

Dalkeith High School

Standards and Quality Report

Session 2014-15

Each year Dalkeith High School will produce a Standards and Quality Report to evaluate our work through the previous session. In this, we aim to address the following questions:

- 1. How well do our children and young people learn and achieve?**
- 2. How well do we support our children and young people to develop and learn?**
- 3. How well do we improve the quality of our work?**
- 4. What are we going to do next?**

The outcome of our evaluation is highlighted in this summary leaflet. A full version can be made available by contacting the school.

I. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?

The school is making **good** progress in this area.

Strengths

Attainment continues to improve across many measures. The figures for the session show:

- a 1.8% improvement in 3 or more Highers by the end of S5
- a 3% improvement in 5 or more Highers by the end of S5
- a 2.4% improvement in 1 or more Highers by the end of S6
- a 6.3% improvement in 3 or more Highers by the end of S6
- a 3.3% improvement in 5 or more Highers by the end of S6
- a 3.1% improvement in one or more Advanced Highers by the end of S6.

Almost all young people take part in opportunities for wider achievement; this includes a range of clubs, extra-curricular activities and trips in Scotland and abroad. Almost all S1 and S2 pupils participate in the JASS award scheme and there will be a focus on the Children's University this term. Almost all S5 pupils were involved in organising a very successful event for local people as part of their S5 Induction Process in June. A significant number of S6 pupils are engaged in volunteering activities; these will be recognised through the SQA Volunteering Award and the Saltire Award Scheme. The introduction of the SQA Leadership Award will allow for accreditation of many aspects of wider achievement for S5/6. The school presents pupils for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels with all groups running at, or close to, full capacity. Other achievements include most pupils taking part in the School Sports Day and the majority of S1 pupils joining in the 'Race for Life'. In June, the school staged an excellent and well-received production of the musical 'Rent' with many of our pupils either performing or assisting backstage.

The school celebrates achievements through the use of the website and school app, articles in newsletters, regular assemblies, displays of pupils' work, the annual Award Ceremonies, and the merit award scheme. A House Points system has been reintroduced to encourage

recognition and celebration of achievement and this is working well to motivate the majority of our young people to celebrate their successes. Good links exist with local press to advertise the achievements of our pupils.

In most classes young people are motivated and eager to learn. Most young people feel that they are treated fairly and this is evident from the learning conversations taking place between staff and young people on a daily basis. Overall, most young people are well behaved, hard working and satisfied with their school experience, as evidenced by the general positive atmosphere across the school.

Rigorous Tracking and Monitoring in the Senior Phase (S4-6) ensures that all pupils are given the opportunity to have learning conversations with subject teachers, allowing them to consider where they are with their learning and also their next steps in making progress. Learning Conversations are enhanced by further discussions about progress and next steps with their Guidance teachers during PSE classes. The introduction of Target Setting reports in the Broad General Education (S1-3) is starting to formalise learning conversations between pupils and class teachers in this area.

The Enhanced Curriculum has helped improve the attendance, behaviour and commitment to learning of vulnerable young people by providing learning experiences targeted to their specific needs and abilities.

Learning in the Senior Phase is being enhanced for a significant number of pupils through partnership working with The Open University, The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Queen Margaret University, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh College and other partners. This learning is contributing to an improving trend in the number of young people moving on to a positive destination beyond school. Statistics for our pupils moving onto positive destinations beyond school are above those of our comparator schools, Midlothian and National figures.

Areas for Development

We will continue to focus on raising attainment, particularly for our S4 pupils as well as for those in S5 and S6 who are not being presented for Highers. The introduction of more vocational options in the Senior Phase will expand the opportunities for all pupils to achieve their best. There will be a sustained effort to continue to improve the literacy and numeracy levels of all pupils. There will be a focus on improving attainment for young people from families experiencing higher levels of deprivation in order to begin to close the attainment gap.

Discussions about the structure of the curriculum in the Senior Phase will take place with pupils, parents/carers and staff to provide flexible learning pathways which meet the needs, aspirations and interests of all pupils. Further development of Pupil Voice will help shape and improve learning experiences for pupils and we will encourage greater participation from parents/carers in the terms of evaluating our work.

2. How well is the school helping children and young people to develop and learn?

The school is making **good** progress in this area.

The present curriculum takes account of national and local advice and is based on sound rationale and appropriate consultation. The school continues to be involved in consulting staff, parents and pupils in the development of the curriculum, taking into account advice from HMIE and emerging practice across the country.

