

# **Dunoon Grammar School**



## **Standards and Quality Report**

**Session 2009-10**

## **Foreword**

As headteacher, it is my pleasure to present the Standards and Quality Report for Session 2009-10. I hope that in reading it you will appreciate that much is being done to develop our young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. This session has once again been a very busy one for staff and pupils and this report reflects the hard work of all within the school. I have been very impressed by the maturity and politeness of the vast majority of our pupils and the positive relationships existing between staff and pupils. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge my gratitude to staff, parents/carers and pupils for all that they do to ensure that the good name of Dunoon Grammar School is maintained and enhanced within our community and further afield. The report follows the format of the new style of HMIE reports.

W Stewart Shaw

## **Purpose**

This report, on the Standards and Quality of the work within Dunoon Grammar School, informs the reader about the school's major activities, achievements and key priorities overtaken in session 2008-09. It also lists the improvement priorities for session 2010-11.

## **How evidence was gathered**

Evidence for this report has been gathered from various sources:

- HMIE Standards & Quality Report – 3 November 2009
- The school improvement plan
- Published statistical information
- Internal school evaluations

## **1. The School**

Dunoon Grammar School is a non-denominational secondary school which serves the Cowal Peninsula. It takes pupils from our 11 partner primaries: Dunoon, Kirn, St Muns, Sandbank, Strone, Lochgoilhead, Strachur, Kilmodan, Tighnabruaich, Innellan and Toward. In September 2009 the school roll was 957.

For session 2009-10 the teaching complement was 70 full time equivalent. There is support staff comprising teachers from Cowal Network Support Team, administration and clerical staff, technicians, librarian, classroom assistants and Additional Support Needs(ASN) assistants. Unfortunately during the course of the session for different reasons we lost our Campus Police Officer and temporarily our School Social Worker. It is hoped that we can provide an alternative provision next session to redress this situation.

## **2. Particular Strengths of the school identified by HMIe**

- Confident, friendly young people who play an active part in the life of the school and community.
- Positive relationships between young people and staff.
- Approaches to promote the care and welfare of young people.
- Commitment of staff to the school and the young people.
- An extremely helpful and committed support staff, classroom and ASN assistants.

## **3. Examples of Good Practice**

- The continuing work of DGS TV through its engagement with the BBC.
- The production and publication of a children's book written and illustrated by second year pupils through an interdisciplinary study developed by members of the English and Art Departments.
- The production of a powerful film by pupils in the Performing Arts Department in conjunction with Spirit Aid.
- Support for young people with additional needs when they move from P7 to S1.
- Year Group Assemblies to celebrate achievements.

#### 4. Learning and Achievement

The school's attainment is better than average at the end of S4. It does particularly well with the lowest attaining group, and in this respect compares very favourably with schools of similar backgrounds.

SCQF level 4 (General/Int1) and level 5 (Credit/Int2) are in line with national averages and comparator schools. However, there have been better performances in the past and we must believe as a learning community (Staff, parents/carers and pupils) that there could be again.

In S5 and S6 the school adds value solidly at levels 4 and 5. At level 6 (Highers) performance is rather more inconsistent.

Some key departments need to develop an ethos of achievement. Detailed analysis of key measures is shown in appendix 1.

HMIe noted that "Most young people work well together and with their teachers in the school's pleasant, attractive accommodation. They are involved in their learning and motivated by well judged use of praise. In a number of subject departments they are showing increasing creativity and confidence in tackling tasks using information and communications technology."

The school produced a booklet detailing the wider achievement opportunities which were provided by all departments. The school will be involved in a local authority pilot scheme which should allow pupils to record the learning and development of skills afforded by participation in such activities. On leaving school, almost all young people progress into employment, further education or training.

- The range of extra-curricular activities has expanded mainly due to the increased opportunities offered by the PE department.
- The school received two Argyll & Bute Education awards: the first in the "Making a Difference" category for the work undertaken by the pupils participating in the Costa Rica trip; and the second in the "Switched On" category for the innovative and creative work of DGS TV.
- A significant number of young people in S4, S5 and S6 learned new skills and showed responsibility for others by training as sports leaders or gaining Community Service Awards.
- Our Performing Arts Department kept the talent of Dunoon Grammar School in the public eye – amongst the highlights were the full houses of 'Songs from the Musicals'; the Young Musician of the Year; the production of a hard-hitting film in conjunction with the Shooters film production teams of David Hayman's Charity Spirit Aid. A large number of our pupils starred in the Cowal Choral Club's production of Beauty and the Beast. A good number of individuals have excelled in their own field in voice and other individual instrumentalists. The pipeband is back to winning ways and have bagged several trophies this season.

