential post-school arrangements. This information was shared and discussed with staff during collegiate activity sessions and on an INSET day. As a result an agreed pupil tracking system had been introduced into the school this session. The tracking system had promoted closer and more regular monitoring of pupil progress and had informed decisions at key stages, such as S2 option choices, as well as review meetings with parents.

A revised review system had been also been set up. Senior managers had ensured that individual pupil reviews accord with current legislation and take account of significant stages in a pupil's school life.

Liaison has continued with the range of staff from all local authorities involved with the school to ensure a smooth transition from Records of Needs to the system which will be operative under the new additional support for learning legislation.

Initial staff development had taken place to support the introduction of learning outcomes being set for pupils in all subject areas.

In November 2006 the education authority had published a code of practice on additional support for learning and introduced a standardised electronic format for setting learning outcomes to address additional support needs. Staff development sessions on how this format, which is now in use in the school, can be extended across the curriculum had been scheduled. To promote collective understanding of pupils' achievements across the curriculum all staff will participate in an individual pupil review.

**Main point  
for action 4**

**Review and improve aspects of the school environment for learning taking into account the accessibility's survey's findings with particular regard to toilets, classrooms, traffic management and security.**

*The authority and school had made some progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

Plans for the refurbishment of toilets for the school's most disabled pupils had been drawn up with an architect and costed. The plans paid due respect to the dignity and privacy of pupils and to the needs of support staff and were produced in consultation with pupils, staff and parents. These were included in the authority's capital spending programme for the current financial year. Refurbishment of the toilets had commenced and should be completed by Easter 2007. The replacement of flooring in an area of the school that is heavily used had also been included in refurbishment plans. The potential effectiveness of this as flooring throughout the school will be evaluated.

The school's security system had been upgraded. Security doors are now in place and provide a secure perimeter for the school with entry to the school under video surveillance.

An outside patio area had been successfully refurbished using Big Lottery Funding. This area had been available for pupils during the school day and for disabled community groups in the evening.

Guidelines on safe classrooms had been issued to staff and will become a permanent entry in annual staff planners. A system for monitoring the health and safety of classrooms by a member of the senior management team had been set up.

Braille signs had been added to areas in general use to encourage independence and mobility in pupils with a visual impairment.

A new outdoor sports arena with a disability surface and safe access for pupils had been planned and will be constructed over this session for use in 2007-08. This will permit pupils to play both ambulant and wheelchair sports.

### **Main point for action 5**

#### **Update and improve the school handbook and the use of report cards**

*The school had made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

The school handbook had been upgraded and monitored to ensure all information is correct. It had also been published professionally to ensure it provides information for parents and partners in an attractive and accessible format.

Reports to parents had been revised to include specific information on how pupils might improve their own learning and to define next steps specific to age and stage. Reports had been issued throughout the session to inform either individual pupil reviews or parents' evenings. These revised reports had been introduced after initial training sessions with staff. The effectiveness of the reporting process and the quality and consistency of reports had been monitored by middle and senior managers and sampled by the headteacher. Members of the school board were asked to assess the revised reporting format and how informative and useful it was in helping parents support their children's learning. During the next session the School Board will undertake the production of a leaflet for parents on making the most of parents' night using the school report. This will be based on an existing leaflet from Learning and Teaching Scotland but will be adapted to the context of the school and will take account of information provided in pupil reports.

### **Main point for action 6**

#### **Develop more systematic and rigorous quality assurance and improvement planning procedures.**

*The school had made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

As was signalled by targets in the previous improvement plan, an annual quality assurance calendar had been agreed and will form an integral part of the school's planning for a session. The calendar indicated monitoring activities at all levels including learning and teaching within the classroom, monitoring of pupil experience across the curriculum, and monitoring of faculty improvement.

To date approaches to assuring quality had included: monitoring teaching; sampling assessment; the use of collaborative assessment; monitoring of faculty minutes; formal evaluation of faculty developments. All staff had been consulted on school improvement and all middle and senior managers had been involved in formal monitoring and evaluation.

The school had continued to extend its range of consultation with parents and pupils with an increased focus on the upper school stages.

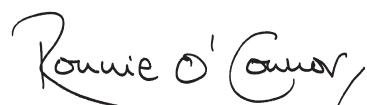
Findings from the above procedures will be reflected in the school's annual standards and quality report and will inform future planning for improvement.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

In most areas the school had made very good progress towards meeting the main points for action. Progress in other areas had been made and will continue to be made over the next session. The school had continued to build steadily towards its aim of being a centre of excellence.

As next steps the school will address its stated improvement agenda for this session and next which includes:

- auditing the curricular opportunities for pupils and how their achievements are recorded in relation to a 'Curriculum for Excellence';
- extending the use of ICT to all areas of the curriculum and ensuring all staff are trained in the use of three key aspects that will positively impact on pupils' learning;
- evaluating the impact of the school's effective practice guidelines on teaching and learning;
- revising, as necessary, present procedures for meeting pupils' needs to ensure these are effective in relation to current legislation;
- establishing Ashcraig as a Health Promoting School.



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