

**Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee****24 April 2013****SUMMARY REPORTS ON STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN SCHOOLS, PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT****Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report sets out the key findings and areas for improvement following the inspection of Blairgowrie High School and the inspection of the learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI).

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Each year Education Scotland's scrutiny body (Her Majesty's Inspectorate, HMI) inspects and reports on the quality of education in pre-school centres, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, community learning and development services, colleges, and residential educational provision. HMI also inspects the education functions of local authorities and carries out joint inspections of services for children.
- 1.2 This report sets out the key findings and areas for improvement following inspections of Perth and Kinross Council schools, pre-school centres (including partner providers) and learning communities by Education Scotland. This includes the findings of follow-through inspections where appropriate.
- 1.3 Specifically the report sets out the findings of the following inspections which have been published by Education Scotland since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 6 February 2013:
- Inspection of Blairgowrie High School.
  - Inspection of the learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School.
- 1.4 Schools/Pre-school Centres**
- 1.4.1 HMI changed the format of reporting about schools in August 2011 and inspection reports provide an overall evaluation of the quality of the school's provision. In coming to a judgement, HMI will aim to answer three key questions which are:
- How well do children/young people learn and achieve?
  - How well does the school support children/young people to develop and learn?
  - How does the school improve the quality of its work?
- 1.4.2 To help answer the first two questions, HMI provides a summary sentence followed by text which explains their findings. For the third question, HMI provide text and express their level of confidence in the school's ability to

continue to improve the quality of its work. Finally, they sum up the overall quality of education provided by the school.

- 1.4.3 There are four broad continuing engagement activities that HMI may select following an inspection, not all of which are mutually exclusive. They are:
- Innovative practice
  - No further inspection activity
  - Additional support for improvement
  - Continued inspection
- 1.4.4 In the case of an initial HMI inspection of a school, a public meeting is held after the publication of the inspection report with invitations going to parents, the local elected members and members of the Lifelong Learning Committee. These meetings give parents, carers and other members of the community the opportunity to discuss the findings of the inspection and to be consulted on the areas for improvement to be taken forward.
- 1.4.5 Where further inspection activity is carried out HMI will report publicly to parents and stakeholders. Other continuing engagement activities undertaken by Perth and Kinross Council will also be reported to parents and stakeholders. This includes the publication of reports to parents on Extended Learning and Achievement Visits and follow-up reports on the school's website and on each school's page on [www.pkc.gov.uk](http://www.pkc.gov.uk)
- 1.4.6 In addition to HMI inspections, a range of school specific information is submitted by all schools to Education Services in relation to performance management, planning for improvement and self evaluation leading to improvements. Education Services staff use this information to work with headteachers to determine the nature and frequency of support/challenge visits that will be appropriate for each school over the course of any session. The school visits form the core of the school improvement framework and will take the form of one or more of the following over a planned four year programme:
- School Improvement Visit
  - Learning and Achievement Visit
  - Extended Learning and Achievement Visit and follow up activity and visit
- 1.4.7 During such visits the School Improvement Plan, the Standards and Quality Report and the Self Evaluation Pro forma are scrutinised and challenged to ensure appropriate account has been taken of any identified improvement actions and that work in these areas is having a positive impact on the quality of educational provision provided by the school. In most cases, an HMI inspection has confirmed the view of the school improvement team. Schools are also required to have robust processes of self evaluation embedded in their quality assurance approaches. They are required to submit an annual summary of this work which is also subject to scrutiny by Education Services.

## **1.5 Learning Communities**

- 1.5.1 HMI also undertake inspections of learning communities within the geographical areas surrounding secondary schools. A learning community inspection is an evaluation of the learning needs of a locality and partnership.

- 1.5.2 The Scottish Government expects local authorities to provide clear leadership and direction and to drive the action needed to ensure we maximise the contribution of Community Learning and Development (CLD) partners in the reform of public services. The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework sets out the strategic objectives for all public services, including those delivering CLD. The specific focus for CLD should be improved life chances for people of all ages through learning, personal development and active and stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities.
- 1.5.3 Learning community inspections allow HMI to identify and report on how these objectives are being met. Local authorities are required to clearly identify how well partners are improving learning, increasing life-chances, promoting and securing wellbeing. They are also required to identify how well partners are working together to improve the quality of local services and provision. Learning community inspections also take a closer look at how well partners are taking forward public service reforms in their local context. This includes a shift towards prevention and early intervention; greater integration of public services at local level and enhanced workforce development; and improving performance through greater transparency, innovation and use of digital technology.
- 1.5.4 In consultation with partners, the Council is required to provide HMI with a summary self evaluation including the key strengths of the learning community and areas for development and next steps.

