

HERMITAGE ACADEMY CURRICULUM REVIEW

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| 1.0 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | |
| | 1.1 | The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Area Committee of the progress in taking forward the agreed action plan arising from the internal review of the senior phase curriculum at Hermitage Academy. |
| | 1.2 | It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee: |
| | a | Note the progress of the areas identified for improvement contained within the Action Plan which was prepared in November 2015. |
| | b | Note that a further progress report will be presented to a future Area Committee meeting. |

HERMITAGE ACADEMY CURRICULUM REVIEW

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| 2.0 | INTRODUCTION | |
| | 2.1 | The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Area Committee of the progress in taking forward the agreed action plan arising from the internal review of the senior phase curriculum at Hermitage Academy. |
| 3.0 | RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| | It is recommended that the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee: | |
| | a | Note the progress of the areas identified for improvement contained within the Action Plan which was prepared in November 2015. |
| | b | Note that a further progress report will be presented to a future Area Committee meeting. |

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| 4.0 | DETAIL | |
| | 4.1 | <p>At the Council meeting of 22 October 2015 the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted the concerns expressed about the current curricular model (framework) in place at Hermitage Academy and the possible impact on the 2015 academic results for the school • Reaffirmed that the education of our children and young people is a key priority for the Council • Noted that the Council's Education Service has commenced a review of the curricular model (framework) in conjunction with the Hermitage Academy Senior Leadership Team following the publication of the first year of results • Agreed that the review will consult staff, parents and pupils with immediate effect to ensure their views are reflected in the evaluation and its outcome • Noted that the design of a curricular model (framework) for schools, firmly embedded in the Curriculum for Excellence, is an operational matter based on education professional judgement • Noted that it would be inappropriate for the council to direct the design of a school curriculum which is not based on a professional evaluation and prior to the conclusion of the current review |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed that any changes to the curricular model (framework) at Hermitage Academy should take account of the needs of all pupils at the school, including those currently in the senior phase • Endorsed the view of the Education Service that any critical adjustments found to be necessary during the review will be implemented immediately to minimise potential disruption to learners • Agreed that regular updates on the ongoing review, and any resulting changes to the curriculum model, are reported to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee and the Community Services Committee • Agreed that any policy implications or changes required as a consequence of the review were reported to the Community Services Committee and Policy and Resources Committee for consideration. |
| 4.2 | | <p>Following the October Council meeting, Education Services continued to progress the comprehensive review of the senior phase curriculum framework jointly with Hermitage Academy.</p> <p>As the Hermitage Academy curriculum framework was different in structure to that of other Argyll and Bute secondary schools, the engagement included a review of the senior phase curriculum in terms of both processes and outcomes.</p> <p>The principal aim of the review was to assess the effectiveness and impact of the current senior phase curriculum framework in meeting the needs of all of the young people attending Hermitage Academy.</p> <p>To assess this impact a number of review activities were taken forward including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of a wide range of background information including: scrutiny of examination statistics, approaches to whole school and departmental tracking and monitoring: including the effectiveness of the school's supporting learners programme "<i>I time</i>", and review of subject timetabling arrangements; • A review of current departmental tracking and monitoring of individual pupil progress; • Issue of questionnaires to all parents/carers, pupils and staff of Hermitage Academy. Full analysis of the questionnaire responses; • Facilitation of a range of opt in focus groups for parents/carers, pupils, staff and pupils; • Analysis of responses from all focus groups; • Consideration of individual submissions by parents/carers; • Participation in one to one meetings, as requested by individual staff members; • Consideration of documentation provided at an initial meeting facilitated by the Parent Council; |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the effectiveness of approaches to engagement and communication between the school and parents; • Review of the documentation providing information on the individual learning experiences of young people, and • Meetings with a number of principal teachers. |
| | 4.3 | Following the initial field work phase of the curriculum review (as noted at section 4.2) Education Scotland was invited by the Council's Education Service to join the review team to contribute challenge, knowledge and advice to the Council's internal review of the senior phase curriculum at Hermitage Academy. This engagement included a commitment to provide on-going support to both the local authority and the school in order to offer an independent perspective, as well as advice around best practice, parental engagement and assessment. |
| | 4.4 | Key themes identified within the Curriculum Review |
| | | <p>Upon completion of the curriculum review, findings in relation to four key themes were agreed by members of the review team. These were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall effectiveness of the current curriculum framework (model), including enhancement courses in meeting the needs of all young people; 2. Effectiveness and impact of whole school approaches to tracking and monitoring learners' progress; 3. Effectiveness of approaches to engagement and communication with key stakeholders; and 4. Evaluation of the school presentation policy and its impact on learners. |
