

Dalziel High School

HMIE Inspection Follow Through Report

1. The inspection

Dalziel High School was inspected by HMIE in June 2008. The report, published in November 2008, was very positive and recognised the good practice and high standards of the school.

2. Progress in improving the quality of education

The original HMIE report identified four areas for improvement.

2.1

“Further develop links with local primary schools so that young people can build more effectively on their learning.”

We have made very good progress with this point for action.

Since the 2008 inspection, the science department have been working closely with all three associated primaries to develop science knowledge and investigative skills. This involves science teachers working closely with P7 teachers and pupils in developing a science project chosen by pupils. This culminates in pupils taking part in a science fayre with S1 pupils at Dalziel in June. This has had a notable positive impact on the pupils’ investigative skills when they begin S1 and has certainly improved their confidence in applying their previously learned knowledge to new problems. All of the science staff have also noted that this has enabled the S1 pupils to work more independently when working on their S1 science projects.

Maths and English teachers take part in a programme of liaison in May of each year. This involves secondary staff working with P7 pupils and their teachers, delivering a variety of lessons and taking time to observe what the children have been working on in their class with respect to Maths and English. At this stage, prior learning and achievements are discussed and this information used to help identify next steps for when the pupils begin S1 in August.

Principal teachers of pupil support visit each primary school to discuss the personal and social education programme with pupils and the transition events that take place in May/June. They are also involved, along with Support for Learning staff, in sharing information with regards to pupils who may require extra support, whether this be emotionally or academically. The transition paperwork has also been adapted to incorporate this. This ensures appropriate support is in place for each pupil.

We are currently working with the headteachers of cluster primary schools to develop further links, with particular emphasis on Curriculum for Excellence.

2.2

“Support further improvements in learning by involving senior managers directly in the process of evaluating learning.”

We have made very good progress with this point for action.

The senior managers of the school are responsible for the creation and contents of the annual individual departmental monitoring calendars which detail each department's specific targets and dates for monitoring various aspects of learning and teaching for each particular session. These targets include class comparisons of formal assessments, homework comparisons, cross marking of exercises, the regular sampling and evaluating of classwork and homework as well as regular pupil and staff evaluations of courses on a topic or unit basis.

All evidence of progress is recorded and filed in a monitoring folder which the SMT regularly check and evaluate. The SMT discuss progress through the calendar with PTs on a regular basis. In addition all departments are required to minute their progress, after discussions at departmental meetings, where progress is a standing agenda for all departments. The SMT read all departmental minutes closely and take action if and when necessary.

The benefits of this process is that it ensures the maintaining of standards in course delivery and the consistency of course provision among staff within departments and across the school, to ensure that effective teaching and learning is taking place for all pupils. Pupil evaluations in particular are used to further identify aspects of learning and teaching to be enhanced and augmented. As well as giving pupils an active role in influencing the content, structure, teaching styles and preferred learning techniques within their courses it also encourages motivation and supports individualised learning, personalisation and choice.

A Cross Curricular Observation Group has been created by senior managers to implement and monitor learning and teaching both on a departmental and cross curricular basis. Here, the group, which includes senior managers, identifies the annual programme of observations for each session and the particular aspects of learning and teaching to be evaluated. The aspects of learning and teaching covered to date have included methodologies for differentiation, questioning styles and techniques, techniques to improve pupil motivation and interaction in lessons, use of different resources within the classroom to promote learning and enhance teaching and highlighting literacy and numeracy across all subject areas. Each annual programme involves all staff in the school. The detailed evaluation of staff reports of their experiences of the programme is used by the SMT to highlight innovations in learning and teaching approaches that will engage and immerse young people in powerful and relevant learning experiences and improve attainment.

As this programme involves all staff, it has led to the active dissemination of best teaching practices - improvements in individual staff expertise, the positive sharing of ideas and methodologies among staff who now constantly enhance and modify

their teaching styles and adapt lessons to improve pupil experiences and hence their learning in the classroom.