- The Modern Languages department enriched their curriculum through the re-introduction of the French Exchange, a trip to Paris and of course the continuation of the very successful German Exchange.
- The PE Department organized a very successful ski trip to Italy.
- On leaving school, almost all young people progress into employment, further education or training.
- Four Teacher Learning Communities were established to help embed Assessment is for Learning strategies. These have met with limited success.
- Some teachers are highly skilled in the use of ICT to enhance learning. The initial roll-out of GLOW to staff was successfully achieved.
- Good learning and teaching practice was shared during our final in-service day of the year.

## **5. Curriculum and Meeting Learning Needs**

- Learners continue to experience a wide range of activities and subjects from S1 to S6. There are a number of very positive initiatives such as the “Playfair Day” and “The Health Fair” event for S1.
- We introduced our enhanced Primary 7 induction programme. Primary pupils were in DGS for 4 days following the new interdisciplinary study “On the Move”. This has been well-received by pupils, teachers and parents.
- We continue to build partnerships with the local community; notably with The Burgh Hall redevelopment initiative.
- We have developed our new parental involvement policy and continue to welcome the support of parents in helping with activities, enhancing learning opportunities and fund raising.
- We have developed policies for literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing. All departments are making good progress towards developing their new courses in line with the principles and purposes of Curriculum for Excellence. We are in the position to deliver at least three interdisciplinary studies to our S1 pupils next year. We discussed several curriculum models to deliver CfE, but remain undecided. This will be a major priority for next session.
- The school has extended opportunities to develop young people’s skills for work by introducing courses to S5. However, HMIe reported that the curriculum had not improved sufficiently in recent years to meet the needs of those young people who benefit from more practical and vocational approaches to help them develop important life skills. To address this we are introducing the Princes Trust xL programme to a group of S3 pupils and a more practical course in Technical for a group of pupils with significant needs.
- Young people from S1 to S4 benefit from almost two hours high-quality physical education (PE) per week and the school has extended this provision into S5/S6.

- Curriculum for Excellence Work undertaken by the Business & Computing faculty is being showcased on the best practice section of the CfE website - twice.
- The effective programme in personal, social and health education (PSHE) from S1 to S5 contributes strongly to young people's health and wellbeing.
- Impact Working groups have developed policies and undertaken an audit on literacy and numeracy. However, this work has yet to influence practice across the school.
- Our restructuring of Pupil Support received praise from HMIe. However, further developments are required to allow us to deliver sound personal learning planning to individual pupils.
- We had an awareness raising in-service on restorative practices. This will be taken forward further next year.
- Two-thirds of the staff underwent Coaching and Mentoring training, which was unfortunately of a poor quality. Further and more focused training will be undertaken to address this, so that we will be able to deliver personal learning planning across all year groups.

## **6. Staff working with others to support young people's learning**

- Parents continue to be very supportive of the school. The new Parent Council has been involved in fund raising activities and is actively planning to engage with and support parents help their children learn more effectively.
- The parent council organized a very successful cyber safety evening.
- The Cowal Pipes and Drums Association undertake stalwart work to support the pipe band both through fund-raising and organizing travel arrangements.
- Through our surveys parents are generally satisfied by the education provided in DGS but they feel their views are not sought often enough and that communication could be improved. The school is forming a group to develop a better communication strategy.
- The school continues to develop good working relationships with our partner agencies to support our pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.
- A very successful conference was held with all our partner agencies under the auspices of Learning and Teaching Scotland. This reinforced that we were well positioned to deliver the support entitlement to pupils within CfE framework.
- Many local businesses take pupils for work experience. Former pupils, business people and professionals support the Careers programme by participating in our "I can do anything" conference.

