



Follow-through Inspection Report

Hillpark Secondary School

September 2007

The Inspection

In September 2005, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspected Hillpark Secondary School as part of a national sample of secondary education. The report was published in December 2005 and highlighted strengths and points for action. Working with the education authority, the school prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the points for action identified in the report.

Officers from Education Services visited the school in the period January 2006 to June 2007 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

Hillpark Secondary School had continued to improve the education it provided for its pupils. The head teacher had revised the remits of the senior management team to focus on learning and teaching and evaluating the learning experience of pupils. She had consulted with staff and, as a result, had implemented more rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluation. This included tracking pupils' progress more effectively and setting learning targets for them. Staff had actively engaged in improving the quality and consistency of learning and teaching by drawing on good practice and sharing this throughout the school. The school had invested in ICT resources to support a stimulating and motivating learning environment for pupils. It had, for example, equipped every classroom with a smartboard and projector to encourage interactive lessons. The school and Education Authority had provided a wide programme for professional development, including an extensive programme of ICT training.

Progress Towards the Main Points for Action

The report identified four main points for action:-

Main point for action 1

Review the provision for religious observance.

The school had made very good progress towards meeting this recommendation

A Religious Observance Planning Group, chaired by the Head Teacher, and comprising staff, pupils and a Chaplaincy team had been established to review the schools' provision. The group sought the views of staff, pupils and parents and, as a result, had produced a policy which the school implemented. The school now provided appropriate opportunities for religious observance and the celebration of the shared values of the school.

Main point for action 2

Continue to improve the consistency and quality of learning experiences for all pupils to ensure that their needs are met.

The school had made very good progress towards meeting this recommendation

The school had reviewed its learning and study skills policy to improve the range and appropriateness of teaching approaches. To improve the consistency of pupils' learning experiences, teachers had shared and demonstrated good practice. With the support of the education authority, it had introduced a number of initiatives to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the school. Teachers were beginning to share learning outcomes with pupils. They were involving pupils more actively in lessons, for example through the use of ICT. Across the school, the pace of learning had improved. Many teachers had provided pupils with opportunities to work collaboratively with each other and to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils used study planners issued by the school to record what they had learned in lessons. The school tracked pupils' progress and teachers provided pupils with feedback on their progress so that they were clear about what they were expected to learn. Teachers set tasks which were more challenging and met pupils' learning needs more effectively. The school had reviewed the homework policy to ensure consistency and to support pupils' learning.

The support for learning department had continued to develop the quality of the service provided in support of pupils. The principal teacher of support for learning had met with members of the English and mathematics departments to improve planning for learning and teaching and to plan more focussed support for pupils with additional support needs. All teachers were issued with information of pupils' additional support needs, including helpful guidance for staff on supporting pupils. Literacy tutorial groups for approximately 30 S1 pupils had been established.

In the Autism unit the system for sharing unit pupils' targets with subject teachers had been improved. These targets were evaluated and collated regularly. Teachers had received guidance and advice about the support provided in mainstream classes for pupils from the unit.

Pastoral care teachers had reviewed and updated the resources used in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. This had resulted in more interactive activities where pupils had greater involvement in their learning. Pupil engagement, motivation and pace of learning had been further developed by the increased use of ICT within PSHE. The school had sought the views of pupils on the PHSE programme.

Main point for action 3

Continue to improve attainment at all stages, in particular in English and Mathematics at S1/S2.

The school had made adequate progress towards meeting this recommendation

Attainment by the end of S2 in mathematics and writing had improved. Although there had been an improvement in levels of attainment for reading in 2006, this had not been sustained in 2007. Overall the SQA attainment levels in the school have declined. By the end of S4 attainment at 5 or more awards at SCQF levels 4 and 5 improved in 2006 and 2007. Attainment by the end of S6 was variable. At all measures attainment at SCQF level 6 declined in 2006 and improved in 2007 for pupils in S5. For pupils in S6, attainment at SCQF level 6 improved in 2006 and declined in 2007.

In the English department, teachers now took a systematic and more skills based approach to reading and writing. The department were developing New Horizons materials in reading and using greater differentiation strategies to support pupils in their learning. Teachers were involving pupils more actively in their learning, in particular through 'formative assessment' strategies in writing at S1/S2. These initiatives had impacted on pupils' attainment in session 2006, substantially exceeding the departmental reading and writing targets. However, there had been a dip from these high figures in session 2007.

In Mathematics there has been a very significant increase in pupils' attainment. By 2007, the proportion of pupils achieving appropriate national levels of attainment had increased to around 70%. In addition, in the 2006 Glasgow Maths Challenge competition, the Hillpark Junior Team were the Glasgow champions. The Intermediate team also achieved success and were chosen to represent the city in the national Enterprising Maths competition. Commendably the Hillpark Intermediate team came fourth in this prestigious national competition.

Main point for action 4

Improve the impact of self-evaluation on learning and teaching by ensuring that the revised approaches are consistently applied by all staff.

The school had made very good progress towards meeting this recommendation

Following consultation with staff, the school implemented a Quality Assurance Policy in session 2005/2006. This had allowed the school to monitor and evaluate the work of the school in a more focused and rigorous way. Staff were now more effectively engaged in the school's approaches to self evaluation. The school now used a management calendar which set out timescales for a range of monitoring and evaluation activities throughout the year. The headteacher met annually with principal teachers and faculty heads to review and evaluate pupil performance. As a result, areas for improvement were identified and teachers were engaged in developing an action plan to raise pupils' attainment. Annually, each department produced a report evaluating their progress in meeting these targets. The headteacher used these to monitor improvement and produce a standards and quality report for the school. Senior staff engaged more systematically in evaluating directly the quality of pupils' learning experience and provided purposeful feedback. They shared good practice with all staff to develop consistently high standards in learning and teaching across the school.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Overall, with the very effective leadership of the headteacher and support from the education authority, the school had made very good or good progress in addressing the main points for action. The school had responded very well to the recommendations of the report and staff had demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Senior managers, faculty and department heads and teachers had successfully implemented improvements which had impacted positively on pupils' learning experiences. Hillpark Secondary School continued to provide an effective education for all its pupils and the school was very well placed to build on these key improvements and improve further.

Margaret Doran

Margaret Doran
Executive Director: Education and Social Work Services
Glasgow City Council



Glasgow City Council
Education and Social Work Services
Wheatley House
25 Cochrane Street
Glasgow G1 1HL

0141 287 2000
www.glasgow.gov.uk