



Follow-through Inspection Report

Newhills School

JANUARY 2011

1. The Inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Newhills School in January 2009. Working with the school, the education authority prepared a plan indicating how they would address the main points for action.

This report evaluates the progress that the school and education authority have made in addressing the main points for action in the report.

2. Continuous Improvement

Following a positive report from Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education, the school continued to build on its existing high quality provision to bring about further improvements.

The school has continued to be highly committed to raising attainment and achievement for all young people. Staff have continued to work together to ensure that the implementation of a Curriculum for Excellence impacts very positively on the attainment and achievement of all young people. The curriculum continued to focus clearly on the development of transferable, independent, vocational and life skills to prepare young people for the post-school world. As a result of the continued, strong person-centred approach adopted by all staff, courses and programmes offered to all young people have been developed further and have led to increased success in SQA awards. Young people now have the opportunity to gain a wide range of Nation Qualifications with the introduction of new subjects¹.

Young people also benefit from gaining accreditation for achievement at a range of levels within the newly introduced and nationally recognised programmes of ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). As part of the effective primary/secondary transition process, young people now begin the ASDAN programme 'New Horizons' in the final year of primary education before transferring to Newhills School, thus supporting continuity and progression in learning and development.

The school continued to recognise and celebrate the achievements of all young people. The annual award ceremony now includes an Oscar Award ceremony, celebrating multi disciplinary learning which is delivered through the vehicle of the annual school show. This has further raised the self-esteem and self confidence of the young people.

Through effective partnership working with the Glasgow Vocational Programme, more young people now access college placements, for example young people can now study photography and woodwork at Anniesland College thus widening their experience of the world outside their immediate local community, generalising life skills and developing subject specific skills.

The school has also been successful in achieving a range of national awards. For the fifth consecutive year, young people gained a platinum award in the annual Determined to Succeed Enterprise Awards. The school has also been successful in being awarded its first eco flag and was overall winner of the Clean Glasgow Award 2010 in recognition of working in partnership with parents, other stakeholders and the local community in improving the local community. The school achieved outstanding health promotion status and was praised highly for work with parents and partners.

¹ Now on offer: Literacy; Mathematics; Personal, Social and Health Education; PE; IT; Enterprise; Drama; Music; Art.

3. Progress Towards the Main Points for Action

The inspection report identified three main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for young people and other stakeholders.

Main point for action 1

To continue to improve the curriculum and extend the length of the school week.

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

A core programme for numeracy skills has been further developed in line with a Curriculum for Excellence. This programme, with an emphasis on progression through the skills continuum, has clearly identified individualised next steps for all young people and contributes to the developing pupil profiles. A similar approach is being developed for literacy skills. The school continues to develop its approaches to active learning in order to maximise the engagement of young people.

An innovative approach has been adopted with the introduction of A Curriculum for Excellence session, the 'ACE Afternoon: A Choice for Everyone', which takes place on a weekly basis with an emphasis on pupil choice of learning activity. Feedback from parents and young people confirms the success of this initiative which, as a result, is being extended to become a 'Thematic Week'.

All young people follow a broad and balanced physical education programme with a wide range of activities including swimming and aerobics. Active sessions are embedded as part of lunch time activity choices and as part of the newly introduced 'ACE Afternoon'. Young people participated in an eight week football coaching programme², organised by the active schools co-ordinator with other schools; this culminated in a tournament, won by the young people at Newhills.

Senior pupils take part in a lengthy transition programme, "Stepping Out"³, which offers them a highly supported person-centred approach to ensure a positive and appropriate destination beyond school. In partnership with Determined To Succeed, they are also provided with the opportunity to explore their ideal work placements, with a job coach teaching the skills required for success at work. In partnership with Glasgow Vocational Programme and Cosgrove Care a rolling programme of work experience is now provided for young people in their final year; this is within an operational cafe and charity shop which improves employability skills in a real life context.

The school continues to develop its approaches to meeting the learning needs of young people with the increased use of objects of reference as means of supporting the young people as they anticipate the beginning and end of an activity.

The school has not yet extended the school week. They have however ensured that young people's learning is planned effectively through lunchtime activities. The acting head teacher is reviewing the steps which would be required to extend the length of the school week as part of the authority's review of ASL.