| | 4.5 | Key messages |
| | | <p>4.5.1 Overall effectiveness of the current curriculum framework (model), including enhancement courses in meeting the needs of all learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current curriculum framework is resulting in a range of positive outcomes for some learners. • In 2015, Attainment by the end of S5 at Higher (SCQF level 6) has increased since 2014 and is now in line with virtual comparators (the virtual comparator is compiled from the results of pupils across Scotland and is built to reflect the same socio economic/ demographic profile as Hermitage); • Some young people are also achieving certification through the enhancement courses. For example, community sports leadership awards, sociology and positive destination; • In 2015, Attainment at National 3, 4 and 5 was generally significantly below virtual comparators; and • Enhancement courses are perceived, by some, as not adding sufficient value for the time commitment. |
| | | 4.5.2 Effectiveness and impact of whole school approaches to tracking and monitoring learners progress: |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a range of established procedures and processes in place to track and monitor outcomes for learners this includes the use of “<i>I-time</i>” and targeted support for young people; • Young people, parents and staff do not have a shared understanding of the progress individual young people are making; • Target and presentation levels are not sufficiently clear for all young people and their parents; • The reliability and consistency of assessment information requires to be improved; and • A strategic overview of pupil progress across subjects, courses and levels is not sufficiently well developed to lead to improved outcomes. |
| | | <p>4.5.3 Effectiveness of approaches to engagement and communication with key stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad range of approaches is used by the school to engage effectively with pupils, parents and staff. This includes Parents Evenings, Open Night, P7 Information Evening; • Further work is required to improve engagement and communication with pupils and staff; and • Parents of the current S6 feel that they have been well-informed about the curriculum model. However, overall staff, pupils and parents are not sufficiently clear about the current curriculum framework. In particular there is a notable lack of clarity about the two year course versus the two year Higher. |
| | | <p>4.5.4 Evaluation of the school presentation policy and its impact on learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hermitage Academy’s current presentation policy has resulted in a high level of attainment for many pupils. However for a significant number of young people the current framework did not fully meet their needs. |
| | 4.6 | Key actions |
| | | <p>A number of key actions have been identified to securing improvement in outcomes for all young people attending Hermitage Academy. These include making changes to the current framework :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply greater flexibility in the delivery of the current curricular pathways to improve further the outcomes for all young people. This should include increasing the range of opportunities for one and two years pathways to certification; • Immediately implement changes to the current delivery of enhancement courses to maximise opportunities for all young people to attain highly; • Review individual pupil progress across all subjects to ensure pupils are achieving at the appropriate level; • Build on the recent review of Broad General Education (BGE) to ensure pupils have appropriate opportunities for specialisation (ensuring young people have a suitably broad experience in the |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGE to support their subject choices in the senior phase) ; • Develop further the recently revised processes in the senior phase for tracking and monitoring to inform appropriate and timely interventions to help secure improvements in attainment for all young people; • Work with parents, staff and pupils to develop a shared understanding of progress (assessment, working grades, target grades, presentation levels); • Ensure effective systems are in place to confirm the reliability and consistency of assessment information; and • Develop further the school’s strategic overview of pupil progress across subjects and courses. <p>Communicating the action planning to secure improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter illustrating the findings of the curriculum review was prepared and issued to all parents, noting the comments of Education Scotland; • Further discussions have been taken forward between the school, Education Services and the recently elected Parent Council to share the findings of the review and subsequent actions; • Individual pupil and family engagement for all S4 and S5 pupils has been offered; and • A further presentation to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee to share information on the review was agreed. |
| 5.0 | DETAIL | |
| | 5.1 | <p>Good progress is being made in delivering the agreed actions as outlined within the Senior Phase Curricular review action plan. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall effectiveness of the current curriculum framework (model), including enhancement courses in meeting the needs of all young people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S4 – As agreed a review of the planned curriculum model for S4 pupils has now been undertaken following which a number of amendments have been made to support the current S4 pupils. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In meeting the needs of individual pupils they will be presented for National 3, 4 or 5 Mathematics in May 2016, as appropriate. Prelim examinations for Nat 5 have been arranged for Mon 1st Feb 2016. For some individual pupils there may be dual presentation in some subjects in S5, at the end of May 2017, to secure achievement in individual subjects. ○ In session 2016/17 it has been agreed that the current S4 pupils, who will then be in S5, will not participate in |