## 2 PROPOSALS: RECENTLY PUBLISHED REPORTS

- 2.1 Since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 6 February 2013 the following reports have been published by Education Scotland<sup>1</sup>:
- **Inspection of Blairgowrie High School.** HMI will return to evaluate aspects of provision and the progress in improving provision within one year of publication of the inspection. A summary of the key strengths, areas for improvement and evaluations against the quality indicators is shown in Appendix 1a together with a copy of the inspection letter in Appendix 1b and a copy of the Extended Learning and Achievement Visit, December 2010, Appendix 1c. At the time of the 2012 Census (September 2012), Blairgowrie High School had a pupil roll of 898 and has a staffing compliment of 66.60 FTE teachers and 19.3 FTE non teaching staff.
  - **Inspection of the learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School.** HMI are confident that the learning community's self evaluation processes are leading to improvements and they identified aspects of innovative practice that they would like to explore further. HMI will make no further evaluative visit in connection with this inspection. A summary of the evaluations against the quality indicators is shown in Appendix 2a together with a copy of the inspection report in Appendix 2b and a copy of

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, as at 26 February 2013.

the learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School self-evaluation summary paper (Appendix 2c). This paper sets out the context of the learning community and key partnerships.

## 2.2 Performance Summary Secondary

2.2.1 Evaluation of each school's performance is assessed across five quality indicators, including three core quality indicators:

- Core quality indicator Improvements in performance
- Core quality indicator Learners' experiences/children's experiences
- Core quality indicator Meeting learning needs
- Quality indicator The curriculum
- Quality indicator Improvement through self-evaluation

2.2.2 Prior to August 2011, these were published as part of the inspection report. Although post August 2011 these evaluations no longer feature in the reports published by HMI, they are published on Education Scotland's website and will continue to be reported to the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee. Follow-through inspections do not include an evaluation against quality indicators.

2.2.3 Since the report to Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 6 February 2013 (13/65) there have been no updates to the analysis of pre-school centres and primary schools (as no further reports have been published<sup>2</sup>).

2.2.4 Table 1a and 1b below summary performance against the quality indicators in inspections of secondary schools in Perth and Kinross since 2008. Please note that care should be taken with the interpretation of percentages given the small number of inspections.

**Table 1a: Overview by Performance Indicator: Satisfactory or Better**

Satisfactory or Better Secondary	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Improvements in performance	2	100	1	100	0	0	2	100	1	100
Learners' experiences	2	100	1	100	0	0	2	100	1	100
Meeting learning needs	2	100	1	100	0	0	2	100	1	100
<b>Total Core QI's Satisfactory or Better</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>
The curriculum	2	100	1	100	0	0	2	100	0	0
Improvement through self evaluation	2	100	1	100	0	0	1	50	0	0
<b>Total QI's Satisfactory or Better</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Total Number of Quality Indicators</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Number of Inspections</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total schools with positive evaluations**</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>

\*\* Positive evaluation - all three core QI's are satisfactory or better.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing, as at 26 February 2013.

**Table 1b: Overview by Performance Indicator: Good or Better**

Good or Better Secondary	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Improvements in performance	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0
Learners' experiences	2	100	1	100	0	0	2	100	0	0
Meeting learning needs	2	100	1	100	0	0	2	100	0	0
Total Core QI's Good or Better	6	100	2	67	0	0	6	100	0	0
The curriculum	2	100	1	100	0	0	1	50	0	0
Improvement through self evaluation	2	100	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0
Total QI's Good or Better	10	100	3	60	0	0	8	80	0	0
Total Number of Quality Indicators	10	-	5	-	0	-	10	-	5	-
Total Number of Inspections	2	-	1	-	0	-	2	-	1	-
Total schools with good or better evaluations	2	100	0	-	0	-	2	100	0	0

## 2.3 Performance Summary Learning Communities

2.3.1 The quality indicators used by community learning and development providers, partners and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the learning community were updated in 2012 and are set out in *How good is Our Community Learning and Development?*

2.3.2 In the latest inspection of the learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School in 2012, three of the four quality indicators (improving services, impact on participants and impact on the local community) were evaluated as **very good**. Improvement in performance was evaluated as **good**.