Main point for action 2

To improve accommodation and facilities and further extend the use of the local community for learning.

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

The school building itself is shortly to benefit from refurbishment by the local authority. This will include an extension of the sensory room and an increase in the range of sensory technology equipment available to engage and motivate young people in their learning. Young people also have opportunities to access to the sensory curriculum at both 'Touchbase'⁴ and within the setting of John Wheatley College. The use of

² In partnership with PRIMO Academy, an external agency.

³ In partnership with Enable.

⁴ Sense Scotland's Glasgow resource.

interactive whiteboards is now further embedded into the daily learning experiences of young people, providing improved access to ICT within the classroom setting.

Shared campus⁵ facilities offer increased opportunities for outdoor physical activity⁶ while the school outdoor areas used for a programme of outdoor games and activities⁷. All pupil support assistants have had one day's training from the active schools co-ordinator to maximise the success of this programme.

Very strong links have been formed within the local community, in particular with Lochend Community High School. Young people now benefit from new, effective links in place with this local school where they use facilities for practical subjects including Science, Physical Education and Home Economics. A successful buddying system continues to develop between the two schools. This session, young people from both Lochend and Newhills have been working together to improve the sensory garden with the subsequent benefits of improved confidence and social skills.

Closer links have also been established with other schools within both the school learning community and in the wider local area. Young people take part in regular litter picks, joining with parents, members of the local community and primary aged children from other local schools. In addition, GERA and Starbucks provide valued support for other related events: the Community Park Litter Pick and Newhills Garden Tidy Up. This session, senior pupils from another local secondary school have joined forces with Newhills pupils to make piñatas which they sold at the Determined To Succeed Enterprise Trade Fayre at a local retail park. Young people in S1 benefit from classroom support provided by two senior pupils from a third city centre secondary school.

Extensive use is also made of community facilities, with young people accessing Easterhouse and Tollcross Sports Centres and the games halls and fitness suites at the local community centre⁸. Local gardeners based at the local community centre work alongside young people in the sensory garden. Young people take responsibility for keeping the small community park litter free both on an informal and formal basis through monthly litter picks in partnership with Glasgow Community Safety Services and by leading an annual day of action. The Community Action Team play a valuable role in delivering eco-recycling programmes as well as organising walks with park rangers which prepare young people for the successful annual West Highland Way. Links have also been established with Falkirk Football Club who provide coaching at the annual health fayre.

Main point for action 3

To develop further approaches for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school in order to improve the school.

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

A parental group called 'The School Gate', has been established and these parents meet informally once a month to support each other and to chat. This also provides a platform for partnership in taking forward the school's vision, values and aims and for parents to influence school developments. Small working parties have been established from the larger group, to contribute to discussion about the range and quality of learning experiences offered to their children. Suggestions have been taken forward and implemented with a range of courses subsequently organised, from self development to internet safety.

Young people, parents and providers now evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of all work experience placements; evaluation of the work experience programme has

⁵ Aultmore Park Primary School and Unit.

⁶ Access to the campus football pitches.

⁷ For example skipping, Jenga.

⁸ The HUB Sports.

become formalised. As a result, young people benefit from increasingly effective matching of individual needs and skills to appropriate placements. Partnerships have been maintained while some are more established, with evidence of work placement providers taking increasing ownership of meeting the needs of young people placed with them. Independent travel skills are consolidated in this context. More formal evaluations of learning now regularly take place, for example parents and young people were consulted on the 'ACE Afternoon', using a newly developed questionnaire format. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. External agencies similarly evaluate the impact of the partnership on the young people's learning, making recommendations for improvements to learning experiences as appropriate. These are subsequently implemented.

4. Conclusion and Next Steps

All staff, with the strong support of senior managers, have worked effectively as a team to develop and improve provision. Overall, the school had made very good progress towards meeting all the main points for action and was well placed to continue to improve.

Maureen McKenna

Executive Director of Education
Glasgow City Council
Education Services
Wheatley House
25 Cochrane Street
Glasgow G1 1HL

0141 287 2000
www.glasgow.gov.uk