

# Park Mains High School

15 September 2005

building   
a learning   
renfrewshire





# Follow-through report on HMle inspection of Park Mains High School

## A Report by Renfrewshire Council: Education and Leisure Services

15 September 2005

### 1 The inspection

In May 2003, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMle) published a report on standards and quality in Park Mains High School following their earlier inspection of February 2003. Working with the education authority, the school prepared, and made public an action plan in October 2003, indicating how it would address the main points for action identified in the original HMle inspection report. The local authority 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 was published in May 2003, 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 65% in reading and 62% in mathematics were exceeded. Since 2002, very good Standard Grade results had been maintained with further improvement in the number of pupils gaining 5 or more awards at Credit level. The school had maintained its already positive performance in both Higher and Advanced Higher examinations.

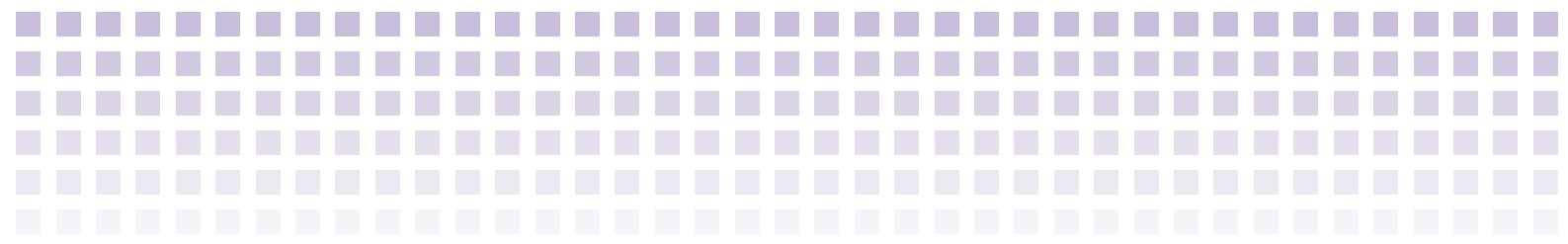
In the period since the publication of the original report, the head teacher and his staff had demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and commitment in addressing the main points for action. They had succeeded in establishing a culture of continuous improvement in the school. The senior management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

### 3 Progress towards the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in May 2003 identified three main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made in addressing the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and others involved with the school.

#### 3.1 The education authority and the school should continue to co-operate in addressing the accommodation issues identified in the report

Good progress had been made in relation to this action point. The education authority and the school had improved security arrangements by installing computer controlled security



doors in critical locations. Health and safety issues had been fully considered and the business support manager had received training in health & safety. Pupils' toilets had been painted. A new, much needed, study area for staff had been created and was now in use.

A thorough review of accommodation had been undertaken by the school with some changes made to the allocation of classrooms, particularly those used for social and vocational skills.

The community wing had been adapted and was now in constant use by the physical education department who were making very good use of the additional facilities. Currently, an artificial pitch was being installed which will enable all year round use and will ease the physical education department's accommodation difficulties during the winter months.

The provision of information communication technology (ICT) had been reviewed following the authority's planned refurbishment programme. Business studies and computing departments had now successfully migrated from Apple Macintosh to PC platform. Staff from these departments had attended two very useful in-service sessions on the use of these computers. The school had successfully deployed computers around the school resulting in more computers being used in more classrooms. Additional internet access points had been installed around the school as required.

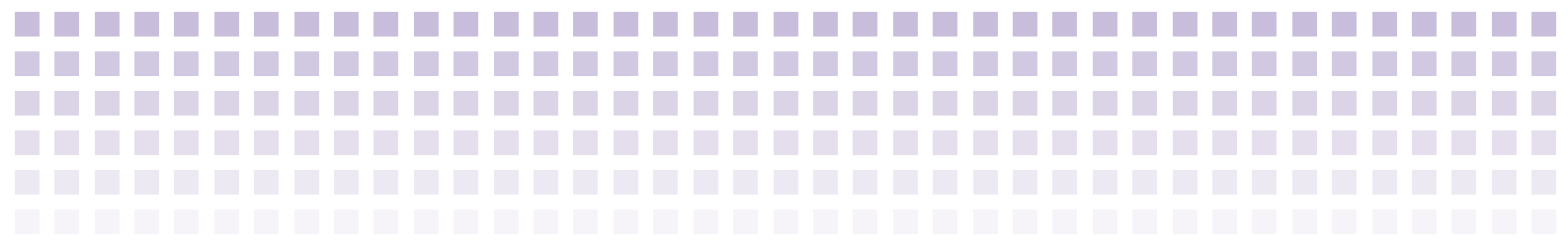
Plans had been drawn up for the refurbishment of the school as part of the authority's school estate management plan.

