



# Follow-through Inspection Report

## St. Joan of Arc School

March 2010

### **1. The Inspection**

St. Joan of Arc School was inspected in November, 2007 as part of a national sample of provision for young people of secondary school age with additional support needs. HMIE's initial report was published on 11 March 2008. Working with the education authority the school prepared an action plan to address the main points for action identified in the report.

In September 2009 the St. Joan of Arc school building was very badly damaged by fire. The school was moved and accommodated in the building currently used by St. Vincent's School for the Deaf in the east of the city. The two schools currently share this campus. The difficulties, disruption and loss of resources that resulted from the fire to some extent affected the pace of development.

### **2. Continuous Improvement**

The leadership team, of the head teacher, one depute head teacher and three principal teachers had worked together with the staff and with the education authority to address the main points for action identified in the report and had continued to improve the quality of education for young people attending the school.

Two acting (0.5) principal teachers had been appointed following and had effectively undertaken some aspects of the remit of the former DHT. Staff had been encouraged to develop their leadership for learning and had successfully taken forward both whole school and departmental initiatives. There had been a continued focus on developing the professional skills of all staff.

Staff had continued to ensure that young people grew in confidence through a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the life and work of their school and of the wider community. Together, staff and pupils had made very good progress towards achieving a fourth green flag and permanent eco-schools status. Enterprise education had been embedded across the school.

**3.  
Progress  
Towards the  
Main Points for  
Action**

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

**Main point for  
Action 1**

**Improve the curriculum by extending the school day and the accreditation of pupils' achievement.**

The school had made good progress towards meeting this main point for action. Since the move to share the campus at St. Vincent's, the school day had been extended by fifteen minutes. The extension of the day had supported the development of curricular opportunities for learners, for example through an additional allocation of time for physical education and by allowing those young people involved in technical studies to access facilities at a neighbouring school.

The school had ensured that young people had the opportunity to achieve accreditation in all areas of the curriculum. Many had achieved accreditation earlier as they had opportunities to take certificated courses in S3. From S3 to S6 all young people had achieved certification at appropriate levels and almost all had gained national qualifications. Presentations for SQA awards had increased from 2006 in 2008 to a planned 230 in 2010, with particularly significant increases in English, Maths, Science and Home Economics. There had been a significant increase in the range of levels young people were presented for in some subjects. For example, in English, young people had been presented at Access 1, Access 2, Intermediate 1 and Standard Grade. Young people, from S1 to S6 had their achievements recognised through ASDAN awards. These included the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness which provided appropriate levels of challenge for some learners.

Progress in reading had been carefully tracked and supported and this had resulted in significant gains for almost all young people. The school had also developed approaches to tracking young people's learning in all curricular areas to ensure that they were making good progress.

Almost all young people leaving the school had gone into further education, training, or employment and the percentage not in employment, education or training had continued to drop (14.3% 2008, 6% 2009).

Young people had continued to have their learning, personal development and achievements recognised through a very wide range of certificated programmes, for example, Forest Schools, Sports Leaders awards, prevocational courses and college courses. There had been an expansion of clubs and learning opportunities at lunchtime and significantly more young people were involved in, for example, the guitar and the art clubs.

Departments had worked well together to develop opportunities for young people to learn and achieve in a variety of relevant contexts.

**Main point for  
Action 2**

**Ensure safe access to the school.**

This point for action had been overtaken by the move to share the campus at St. Vincent's. St. Vincent's buildings and access had been surveyed and approved for the additional number of pupils. Further upgrades to the St. Vincent's building had been planned.

**Main point for  
Action 3**

**Ensure more specific short and long-term targets in individualised educational programmes to better meet pupils' learning needs.**

The school had made good progress in overtaking this main point for action.

Staff had worked together to develop their approaches to setting learning targets for young people. They had very effectively linked their planning for individual young people to their curricular planning. As a result, all staff knew and understood the learning needs of their pupils and had begun to put in place appropriate strategies for tracking individual progress and for ensuring that all learners were challenged and supported.

All young people had an agreed target relating to their personal and social development and staff worked together across the curriculum to ensure that learners had planned opportunities and appropriate support to meet these targets. Young people knew their learning targets and were encouraged during individual guidance interviews to talk about the progress they were making. Senior staff monitored the quality of planning and also young people's learning experiences. As a result, they were confident that staff were meeting learners' needs. Long and short term planned outcomes were shared with parents and they were involved in reviewing progress. Senior leaders were planning to involve both young people and their parents more fully in agreeing long and short term planned outcomes. Parents and young people were encouraged to comment on learning plans and PSD targets through the Additional Support Plan review process. Their views were minuted and appropriate action taken.

**Main point for  
Action 4**

**Promote the active involvement of pupils in their learning.**

The school had made good progress in overtaking this main point for action.

In most curricular areas staff had developed more active approaches to learning. In science, young people were involved in planning their learning, taking account of what they already knew. In English, young people were using approaches to writing that helped them assess and develop their skills.

Across the curriculum staff had worked together to develop contexts for learning that gave young people relevant opportunities to practise and develop their skills. For example, maths, science and technical teachers had begun to work together to promote numeracy across the curriculum and young people in the Skye Group had opportunities to develop skills for life through shopping and using money in the local community.

The many opportunities for learning beyond the classroom had actively engaged young people who were very positive about their involvement in eco, enterprise and forest school activities. Young people had enthusiastically responded to opportunities to share their learning with others at regular assemblies.

Staff had begun to identify appropriate priorities for the further development of active approaches to learning.

**Main point for  
Action 5**

**Develop more effective approaches to self-evaluation and improvement.**

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

All staff had been involved in identifying priorities for improvement and in working together to take these forward. Four school improvement planning groups had given

direction to their planning and had effectively monitored progress and evaluated how the experiences of young people had been improved.

The school had developed more effective approaches to evaluating learning and teaching. Senior leaders and faculty heads had put in place a programme of class visits. They provided clear feedback to teachers, identifying what was working well and suggesting ways in which learners' experiences could be further improved.

The head teacher had ensured that there was an appropriate focus on young people's attainment and achievement. The school had introduced more rigorous approaches to tracking and recording attainment.

Staff had worked together to evaluate key areas of their practice. They had developed approaches to involving young people and their parents in self-evaluation and were planning to take this further.

Each department had developed a departmental improvement plan which was clearly focused on appropriate priorities. Departmental leaders had effectively evaluated progress and identified strengths and areas for improvement.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

The school had continued to build on its strengths and had effectively addressed the main points for action identified in the initial report. The head teacher, supported by her staff, had succeeded in bringing about improvement despite the challenging situation of relocation as a result of a fire. There had been a strong and effective focus on attainment and achievement and on curricular development. The school had further extended the opportunities for young people. It provided and had increased their levels of attainment. It had begun to develop more active and cross-curricular approaches to learning. Together staff had developed more effective approaches towards evaluating their work and planning for improvement. The school is well placed to sustain and build on the improvements it has brought about.

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