enhancement courses. This will allow for an additional subject period in all subjects: (6 subjects x 5 periods per week) to support pupils to make progress as they prepare for presentation in National Examinations at the end of S5.

- **S5** – A revision of the current curriculum timetable for S5 pupils has taken account of their current participation in enhancement courses, with changes made supporting pupils to reduce the overall number of enhancement courses. The time allocation previously used for enhancements courses now provides support for additional study periods for pupils.
 - Further consideration will be given to the use of dual presentation in English in the examination diet scheduled for May 2016, where appropriate to the individual pupils.
 - Following the completion of the S5 Prelim examinations parental consultation meetings have now been held with parents, with over 70% of parents in attendance. The school and the Authority are undertaking a review of the range of assessment information for S5 pupils, this includes the outcome of Prelim Examinations and the achievement of internal course work national assessments. This will now allow for the appropriate presentation level (in the examinations in May) to be agreed between the school, parents and pupils.
 - Where necessary a supporting statement has been provided for pupils as part of their application process for UCAS.

- **S6** – Pupils continue to participate in current coursework with regular tracking and monitoring taking place. Prelim examinations for the S6 cohort were undertaken week commencing 20th January and due to be concluded on 29th January.

- **S3** – An evaluation and assessment of the current S3 timetable is now well underway. Consideration has been given to the views of parents, staff and pupils with an S3 parents evening held on 20th January. The presentation and parental questions have subsequently been posted on the school website for information for parents. A number of key changes will be included as the S3 cohort move into S4 and this will include:
 - English and Mathematics will be compulsory for all S4 pupils and will receive 4 periods per week.
 - English and Mathematics receives a greater allocation each year from S1 to S3.

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Literacy and Numeracy is also delivered across the school and with inputs at <i>i-time</i>. ○ Pupils will choose 4 other subjects (x 5 periods per week) ○ All students will take PE x 2 periods per week (Compulsory as per Scottish Government guidelines). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● S2 – The school is currently revising the S3 Curriculum as a result of the Broad General Education review and is planning to offer more challenge, progression and specialisation in S3. This will allow pupils to have personalisation and choice and a successful transition into the Senior Phase. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further discussions on the S3 curriculum are planned between the school, Education Services and Education Scotland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A review group has now been established to evaluate the impact and benefit of enhancement courses for pupils. ○ Meetings have now been held with subject department Principal Teachers to discuss proposed curriculum changes. ○ Revised dates for the parent information evening are currently being agreed. <p>2. Effectiveness and impact of whole school approaches to tracking and monitoring learners' progress:</p> <p>Leadership of tracking and monitoring whole School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members of the Senior Leadership of the school continue to meet with subject departments to discuss the progress of pupils particularly those in the senior phase (S4, S5 and S6). ○ Departmental reviews between the School's Senior Leadership Team and Subject Departments are increasingly supporting decisions on the presentation level for pupils in the forthcoming Examination Diet. ○ Further work has been undertaken to create a whole school tracking and monitoring overview with a particular focus on the effectiveness of the data transfer for pupils from P7 to S1. ○ Tracking review forms have been used to support pupils in learning conversations with Class Teachers, in i-time and with parents. <p>3. Effectiveness of approaches to engagement and communication with key stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letters were provided to parents and carers of the S4, S5 and S6 cohorts outlining the proposed changes for their young people and offering the opportunity for individual consultation |
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| | | <p>meetings, as necessary. Careful consideration is being given to the terminology and phraseology used in letters for parents and carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further work has been undertaken in establishing positive working relationships between the school and the newly formed Parent Council with a number of meetings having been held. ○ Education Services have agreed to provide a range of support to the newly formed Parent Council to allow them to undertake their role as described within the Parental Involvement Act. This includes recently agreed timetable of training and development session to meet the identified needs of Parent Council members. These are being planned to be taken forward over the next few weeks in conjunction with Scottish Parent Teacher Association. ○ The schools website is being routinely updated with relevant information and this includes curricular information, powerpoint presentations, notification of examination timetables and a question and answer section. ○ S6 options booklets are currently being revised to include information on SCQF levels. ○ Approaches to engaging with pupils, through the work of Pupil Council is currently being implemented. <p>4. Evaluation of the school presentation policy and its impact on learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As agreed within the Senior Phase Review the school continues to evaluate the current presentation policy and its impact for learners, progress to date includes consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dual presentation opportunities for some pupils ○ A review of Prelim information as a measure for consideration of Dual presentation. ○ Following the evaluation of the current assessment information for individual pupils additional support, as necessary will be planned to support pupils as they progress towards the final examinations in May/June 2016. <p>A further summary of the wider progress is contained within Appendix 1 for information.</p> |
| 6.0 | CONCLUSION | |
| | 6.1 | Following the Hermitage Academy curriculum review the team concluded that the current curriculum design should be amended and improved to ensure it effectively meets the needs of all young people. |

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| | | <p>Education Services continues to engage with Hermitage Academy to ensure the delivery of these actions, as well as to provide on-going challenge and support. A programme of visits have been taken forward during which Education Services is monitoring the progress of the school in taking forward the key components of the action plan.</p> <p>Approaches to engaging and consulting with the newly established Parent Council are now in place. Education Services with the nominated Education Officer providing on-going support and advice to members of the Parent Council.</p> <p>Further letters were prepared and issued to all Hermitage Academy parents outlining the outcome of the review and confirming proposed actions.</p> <p>Support for pupils currently studying in the senior phase continues to be monitored to ensure the needs of learners are being met.</p> | |
| 7.0 | IMPLICATIONS | | |
| | 7.1 | Policy | The outcome of the curriculum review may result in policy implications. |
| | 7.2 | Financial | None |
| | 7.3 | Legal | The Council meets its duties in terms of the Education Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000. |
| | 7.4 | HR | None |
| | 7.5 | Equalities | None |
| | 7.6 | Risk | There are risks to the Council in terms of reputation and operational risks |
| | 7.7 | Customer Service | None |

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services

Policy Lead, Councillor R Colville
10 December 2015

For further information contact:
Ann Marie Knowles – Head of Service: Education
Argyll House, Alexandra Parade,
Dunoon, PA23 8AJ

Tel: 01369 708474

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Action Plan Progress Paper