2.3

‘Continue to extend opportunities for young people to link their learning across several subject areas, and to prepare for the world of work ‘.

We have made very good progress with this point for action.

Since the inspection of 2008, we now offer wide and varied opportunities to all our pupils regarding skills for learning, life and work. S3 pupils complete Standard Grade and Intermediate exams one year early. This has enabled S4 the opportunity to take part in several work related options every Wednesday afternoon for the session. S4 pupils are given the opportunity to volunteer with charitable organisations or complete a placement in a work related environment. Through evaluating this with pupils they have commented on the fact that it has had a positive impact on their preparation for the world of work. Pupils who have a special interest in either childcare or teaching are offered placements in either a nursery or primary school. We are now in the second year of this initiative and as a result the school has had success in securing permanent jobs through work experience placements.

In S1 departments have been paired together. These pairings allow departments to work collaboratively on a unit that links learning in a particular topic e.g. Music and Business Education worked together to enable pupils to produce, market and sell a music CD. Pupils can further enhance learning across several subject areas by participating in at least one enterprise event during the ‘June Timetable’. This gives every student the opportunity to develop skills for learning, life and work. The Enterprise Committee (chaired by Principal Teacher Work, Enterprise & Vocational Education) oversee all activities and an annual audit (including HGIOS Enterprise) is carried out to ensure good practice is maintained.

The school conducted an audit to collate information on Dalziel High School's current provision for pupils who potentially would not have a positive destination when they leave school. The findings resulted in the 'STAR' (Set Targets, Achieve Results) programme being initiated. All S6 are awarded Higher Grade Working with Others through the 'Buddying' programme. Pupils either work in a class or with a STAR pupil. The targets that buddies negotiate with STAR pupils focus on attendance & timekeeping and tasks to raise their self esteem. Through evaluating this initiative and by seeking comments from STAR pupils and ‘Buddies’ they indicated that they found the process greatly improved their confidence and some STAR pupils said that they were more inclined to stay in school and attend.

Our STAR Plus project offers school leavers the opportunity to access careers advice through visits to colleges and local businesses. A comprehensive programme is delivered to S4 & S5 pupils who are selected to take part in the STAR Plus project, increasing their capacity to secure a positive destination on leaving school. The Star Plus initiative exposes pupils to real work related situations. Two local national / multi-national employers are just two of the employers, who have links with the

school. This underpins everything we try to achieve and rely on this good relationship for the continuation of our initiatives.

Local businesses are involved in life at Dalziel and our excellent data base of visiting speakers (many of whom are former pupils) ensure that all of pupils are exposed to a wide range of opportunities regarding the world of work.

2.4

“Provide religious and moral education for young people in S5/6”

We have made very good progress with this point for action.

Since the HMI inspection in June 2008 we have taken a number of steps to further enhance the provision of religious and moral education for pupils in S5 and S6.

We have a dedicated period of RME for every S5 pupil and we have also introduced Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies into the S4, S5 and S6 option structure at Intermediate One and Two levels. We have also introduced Higher and Intermediate Philosophy.

Both of these subjects have proven to be popular with pupils in S5 and S6 and has had a positive impact on pupil education in terms of providing greater curricular choice.

In addition we have introduced a dedicated extended assembly with a specific religious and/or moral message. This assembly is led by the RME department and a range of topics such as festivals and forthcoming themes address the meaning of Easter, Ramadan and Divali. Pupils now benefit by having a far greater understanding of world religions and we are looking to enhance their understanding further through the use of visiting speakers representing the various religious groups.

SMT are currently working closely with the RME department to further enhance the provision at assemblies.

3. Conclusion

We have continued to evaluate provision and enhance pupil’s learning experiences. Given our strong track record in bringing about improvement, our effective leadership and high level of commitment from staff at all levels we are well placed to continue to improve.