### **3.2 Senior managers should be more rigorous in promoting a more consistent approach to planning for improvement and self evaluation at all levels**

Very good progress had been made resulting in a number of improvements in planning and self-evaluation. A specific evaluation of inclusion had been carried out in conjunction with members of staff from psychological services. An inclusion committee had been set up on a volunteer basis to assist in strategy and planning in this key priority area. The school had embraced this well as a pilot project and parents had been kept informed and involved. Classes had been visited with a view to considering how the needs of all pupils were being met. A baseline report had been published with the findings incorporated into an action plan which would assist the school in taking forward inclusive practices.

The departmental review process had been revised with departments completing a profile in advance of the review, which is conducted by the headteacher and senior management team. Currently, procedures were being further modified to include the HMIE departmental profile. These reviews included a thorough and rigorous analysis of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) results and focused on identified key areas from How good is our school? Learning and teaching and departmental management will be the focus of this year's reviews. The senior management team will, as part of their ongoing monitoring arrangements, follow up any issues with their link departments.

A monitoring calendar had been developed and was now operational. It was reviewed by the senior management team on a monthly basis. As a result, monitoring had become more formal and rigorous. Class visits were undertaken regularly with feedback given to staff. Principal teachers were fully involved with these arrangements.



Good practice in department planning had been identified and shared with all departments. Departmental plans were now based on this good practice. Action plans had been produced by all departments and these had been monitored by the link senior management team member with formal written feedback given.

A Planning for Improvement Group had been established which had responsibility for the production of the school development plan. This group will also monitor the implementation of the plan.

### **3.3 The Education Authority and the school should ensure that the process of professional review plays an important role in the identification of staff development needs**

Very good progress had been made in addressing this action point. In taking forward this point for action, the school had taken appropriate note of the policy issued by the authority. All staff will be involved in professional review and development this session.

A staff development committee had been formed and a continuing professional development (CPD) strategy had been agreed and produced. A staff awareness-raising session was planned. All staff have had a CPD interview and all staff members have a CPD profile. A CPD database is under development.

### **3.4 Inspected Departments**

Further to the three main points for action, individual/specific issues were raised in the work of the particular departments inspected. The responses to these issues are detailed below.

All departments inspected had made good or very good progress towards implementing the points for action identified in the HMIE Report.

#### **English**

There was now a better balance between independent learning and supported activities which had resulted in a slight improvement in the 2004 Higher results. The use of discussion in class to improve effective learning had been promoted and was being integrated into units of work. With the production of a departmental timeline, pupils were now more aware of project deadlines. Pupil progress was carefully monitored through folios, with cross-marking taking place at all stages. National assessments were carefully monitored. Boys' attainment in writing had improved.

Good progress had been made in meeting the action points, with departmental meetings now including regular discussion on learning and teaching issues. A depute head teacher visited classes regularly as part of the school's approach to monitoring of learning and teaching and provided regular feedback to the principal teacher and teachers.

#### **Mathematics**

Very good progress had been made in bringing about greater continuity in learning between S2 and S3 through the development of a new course for S3. The pace of learning had been increased with more pupils now working towards level F. The use of information communication technology had been developed further with the introduction of the SCHOLAR online programme at Advanced Higher. Staff were making effective use of websites and CD Roms with their classes. All members of the department had attended in-service courses on the use of the electronic whiteboard. Staff were using a new symposium board with graphics calculators. Higher and Advanced Higher results had improved, as had



the conversion from Standard Grade to Higher.

### **Chemistry and S1/S2 Science**

Very good progress had been made in meeting pupils' needs through the development of differentiated materials for use in Standard Grade chemistry. More investigative tasks had been introduced for more able pupils. Intermediate 1 & 2 courses had replaced Standard Grade science, which had greatly improved pupil motivation. Pupil performance was being carefully monitored.

