

Gryffe High School

10 December 2004

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Follow-through report on HMle inspection of Gryffe High School

A Report by Renfrewshire Council: Education and Leisure Services

10 December 2004

1 The inspection

In January 2002, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMle) published a report on standards and quality in Gryffe High School following their earlier inspection of November 2001. Working with the education authority, the school prepared, and made public an Action Plan in May 2002, indicating how it would address the main points for action identified in the original HMle inspection report. The local authority had supported the school in addressing the points for action and in monitoring the progress made. HMle asked the authority to provide a progress report for parents and carers on the progress identified. This report, prepared by the authority, reflects our evaluation of the progress made in relation to the action plan.

2 Continuous improvement

Since the inspection report published in January 2002, the school had demonstrated its capacity to make further improvements in key aspects of its provision.

The school continued to perform well in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison with similar schools. In session 2003/04 the 5-14 targets of 78% in reading and 72% in mathematics were exceeded. Since 2002, Standard Grade results had continued to improve and the school had maintained its already positive performance in both Higher and Advanced Higher.

In the period since the publication of the original report, the headteacher and his staff had demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and commitment in addressing the main points for action. They had succeeded in establishing a culture of continuous improvement in the school. The senior management team had played a very active role in all aspects of quality improvement and self-evaluation.

Improvements in development planning, learning, teaching and assessment had helped to raise levels pupil of attainment further. As a result, the school had taken significant steps to continue to improve its overall effectiveness.

3 Progress towards the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in January 2002 identified two main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made in overtaking the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and others involved with the school.

3.1 The school should continue to take steps to improve learning, teaching and attainment, based on a closer evaluation of the quality of pupils' work in classrooms by principal teachers and supported appropriately by senior managers.

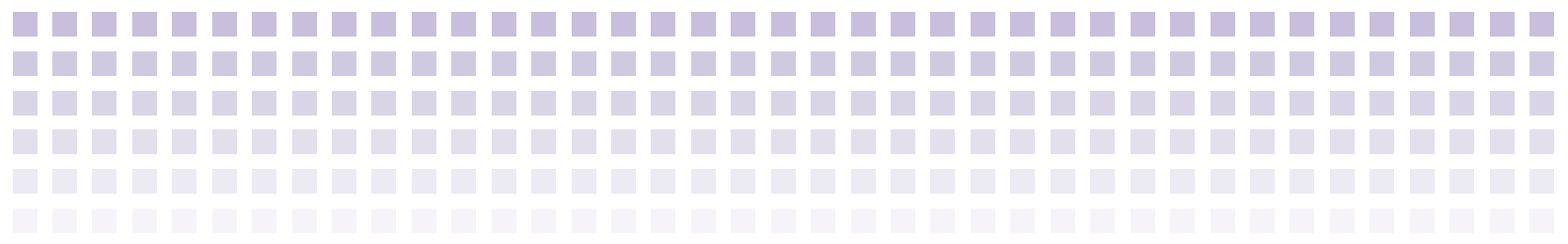
The school had made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

A whole school working party had been set up and a quality assurance policy had been produced. The policy included the role of the senior management team and principal teachers in the evaluation of the quality of pupil work. The policy was implemented following staff consultation. The working group produced lists of strategies, which form part of an effective monitoring policy. Formal classroom visits were trialled initially in the mathematics department, with science and other departments identified for inclusion for session 2004/05. A quality assurance calendar had been developed by every department with agreement that this procedure would be further reviewed and evaluated at the end of session 2004/05.

Almost all departments had audited coursework to ensure appropriate pace and challenge in pupils' learning, particularly with more able pupils. Improving pace and challenge had also been identified as a strategic action, which was planned to be detailed within the school and departmental development plans. Approaches to gender attainment are a priority for all departments and are also included in development plans. One very effective way in which the school had addressed pace and challenge was through generic supported study, which targets particular pupils and tackles issues such as study skills. Evaluations, so far, have been very positive with the school planning to extend this initiative during session 2004/05.

The use of homework diaries had been reviewed. Their effectiveness in supporting pupils' learning and as a means of communicating with parents had improved. A survey of parents indicated that more than 80% were satisfied with homework and the use of homework diaries. The homework policy for S1 and S2 had been reviewed and rewritten resulting in a more consistent approach to the amount and types of homework issued to pupils. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis. Homework diaries were regularly monitored through personal and social education classes and by annual pastoral interviews by guidance teachers.

In terms of improving learning and teaching and raising attainment the English department had reviewed its approaches to class structure and organisation



and had examined strategies which would improve the conversion rate from Standard Grade to Higher. Standard Grade results and especially 'credit' awards had further improved. Through careful monitoring the pace of learning in S1 and S2 had been increased and consequently there had been an improvement overall in 5-14 attainment. Methodology and learning and teaching techniques had been reviewed and agreed by members of the department.

