

HERMITAGE ACADEMY CURRICULUM REVIEW

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a further update to Helensburgh & Lomond Area Committee of the progress in taking forward the action plan arising from the internal review of the senior phase curriculum at Hermitage Academy which was conducted during August to November 2015.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Area Committee:

- a Note the progress achieved by Hermitage Academy, supported by Education Services in taking forward the key actions arising from the internal review of the senior phase curriculum at Hermitage Academy, and
- b Note that a further progress report will be presented to a future Area Committee meeting.

HERMITAGE ACADEMY CURRICULUM REVIEW

3.0 INTRODUCTION

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4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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- b Note that a further progress report will be presented to a future Area Committee meeting.

5.0 BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Hermitage Academy, similar to all Scottish Schools introduced their senior phase curriculum model with the key aims of supporting all learners to:
- Achieve their potential
 - Experience success
 - And be well prepared for life beyond school.

The approach implemented by Hermitage Academy offers a two year course with presentation in external examinations at Higher at the end of fifth year for the majority of young people. This approach embraces the key principles of Curriculum for Excellence, aiming to achieve the highest possible outcomes for all young people. Only a small number of schools in Scotland currently apply a similar framework.

Following the examination results in August 2015 a number of concerns

were raised by parents about the curriculum policy, examination outcomes, the school's presentation policy and consultation and engagement with parents.

Advice was given either by the school or the Education Authority to confirm that their concerns would be considered in the course of the on-going review and that they would receive a response and assurance following the completion of the review.

At this time Education Services engaged with Hermitage Academy as part of the routine programme of support and challenge with all schools. Through this engagement, it was agreed that a fuller review of the curricular model and its impact would be undertaken jointly by the school and the Education Service.

5.2 Following the conclusion of the review a progress update was presented to the meeting of Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 9 February 2016.

5.3 Since the last progress report Education Services has continued to engage with Hermitage Academy to ensure the delivery of the agreed actions, as well as to provide on-going challenge and support. A programme of visits has continued, during which Education Services has monitored the progress of the school in taking forward the key components of the action plan, provided ongoing advice, support and challenge, engaged with the newly formed Parent Council and responded to parental questions or enquiries.

Support for pupils currently studying in the senior phase has continued to be routinely reviewed to ensure the needs of learners are met. With regular communication and engagement with parents/carers throughout the process.

5.4 On the 17th/18th March 2106 colleagues from Education Scotland revisited the school to work with us to evaluate progress and the changes that have been made in the school since the initial Local Authority Review.

At the conclusion of this visit we jointly agreed that a number of positive changes have been made across the Senior Phase Curriculum to further support young people. The schools senior leadership team, teachers and members of the Education Service have worked very hard to implement a wide range of changes, in addition to their on-going work, within a short timescale. These are leading to improvement for young people. For example,

- The tracking and monitoring of young people's progress from S4-S6 is now providing more information to better inform pupils and parents about their progress;
- The SQA presentation policy has been reviewed to increase its

- flexibility for young people;
- The training sessions to support the Parent Council and their roles and responsibilities in school improvement are complete;
- The identification of young people who are at risk of under-achieving is better;
- The range of interventions in place to address under-achievement has increased and improved, and
- A curriculum framework which allows young people to specialise in their third year has been developed.

We also recognised that there is further work to be completed and agreed continued development of key areas including;

- Monitoring and evaluating the changes to the curriculum regularly and rigorously to ensure that they provide effective progression pathways for young people;
- Improving further the communication and engagement with parents, staff and young people;
- Monitoring and evaluate the quality and impact of the interventions to address under-achievement;
- Reviewing further i-time to ensure it is having a positive impact on young people's learning;
- Continue to work with staff to ensure that the assessment information from S1 to S6 is robust and founded on a clear understanding of standards;
- Develop further all staff's understanding of young people's progress towards qualifications;
- Monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of the interventions to address under-achievement, and
- Improve the use of social media to celebrate young peoples' success.

5.6 Parents and young people noted their appreciation of the different ways in which teachers are supporting their learning. For example, through the provision of supported study at lunchtime, after the end of the school day and through the spring holiday break.

5.7 Letters from both Education Services and Education Scotland were distributed to parents confirming the improving areas and areas which were agreed to continue to improve on. Copies of each letter are included at Appendices 1 and 2 for information and are also available on both the school and Education Scotland websites.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The School, supported by the Education Service is making steady progress in addressing the main points for action arising from the Senior Phase Curriculum review.

- 6.2 The Authority will continue to work with the school to monitor and review the progress in achieving the remaining areas for improvement contained within the Action Plan. With ongoing progress updates shared with parents over the coming months.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 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. |

Executive Director of Community Services

Policy Lead, Councillor R Colville

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Education Service's letter of 10 May 2016

Appendix 2: Education Scotland letter of 10 May 2016