



## **Community Services: Education**



## **Follow-through Inspection of Lochgilphead High School Argyll and Bute**

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**1. The Inspection**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Lochgilphead High School in April 2004. HMIE require that a follow-through report is completed within two years of the initial report and, in the case of Lochgilphead High School, this is the responsibility of the education authority.

Members of the education authority's Quality Improvement Team visited the school prior to the publication of this report. These visits assessed the extent to which the school had continued to improve the quality of its work, and evaluated progress made in responding to the main points for action in the report of the inspection.

**2. Continuous Improvement**

Since the HMIE Inspection of Lochgilphead High School in January 2004 there have been a number of changes in the senior management team.

- The head teacher retired in August 2005. A depute is currently acting head teacher.
- A depute head teacher left in December 2004 and was replaced by a new depute head teacher in February 2005.
- The principal teacher of English moved into an acting depute head teacher position as of August 2005.

Building upon these changes, the senior management team has developed into an effective unit with the new members feeling well supported in their work. In particular it has made significant progress in addressing the main points for action and in developing a culture of continuous improvement.

Under the effective leadership of the acting head teacher and her senior management team, and with the commitment and support of staff, the school has continued to improve in key areas of its work.

There has been an increased focus on self-evaluation and quality assurance. A programme of departmental discussions is now in place and there is a closer scrutiny of examination results and departmental performance. In pursuing this increased focus on school improvement the school has established a focus group of pupils to allow them to comment on their view of how the curriculum is presented to them. The school has also included pupils on its improvement planning and publicity groups and regular consultation and feedback is invited from the student council.

The school continues to have good 5-14 results. By the end of S2, pupil attainment in reading and writing is consistently on or above authority and national averages and attainment in mathematics remains close to the authority average. Standard Grade results are generally below both local and national averages. This situation is being addressed through a range of measures including a more focused approach to S4 student mentoring and pupil tracking. At Higher and Advanced Higher results are generally close to or above both authority and national averages. However, this group of students will be subject to the same rigorous tracking procedures as used for S4.

The school has introduced a degree of curricular flexibility in establishing a class for S3 pupils with a curriculum emphasising the development of enterprise, personal and social skills.

The school offers its pupils a comprehensive programme of lunchtime and after-school extra-curricular activities. The school and its pupils have had a number of notable achievements in enterprise, citizenship, music, culture and sport.

Communication with parents is an important aspect of the school's drive to raise its profile within the local community. A leaflet is produced for all parents to inform them of the school's improvement planning intentions and a newsletter is issued to keep parents informed of school news. The school has also redeveloped its website to provide the community with a comprehensive overview of Lochgilphead High School.

### **3. Progress Towards the Main Points for Action**

The inspection report published in June 2004 identified 5 main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

#### **3.1 Share good practice in providing appropriate levels of challenge in lessons and homework and for teachers to create more opportunities for pupils to engage in more active and independent learning.**

The school has made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action. The senior management team has instigated a programme of classroom observations to allow staff to visit colleagues at work across

departments. This is viewed as beneficial by staff in allowing them to share practice and is supporting the raising of attainment.

A new format to staff development days allowed staff from across departments further opportunities to meet and share practice and experiences. This has created greater opportunities for cross-curricular working. The acting head teacher has established a teaching and learning group which offers staff further opportunities to be involved in the attainment raising agenda. However, further work has to be done to fully introduce the national *Assessment is for Learning* (AifL) programme which will allow teachers to employ a wider range of classroom strategies with pupils.

A homework working group has been established to review existing homework arrangements to ensure pupils receive consistent and challenging homework. Pupils at all stages have been provided with new planners and collaborative target-setting has been initiated through the planners. A questionnaire has been issued to students regarding their perceptions of homework. Student feedback is shared with staff to inform practice. Pupils and students have been encouraged to use more active and independent means of learning. Senior pupils have benefited from the extended use of the SCHOLAR resource which allows them to increase their subject knowledge using the internet. In S1 and 2 there is greater use of project work, particularly in English, computing and the social subjects and all departments have encouraged pupils and students to use new technology when making presentations.

### **3.2 Ensure continuity and progression in the Personal and Social Education (PSEd) programme, and evaluate its impact on pupils' development.**

The school has made good progress towards meeting this main point for action. The methodology used by teachers of PSEd has been extended and is now incorporating AifL techniques. There is also an acknowledgement of the Curriculum for Excellence initiative within the programme. Teachers of PSEd now make more use of information and communication technology in their lessons and a new course for senior students is being piloted.

Lesson outcomes, however, are not yet clear enough and need further refinement. A recent audit of PSEd methodologies will prove useful in allowing guidance staff to consider appropriate approaches across the whole course. These developments are still in the pilot stages and are yet to be fully established.

At present, responsibility for the maintenance and development of the PSEd programme is shared between the three principal teachers of guidance. There is a need to identify a key person within the guidance team to maintain an overview of the programme.

**3.3** Review the arrangements in guidance, learning support and behaviour support with a view to developing an integrated approach to providing support to pupils

The school has made good progress towards meeting this main point for action. The relatively recent appointment of a deputy head teacher means that this area is still to be fully established. However, following a review of remits, there are apparent strengths emerging from the new structure. A new integrated pupil support policy is under development and there are improved joint planning arrangements for pupils. Regular faculty meetings have been established and this provides a forum to allow for planning, consultation and implementation of national and authority initiatives. Links between the school and other agencies have been strengthened.

**3.4** Review the information received from primary schools to more accurately identify the information and communication technology (ICT) needs of pupils entering S1.

The school has made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action. There is now in place a dedicated ICT course for all S1 pupils. This has been developed following an audit of provision in the associated primary schools. This new course will support all S1 pupils to develop ICT skills which can be applied across the curriculum. Work is now underway, in conjunction with the Quality Improvement Officer for ICT to introduce a course for S2 pupils which will link the curriculum to the Scottish Schools Digital Network.

**3.5 Address the accommodation issues identified in HMIE report.**

The school and the education authority has made adequate progress towards meeting this main point for action. Two subject departments have moved classroom accommodation to be closer together and improve internal communication. Pupil toilet facilities have been improved as have the senior pupil areas. However, aspects of school security had not yet been upgraded. The move into the new accommodation currently under construction and due for completion in October 2007 will meet all aspects of this action point fully.

**4. Conclusion**

The school, with the support of the education authority, has made good progress overall in meeting the main points for action contained in the HMIE report of April 2004.

Community Services: Education will continue to work with the school to ensure continuous improvement as part of its quality monitoring procedures.

**Douglas Hendry  
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Argyll and Bute Council  
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