

Follow-through Inspection Report

Holyrood Secondary School

July 2005

The Inspection

Following their inspection of the school in February and March 2003, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education HMIe published a report on standards and quality in Holyrood Secondary School in June 2003. Working with the education authority, the school prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the points for action identified in the original report.

After consultation with HMIe, it was agreed that this follow-through report would be the responsibility of the education authority. Members of the Education Improvement Service visited the school in March and April 2005 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work and to evaluate the progress made in responding to the main points for action.

Continuous Improvement

The school has responded to the report in a professional and highly structured manner. The Head Teacher has shown very good leadership and clear vision. The senior managers and principal teachers, with good cooperation from staff, have reviewed and revised aspects of the curriculum with a view to increasing the quality of pupils' attainments and the consistency of learning and teaching, including expectations of pupils' punctuality and workrate. The school has continued to make progress in increasing the proportions of pupils achieving appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics in S1/S2. Attainment in S4 and S5/S6 has continued to be good, showing improvement over a three-year period.

The school has continued to develop good self-evaluation procedures, which have in turn contributed to continued improvement in pupil motivation and behaviour. The school's outstanding arrangements for staff development and review and good planning for improvement have been well supported by the authority's Education Improvement Service and through the authority's information and communications technology partner, EdICT.

The school has demonstrated its ability to continue to improve and has met the main points for action in the report of 2003.

Progress Towards
the Main Points
For Action

The report identified six main points for action.

Main point for action 1

The school should continue to seek improvements in pupils' attainments.

The school has made good progress towards this recommendation

Each subject leader has prepared and carried through an action plan in response to an analysis carried out with the Head Teacher of pupil performance in the subject area. The impact of strategies put in place is noted and shared with other staff. Managers continue to work with appropriate agencies, parents and Education Services to improve strategies to reduce the absence and indifference of a small but significant number of pupils. Attainment at 5-14 has shown continued and significant improvement. In National Qualifications, when the cumulative performances over a three year average are analysed, the school has performed in line with the national average for all categories except for 5+ level 6 SCQF, where the performance was above national average.

Main point for action 2

Staff should continue to improve the programme in personal and social education, including more effective guidelines for those staff teaching the programme. The school should give greater emphasis to promoting pupils' health and fitness.

The school has met this recommendation

There has been a comprehensive review of personal and social education, leading to a greatly improved programme. This effectiveness of this programme is enhanced by the development of lesson plans and guidelines for teachers delivering the programme.

The range of support initiatives has been reduced, with a consequent increase in impact: only activities which could be shown (a) to be valued by pupils and (b) to be delivering a satisfactory outcome were maintained in the programme.

Opportunities for pupils to use the fitness suite have been extended. Healthy menus are served in the fuel zone. Awards have been introduced to encourage pupils to eat healthy food.

Main point for action 3

With the support of senior managers, departments should take steps to improve the consistency of the quality of learning and teaching, including expectations of pupils' punctuality and workrate.

The school has made very good progress towards this recommendation

The school has put in place procedures whereby managers and Principal Teachers monitor pupils' experiences through class visits on which they report using criteria from How good is our School. Issues arising from these monitoring activities are discussed, and good practice shared. Consequently departmental self-evaluation is supported and strengthened. The school has introduced formative assessment procedures as recommended in Assessment is for Learning and Inside the black Box, as well as in the national Guidelines for 5-14. The staffing for Support for

learning has been increased. Care is taken across subject departments to maintain rigour and consistency in setting and checking of homework. Supported study is exploited as an opportunity to develop study skills.

The following are examples of development undertaken which have brought about improvement in pupils' learning experiences in subject departments:

- In Mathematics a new S1 course has been developed to improve progression and rigour; five levels of courses are now available and detailed centralised records of pupil attainment are kept. In addition S3 and S4 programmes of work are being reviewed with a view to improving continuity and progression.
- In the English department the central recording of assessments has been reviewed and improved and pupils in S1 and S2 complete self-assessment profiles. The department has encouraged an increase in pair and group work, which helps develop positive pupil-teacher interaction. There has been improvement in the planning of teaching and learning across the department, and there is now rigorous planning of individual elements of the programme. Improved monitoring of departmental performance has led to improved awareness of development needs.
- In Modern Studies a new S1/S2 course has been introduced. The new units have a strong focus on developing enquiry skills. Pupils are encouraged to use writing frames. The networked shared area is used well to facilitate access for staff and pupils to the best resources.
- In Physics and S1/S2 Science, the Glasgow science scheme has been adopted. Target-setting for pupils is being introduced. Self-evaluation is being improved through planned monitoring of effective learning and teaching and discussion of class visits is leading to sharing of good practice.
- In Technical Education, pupils' attainment in graphic communication has improved. A more rigorous homework scheme has been introduced. The craft and design elements have improved through increased rigour in planning and in higher expectations of pupils work. This rigour has been given sharper focus through the preparation and distribution of a clear departmental course guide.
- In Support for Learning, there has been an increase in the number of pupils with Individualised Education Programmes, and there is improved collaboration with parents. A pupil support team has been set up to consider the needs of particular pupils. Forward planners have been introduced to support coherence in cooperative teaching. Planning and monitoring arrangements have been set out in a schedule available for all to consult. This has led to improved response to the needs of departments and of individual pupils.

Main point for action 4

Consulting with support staff, senior managers should review deployment of teachers of support for learning and increase the number of staff available for this important aspect of the school's work.

The school has met this recommendation

Additional staff have been deployed as recommended. Audit of predictive assessments in the junior school and of SQA results in the senior school has led to improved targeting of individual pupils and of

subject areas in need of support. There is good consultation between managers and support for learning staff.

Main point for action 5 The headteacher should continue to seek ways of addressing some staff's perceptions of weaknesses in communication between senior managers and teachers.

The school has met this recommendation

Monthly meetings of principal teachers have been introduced, to ensure the effective dissemination of information. In addition there are frequent (approximately monthly) meetings between the headteacher and teachers' representative.

Main point for action 6 The school should continue to improve the effectiveness of its approaches to self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The education authority, senior managers and staff should agree appropriate arrangements for staff to meet to discuss improvements in the school's performance.

The school has met this recommendation

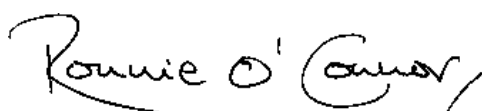
All departments are now carrying out detailed self-evaluation following How good is our School.

Planning for improvement takes account of careful analysis of performance and attainment. Each department considers carefully the impact of its planning. National and local priorities are taken into consideration, as is the success or otherwise of previous plans. Departmental plans are closely structured in line with whole school improvement planning. The monthly meetings of principal teachers and the meetings with teachers' representative provide opportunities on a whole school basis for staff to meet to discuss improvements in the school's performance.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The original report was positive in its assessment of standards and quality in Holyrood Secondary School and the school has met four of the main points for action and has made good or very good progress towards the others. Improvements in classroom practice, monitoring of pupils' progress, on-going and rigorous self-evaluation throughout the school and continuing exchange of information, views and good practice across the school will ensure that progress made will continue.

As a result of progress made by the school, HMIe will make no further visits in connection with the February and March 2003 inspection.



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