Good progress had been made in developing and implementing a systematic approach to self-evaluation through the production of a new 'Quality Assurance' policy. Principal teachers visited classes to monitor learning and teaching and cross-making of pupils' work now takes place. A rigorous, annual review of Scottish Qualifications Authority examination results now takes place as part of overall quality assurance.

### **Computing**

New arrangements for Standard Grade had been implemented and a homework package linked to the course had been produced for S3 and S4 pupils. The S5/6 course plan had been adapted to include the use of SCHOLAR and other online resources. Homework booklets for Higher had been reviewed and revised and were now used by all staff. As part of the "assessment is for learning" initiative the principal teacher had further developed these strategies.

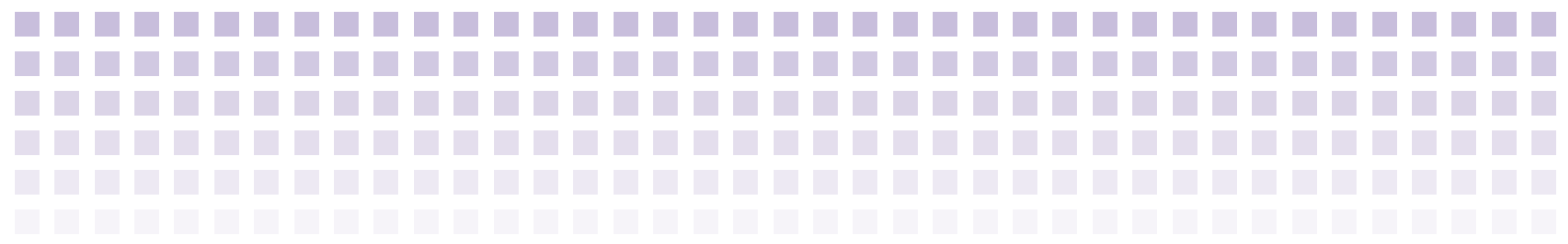
### **Music**

Departmental meetings had been used to evaluate and review practice in inventing. There was now very effective learning and teaching in this area at all levels. The S1/2 course was regularly reviewed at departmental meetings with discussion now focusing on the pace of learning. Backing tracks and new resources were now in use at Higher and Advanced Higher. A more flexible approach to listening in S5/6 to cater for all abilities had been implemented. The structure of listening at Advanced Higher level had been consolidated. SQA criteria were used to assist pupil progress. Appropriate inventing projects had been selected for all levels.

Very good progress had been made in meeting the action points as evidenced by the improvement in Higher results in 2004. Self-evaluation had improved as part of the whole-school approach to quality assurance.

### **Support for pupils**

Very good progress had been made on a number of areas in relation to support for pupils. The integration of guidance and support for learning had resulted in pupils, especially the more vulnerable, being better supported. Guidance staff were now involved in the development of personal learning plans for looked after children. An audit and review of guidance and personal and social education provision is ongoing and was linked closely to the whole school curriculum review. Pupils in S2 and S5/6 had been consulted using questionnaires with improvements to the guidance calendar and interview practices being implemented as a result. The responses indicated that pupils were generally pleased with the provision, and on some occasions, very satisfied with the support provided. A deputy head teacher met with



principal teachers twice a year to review their caseload as part of the monitoring procedures.

Very good progress had been made in improving communication and consultation with pupils. Pupil focus groups had been established in order to gain the views of a larger number of pupils. Volunteer members of staff were involved in the consultation procedures. These were undertaken three times a year with approximately 200 pupils involved on each occasion. Pupils found this a very effective way of making their views known and had seen evidence of their suggestions being put into practice. Staff had been made aware of the importance of consulting pupils and a number of departments were carrying out pupil evaluations.

A behaviour support base was now operational and was staffed by volunteers. It is viewed positively by staff who saw it as beneficial to the ongoing work in their classrooms. Its use was currently being monitored by the head teacher.

The Renfrewshire policy on tackling bullying had been implemented. A buddying system was in place with at least 70 S6 pupils providing a buddy service for S1 pupils. A 'drop-in' facility was also available allowing S1 pupils to seek help and support as required.

## 4 Conclusion

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

Gordon Morton  
Senior Adviser (Performance Management)  
1 September 2005

## 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](http://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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