- Well-established links with our Partner Primary Schools supports all young people at transition and our “On the Move” interdisciplinary study was well-received by pupils, parents/carers and staff.
- The extended support programme for our most vulnerable pupils, provided in conjunction with the Area Network Support Team, was commended as good practice by HMIe.
- The RMPS department organised many enriching learning activities: 2 S6 pupils went on an educational visit to Auschwitz in Poland in Sept 2009; Eva Shrewsbury, a holocaust survivor and local resident visited the school to talk to the RMPS higher class and share her story at our Remembrance service; Teen Challenge visitors talked to S2 classes about drug addiction and took a pupil to a Teen Challenge conference; members of the Time Square Church visited us from New York for a week to speak to classes.
- Over the course of the year, the History/Modern Studies Department has again been involved in a wide variety of activities to enrich pupil learning. This included inviting a guest speaker, Lord Erskine, a Peer in the House of Lords to speak to our Modern Studies pupils. In addition, organised trips, throughout the course of the year, have been a key part of the department’s desire to enrich the pupils’ learning experience. Our Modern Studies Department must be one of the few in Scotland which runs trips to the Scottish; U.K. and European Parliaments where Standard Grade pupil visits are further enriched by meeting and interviewing M.P.s and an MEP. In addition, the Higher Modern Studies pupils take part in a London trip where they visit Downing Street and attend Prime Minister Question Time at the House of Commons. Last year whilst on this trip they also visited the Scotland Office where they met a senior Civil Servant and a Scottish Minister.
- The Home Economics department regularly works with lecturers from Glasgow Metropolitan College and James Watt College to enhance the skills of pupils in their Hospitality courses.
- S3 pupils under the tutelage of the Technical Department supported and sponsored by members of the community took part in a competition which involved building an electric racing car during the course of the year and finally racing it. They performed admirably, achieving second place as well as winning an industry prize for the best use of recycled materials.
- The PE Department in partnership with the Burgh Hall attended a weekend production at the King’s Theatre, Glasgow.

## 7. Staff and Young People Improving their Community

- The S6 Community Service programme continues to be a strength of the school and involves many of our young people of S6 in supporting learning opportunities in classes and clubs.
- Young people have indicated that they would like a greater say in improving learning and teaching, both through the Pupil Council and Focus Groups to improve learning and teaching.
- HMIe indicated that “Teachers were not making enough use of information about attainment and achievement to check young people’s progress, or to build on their earlier learning experiences to ensure they all make progress in their learning.” Our new tracking package and the pilot project to recognize wider achievement should support staff to address this issue.
- Our English Department and Art Department engaged in an exciting project with an S2 class to produce a book for primary-aged children which is just about to be published.
- The work of the Business and Computing Department continues to keep the profile of the school high in both the national and indeed international stage. Our pupils participated in high profile events such as the Scottish Learning Festival and the closing event of the Year of Homecoming at Stirling Castle. They were praised extensively by the chairperson of the Homecoming committee of Learning and Teaching Scotland, Prof Kay Livingstone, especially our pipe band who thrilled the international delegates at their reception in the Kelvingrove Art Galleries during the Scottish Learning Festival. The success of DGS TV was brought to the fore when the B.B.C. invited them to produce a documentary on Dunoon which now features on the B.B.C. education website.
- The Science department organised various trips, events and talks to stimulate further the interest of our pupils in Science. The Lunchtime Science club which has now branched out into an enterprise project where pupils are growing plants from seed and selling them at parents nights to help fund the school garden is very popular. Plans for the school garden are now agreed and the Eco-group is well positioned to make significant progress in session 2010-11. They continue to encourage recycling of paper and mobile phones.
- The school newsletter continues to report the achievements of our pupils throughout the year. Our website has been redesigned and further work will be undertaken to promote the school using this effective medium.
- The school purchased computers to the value of £35 000 with funding provided by the local authority. However, we have as yet to develop a strategic plan for the acquisition of ICT hardware.
- **Scottish Education Award:** Suzanne Welsh was a finalist for the Teacher of the Year category at this year’s Scottish Education Awards. Suzanne was selected by a panel of judges for her commitment and creative teaching methods which have helped to engage pupils in new learning activities.



- Senior pupils completed an Award in Sports Leadership which led to them planning and delivering weekly sessions in a range of activities both within and outwith school
- Throughout the year, Dunoon Grammar School has participated in a range of Authority and National sporting events including Argyll and Bute Swimming:, Scottish Schools Swimming, Argyll and Bute Scottish Schools Badminton Qualifiers, :Argyll and Bute Boys U15 Football Tournament:
- 52 pupils represented Dunoon Grammar School at the Argyll and Bute Youth games in Oban at a range of activities including; football, rugby, shinty, basketball, orienteering, swimming and badminton.