The Broad General Education is being delivered across all curricular areas to develop young peoples' skills for life, learning and work. Almost all departments are working to enrich their courses giving young people more relevant experiences, both in and beyond the classroom. Personalisation and choice in S3 allows pupils to follow their interests, whilst maintaining the integrity of the final year of the BGE. S3 pupils are able to develop their learning at third and fourth level to ensure better articulation with the Senior Phase.

In the Senior Phase, there is a range of provision in place to support pupils to achieve positive destinations on leaving school. These include alternative placements, targeted curricular programmes, vocational and skills based courses etc. to prepare them for the world of work. Provision for S5/6 pupils has been greatly enhanced by the South East Scotland Academies Partnerships in Hospitality and Tourism, Health and Social Care, Creative Industries and Food Science with a few pupils engaging this session. The Engineering Academy delivered by Edinburgh College adds to this provision of 'blended' learning based on partnerships. Engagement of S5 pupils in the Zoo and Environmental Skills Training Award (ZEST) in partnership with The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland has enhanced learning experiences, whilst engagement of a few S6 pupils with the Young Applicants from Schools Scheme with The Open University provides them with required skills for learning as they move into Higher Education.

The Principal Teachers of Guidance, led by the Depute Headteacher (Pupil Support), work closely with a range of partners to support all young people. They meet regularly to discuss priorities, have weekly House Team meetings and contribute to multi-agency meetings. The school encourages parents and carers to contact the school if they have any concerns. These concerns are dealt with promptly and investigated thoroughly. The Reporting system provides regular information to parents/carers to allow them to support learning. Personal and Social Education (PSE) is taught across the school by the pastoral care team to ensure quality in this area of the curriculum through delivery by trained, experienced staff. Regular assemblies reinforce key messages.

The Support for Learning Team has a good record in supporting young people with learning difficulties, including for SQA examinations. Young people are supported at key stages of transition by very good pastoral arrangements as well as curricular and vocational guidance. Young people with particular support needs are well catered for in the school and individualised programmes and procedures are in place to meet their needs, including, where appropriate, provision of Learning Assistants to support within classrooms.

Areas for Development

We will consider the best timetabling arrangements to allow pupils to take part in learning beyond school e.g. at college, with minimal impact on other subjects studied at school.

Activities to promote careers in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics areas (STEM) will be expanded as this will continue to be a key area of employment in the local area in future. Our provision of opportunities for Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) will be expanded to encourage pupils to make links across their learning in different subject areas and to further develop skills for learning, life and work.

An audit will take place to ensure that the needs of all learners are effectively met across the school. This will allow us to ascertain where intervention is required.

3. How well is the school improving the quality of its work?

The school is making **very good** progress in this area.

The school has a strong and effective commitment to self-evaluation which involves all members of staff. Whole school practice is evaluated against the Quality Indicators that are currently used by HMIE in school inspections, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Very good use is being made of information available on Insight. The focus of self evaluation is about improving outcomes for learners. Quality assurance procedures are clearly set out in a calendar which identifies the roles and responsibilities of all teachers in self evaluation.

Following the Headteacher's lead, staff members across the school continually review their work to inform improvement. The Headteacher rigorously reviews key outcomes for learners such as attainment, attendance, behavioural patterns, and views of parents and carers and pupils. These indicators are used to plan further improvements with staff. Effective use is made of published HMIE School Inspection Reports and Inspection Advice Notes by all members of staff to evaluate our current practice against national standards.

All Principal Teachers form part of the Extended Leadership Team (ELT), along with the Depute Headteachers and the Headteacher. Meetings of the ELT are chaired by a Principal Teacher to encourage ownership of the leadership of the school. In addition, one of the Principal Teachers attends SLT meetings to encourage participation in the evaluation of practice and to inform next steps.

All members of teaching staff take part in Learning Visits to see learning taking place in colleagues' classrooms to encourage the sharing of good practice. The visits have a focus on a key priority area (higher-order thinking skills) and evaluations have been very positive in terms of the benefits of discussion as well as identification of good practice and areas for improvement. Good practice is shared in a variety of other ways including demonstrations during in-service days, departmental/faculty meetings, and practice sharing between colleagues.

Rigorous and robust Tracking and Monitoring procedures in the Senior Phase means that pupils are clear about the progress being made and next steps for learning; this is becoming more formalised with pupils in the Broad General Education stage of learning.

Excellent links exist with members of the Parent Council who contribute to the shaping of policy and practice in the school.

All members of staff have engaged with the PRD process, evaluating practice against the new professional standards and using myGTCS to record professional learning.

Areas for Development

The use of Pupil Voice will be expanded wherever possible with continued and better use made of intelligence gathered through parent/carer evaluations.

A whole school tracking system for progress through the Broad General Education will be established, taking advice from Senior Officers in Midlothian Council.