

Follow-through Inspection Report

Notre Dame High School

June 2004

The Inspection

Following their inspection of the school in October 2001, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education HMIE published a report on standards and quality in Notre Dame High School in January 2002. 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 October 2003 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work and to evaluate progress made in responding to the points for action.

Continuous Improvement

The school has responded to the report in a very professional, comprehensive and structured manner, with staff at all levels showing a willingness to address the issues. Demonstrating very good leadership and clear vision, the headteacher has continued to build on the commitment and involvement of staff to improve further the quality of pupils' learning experiences and attainment. Senior managers have very effectively continued to work with teachers to identify and share effective classroom practices and to continue to develop and deliver imaginative initiatives which inspire pupils and improve attainment.

The quality of teaching and learning has been enhanced through a programme of systematic monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice. The school's very good arrangements for staff development and review and planning for improvement have been well supported by the authority's Education Improvement Service, the school arrangements for sharing good practice in-house and through the authority's information and communications technology (ICT) partner, EdICT.

The school continues to show results in national examinations that are well above the authority average. In 2003 there was a 4% increase in pupils gaining 5+ Credit passes at Standard Grade.

The school has demonstrated its ability to continue to improve and has met the main points for action outlined in the report of 2002

Progress Towards the Main Points For Action

The report identified five main points for action.

Main point for action 1

The education authority and school should work together to improve storage provision in departments and classrooms.

This recommendation has been met.

The Council has monitored the storage provided as a result of the review of the school accommodation during the recent refurbishment of the building. The school has incorporated within the development plan actions which have resulted in improvements in storage at classroom and school level. Resources relating to teaching and learning are increasingly accessed electronically and existing storage facilities have been reviewed and their use maximised.

Main point for action 2

Teachers should continue to develop more effective use of new ICT in learning and teaching and ensure that pupils have more opportunities to develop and apply their skills.

This recommendation has been met

The school has continued to implement its clear vision of the vital importance of this priority in assisting it to meet the needs of pupils in the 21st century. The importance has been reflected in the school development plan. Significant use of staff development time and specific funding has been profitable in meeting the school targets to increase pupil access to ICT, develop skills and enhance learning. Consequently the school has been able to extend developments already underway and take forward new, imaginative initiatives to promote enterprise, creativity and an integrated approach to skills development. Using technology in the classroom has been a development priority in effecting change in both teaching and learning. All teaching areas now benefit from the use of ceiling mounted digital projectors and an increased use of ICT is evident throughout the school, not only in subject departments and in Guidance, but also in pupil and public areas. Pupils' increased access to computers has resulted in their routine use of ICT as a medium for making presentations and giving feedback. Open-ended challenge learning is increasingly becoming a feature of the pupil experience in the school and is impacting very positively on motivation, aspiration and attainment.

Within the authority the school initiated development of Challenge Learning through "The Dudley Challenge", an ICT project which encouraged collaboration among pupils and developed their problem-solving skills and school staff worked with the Education Improvement Service to provide a "Challenge Glasgow". The school's good practice was thus instrumental in developing an exciting initiative which has involved over 50 schools in each of the last two years

Main point for action 3

Senior managers should continue to work with teachers in monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching more rigorously and systematically. They should identify and share effective classroom practices to ensure a consistently high quality of pupils' learning.

This recommendation has been met.

The head teacher, the Senior Management Team(SMT) and middle management within the school have agreed and implemented a programme which overtakes this action point. All staff have used quality indicators of effective classroom practice and the head teacher has ensured that the results have been monitored. Classroom teachers have contributed to this priority by identifying effective practice which they have shared with all staff. Examples of the overall effect of this successful strategy include:

- In English pupils are more actively engaged in their learning activities and are more challenged according to their prior learning. Staff have usefully employed strategies which include self-evaluation; peer evaluation and sharing good practice.
- In Mathematics the tasks and activities are better matched to the needs of pupils and more variety in the classroom experiences are evident. Approaches in teaching assist pupils to achieve the next steps in their learning and enhance their self-esteem.
- In Modern Languages the department has successfully approached the issue of opportunities for pupils to develop skills in listening and talking through a structured plan which has a greater impact on pupils' learning.
- In Modern Studies there has been an increase in the pace of delivery and challenge from S1- S4. Internet access has been extended and independent learning through investigation has been encouraged.
- In Music the department has restructured the S1/S2 course to increase pupil responsibility and active participation in learning. Courses in S3/S4 have been restructured to develop further the inventing aspect.

Main point for action 4

The school and departmental development plans should indicate more clearly how priorities will be achieved and identify timescales more precisely.

This recommendation has been met.

The head teacher has addressed this action point as part of her Management and Quality Assurance strategy. She and her Senior Management Team have displayed care in monitoring the timescales employed and the methods adopted for overtaking the priorities identified and agreed. The authority has monitored and advised on the development plans and action planning in which the school and appropriate subject areas have been engaged.

Main point for action 5

The head teacher should continue to build on the commitment and involvement of staff to improve further the quality of pupils' learning experiences and attainment.

This recommendation has been met

The head teacher has consistently shown highly effective leadership in consulting with staff and encouraging them to develop further their professional approach to teaching. In-depth dialogue takes place regularly on issues such as the appropriateness of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. The school continues to review all aspects of its work. This has included work in subjects identified within the report as having specific issues which staff responsible have addressed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The original report was very positive in nature and the school has made very good progress towards meeting the main points for action. A very good foundation has been laid to continue to develop and enhance all aspects of the life and work of the school.

As a result of the progress made by the school HMIE will make no further visit in connection with the October 2001 inspection.



Ronnie O'Connor
Director of Education Services
Glasgow City Council