## **8. High expectations of All Young People.**

HMIe reported that “The school is caring and welcoming. Staff and young people respect each other and have a strong sense of pride in their school. Young people are confident and friendly. Staff have improved their approaches to promoting positive behaviour. Teachers are highly committed to the care and wellbeing of young people. Young people feel safe in school. The school has high expectations of young people’s attendance and behaviour. Teachers need to consistently have high expectations of all young people’s learning in classes.”

- The school promotes equality and citizenship skills through actively promoting health and wellbeing. These experiences include the annual ‘Playfair’ day when young people develop their awareness of racism, domestic abuse and anti-bullying and the need for tolerance whilst appreciating diversity.
- HMIe reported that an increase in teamwork and consistency across the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), guidance staff and support for learning staff would be likely to benefit all pupils of all abilities.
- As a consequence, the SLT received training from the local authority and HMIe during the course of the year. Additionally, a survey was undertaken by two PT’s, the results of which are being used to improve the effectiveness of the SLT.
- We issued staff with the outline of a model lesson from “Opening up Learning to engage in Leading Learning”, an HMIe publication to promote effectiveness in school improvement. More work has to be undertaken to ensure that this is embedded into practice.

## 9. Planned Improvements

Through consultation with pupils, staff and parents/carers the school has produced its shared vision, values and aims statement. Priorities for improvement are identified in the school's Strategic Improvement Plan.

The key areas of focus for session 2010-11 are:

### *Priority 1: A Curriculum for Excellence*

- *Implement SI Courses and continue to introduce and develop interdisciplinary studies*
- *Develop a new timetable structure*
- *Ensure Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing continue to be embedded across the curriculum*
- *Continue to build links with local partners to develop the school at "the heart of the community".*
- *Identification of pupil opportunities for personal achievement and ways of recognising them*

### *Priority 2: Learning & Teaching*

- *Continue work of Teacher Learning Communities*
- *Develop the use of ICT in Learning and Teaching*
- *Develop Assessment and Reporting policy including Tracking in line with BTC5*
- *Implementation of Cooperative Learning Techniques across the school*

### *Priority 3: Self Evaluation*

- *Review and streamline self-evaluation scheme*
- *Search out and share good practice*
- *Explore introducing Learning Rounds*

*Priority 4: Pupil Support*

- *Continue to develop integrated support*
- *Develop vertical system to allow individual pupil interviews to support personal learning planning*
- *Train staff in a simplified system of Coaching and Mentoring to support personal learning planning*
- *Train staff in Restorative Practice techniques*

*Priority 5: Leadership*

- *Develop teamwork approach between SLT and PT's to develop support processes to raise attainment*
- *Leading Learning*
- *Development of Strategic Plan for ICT hardware acquisition*
- *Development of Pupil Voice, through Councils and Focus Groups*

## Appendix1: Attainment Figures

### SQA Results 2010

		School		Argyll and Bute		Scotland	
		2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009
In S4	5+ Standard Grades 1-6	93	92	94	92	88	91
	5+ Standard Grades 1-4	79	80	82	81	73	77
	5+ Standard Grades 1-2	36	34	38	35	33	35
In S5	1+ Higher Grades A-C	42	46	47	45	43	40
	3+ Higher Grades A-C	15	21	23	23	24	23
	5+ Higher Grades A-C	7	7	8	9	11	10
In S6	5+Level 5	57	55	56	55	50	
	1+ Higher Grades A-C	55	46	54	51	46	
	3+ Higher Grades A-C	34	37	32	35	33	31
	5+ Higher Grades A-C	22	24	22	23	22	20
	1+ Advanced Higher	12	10	15	16	12	13

**Examination Results (within Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)**

**(2009/2010 results are pre-appeal)**

Percentage of the relevant September S4 roll achieving:									
By end of S4	5+ @ level 3 or better			5+ @ level 4 or better			5+ @ level 5 or better		
	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
	96	92	94	87	81	80	38	35	36

Percentage of the relevant September S4 roll achieving:									
By end of S5	1+ @ level 6 or better			3+ @ level 6 or better			5+ @ level 6 or better		
	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
	45	47	41	22	23	17	8	8	6

Percentage of the relevant September S4 roll achieving:									
By end of S6	3+ @ level 6 or better			5+ @ level 6 or better			1+ @ level 7		
	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
	27	37	34	15	24	22	9	12	12