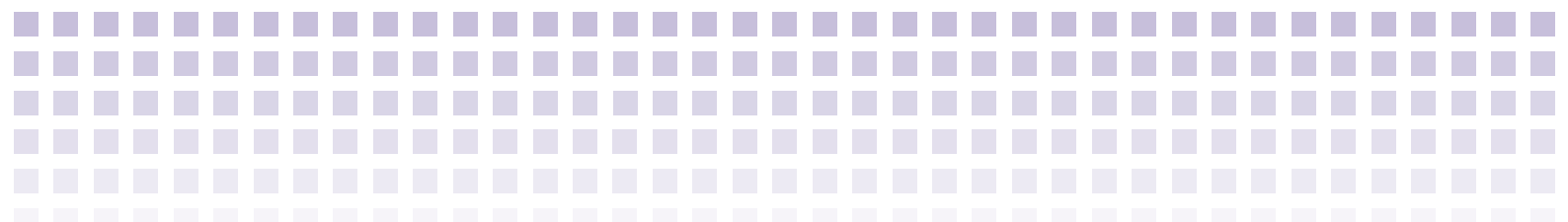
Teaching strategies within science had been reviewed with principal teachers now involved in co-operative teaching. This facilitated the sharing of good practice at departmental meetings and the informal evaluation of the quality of pupils' work in science classrooms. Learning and teaching strategies for most units of Spotlight Science had been reviewed and as a consequence the course demonstrated better progression and continuity with improved pupil performance. Staff had undergone in-service training during their non-contact time which had a positive impact on the learning and teaching of electronics. The remits of the principal teachers had been reviewed with the responsibility for science to be contained within the remit of the principal teacher of physics.

Staffing changes within the biology department had resulted in improved learning and teaching methods being introduced. Good progress had been made in establishing links with biology departments in other schools. A biology website had been developed with direct links to high quality online teaching resources. The use of technology in the classroom had been increased. There had been an improvement in performance at Standard Grade and in the number of A pass awards gained at Higher. The introduction of Intermediate 1 in all three individual sciences in S3 had led to improvements in pace and challenge and increased motivation for those pupils who previously studied Standard Grade science.

The appointment of an administrative assistant within the guidance framework had made a positive impact. Guidance staff had used development days to establish appropriate learning outcomes for almost all Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons. PSE teachers had reviewed PSE on an informal, but systematic basis. Development work on the use of the Progress File had been undertaken and as result, it now had a higher profile in the PSE programme. Ongoing progress with year group pastoral interviews was being monitored through guidance team departmental meetings.

Monitoring of learning and teaching had been reviewed in the mathematics department. As a consequence, procedures were now applied more consistently across the department allowing issues of concern to be identified and resolved more speedily. Appropriate attainment targets within 5-14 mathematics had been met. At S3, both 'general' and 'credit' Standard Grade courses articulate more effectively, with course structures and assessments reviewed accordingly. In S3/S4 appropriate areas of the course had been identified for use of graphics calculators.

The use of appropriate online learning resources had been developed for senior pupils. High performance levels had been maintained at Higher and Advanced Higher whilst at Standard Grade there was evidence of an upward trend in attainment.



Overall progress in attainment in technical subjects had been good, although the quality of awards in Craft and Design at Standard Grade continued to fluctuate. The department had continued to explore strategies which would lead to an improvement in pupils' attainment. A review of course provision had taken place with new units for design being produced and made available. Departmental displays of pupils' work had improved greatly.

3.2 Senior staff should continue to improve school development planning and encourage all staff to undertake professional review.

The school had made very good progress towards meeting this point for action. The school development plan had been improved with clearer information regarding timescales, personnel and success criteria. Agreed priorities had been successfully implemented over the previous two sessions resulting in improved pupil attainment. The senior management team monitored the progress of the plan closely and commendably produced regular progress reports.

Almost all departmental plans had been completed using the same, agreed format. The well established development planning group, representing a cross-section of the staff, played a central role in auditing progress and preparing the school plan. Consultation with parents and pupils had taken place at an early stage in the development planning process. Senior management had become more involved in monitoring departmental action plans.

All principal teachers and senior managers are committed to the annual professional review process. Since 2002, most of the staff had taken part in a formal review, with the majority participating annually. Further development was planned following the publication of national guidelines. All staff are required to produce a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plan. Staff development activities reflect the range of needs of the school, departments and individuals. The school plans its staff development well, making effective use of local authority and other providers.

4 Conclusion

The school had made very good overall progress in responding to the main points for action contained in the original report. Developments in planning, learning and teaching and assessment had helped to further raise pupils' levels of attainment. These developments had helped to further improve pupils' learning experiences and attainment and placed the school in a strong position to improve standards even further.

Gordon Morton
Senior Adviser (Performance Management)
10 December 2004



How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the head teacher and school staff, the school board, the Director of Education and Leisure Services, and local councillors. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from the address below or by telephoning **0141 842 5882**. Copies are also available on our web site: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of this report, you should write in the first instance to Shelagh Rae, Director of Education and Leisure Services at:

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