2.3.3 Since 2008 four inspections have taken place. Table 2 below summarises performance against the quality indicators for each inspection and shows a continuing improving performance.

**Table 2: Summary of Quality Indicators 2008-2012**

	Learning community surrounding...			
	Pitlochry High School 2008	Perth Academy 2010	Kinross High School 2011	Blairgowrie High School 2012
2012 QI: Improvements in performance	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
2012 QI: Improving services	Good	Good	Very Good	<b>Very Good</b>
2012 QI: Impact on participants				<b>Very Good</b>
2012 QI: Impact on the local community				<b>Very Good</b>
Impact on young people	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Impact on adults	Satisfactory	Very Good	Very Good	
Impact of capacity building on communities	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	

### 3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The reports by HMI provide further information on the standards and quality in our services and set out a clear agenda for continuous improvement.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee scrutinises and comments as appropriate on the contents of the report.

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E-mail: [ecsgeneralenquiries@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:ecsgeneralenquiries@pkc.gov.uk)



Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>No</b>
Workforce	<b>No</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>No</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>No</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>No</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>No</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>No</b>
Risk	<b>No</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>Yes</b>
External	<b>No</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>No</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan

- 1.1 The draft Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013-2023 sets out five strategic objectives. This report contributes to:
- Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2013 – 2018 sets out five strategic objectives:
- Giving every child the best start in life;
  - Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
  - Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
  - Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
  - Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report contributes to:

- Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- 1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area: Change and Improvement.

## 2. Assessments

### Equality Impact Assessment

- 2.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 2.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (Eq1A) with the following outcome: assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of Eq1A.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that the work on the quality indicators in schools and services will promote equality of access to care and support and learning and achievement. It is anticipated that the work on the quality indicators will promote equality of access to the learning community. Where appropriate, improvement policies, procedures or strategies will require equalities assessments to ensure compliance with our duty to ensure there is no adverse impact on any community group.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.4 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 2.5 No further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

## 3. Consultation

### Internal

- 3.1 Relevant Heads of Service and Service Managers within Education and Children's Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## 2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Summary reports on standards and quality in schools, pre-school centres and community learning and development, Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 6 February 2013 (13/65).

## 3. APPENDICES

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Appendix 1a | Summary of Education Scotland Inspection, Blairgowrie High School. |
| Appendix 1b | Education Scotland Inspection Letter, Blairgowrie High School.     |



Appendix 1c	Extended Learning and Achievement Visit Report, Blairgowrie High School, December 2010.
Appendix 2a	Education Scotland Quality Indicator Evaluations, learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School.
Appendix 2b	Education Scotland Inspection Report, learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School.
Appendix 2c	Self-Evaluation Summary Paper, learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School, November 2012.



## PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

**Lifelong Learning Executive Sub-Committee – 24 April 2013**

### **SUMMARY OF THE EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION BLAIRGOWRIE HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

This paper provides a summary of the key strengths, areas for improvement and evaluations against the quality indicators following the inspection of Blairgowrie High School by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) in November 2012.

#### **2 PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL**

HMI identified the following key strengths of the school:

- Young people who are friendly, polite and motivated to learn.
- Improvements to behaviour, and success in improving the reputation of the school within the local community.
- Many staff who are committed, hard-working and keen to make changes and improvements.

#### **3 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

The school, Education and Children's Services and HMI have agreed action in the following key areas to ensure continued improvement in the work of the school and nursery class:

- Ensure young people's learning in S1 builds more effectively on the levels they have achieved in primary school.
- Continue with recent improvements to support for learning and ensure that all staff understand better how to meet young people's learning needs.
- Develop a culture of self-evaluation which leads to improvements in learning, teaching and young people's achievements.
- Provide stronger leadership for the school, including for the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

#### **4 QUALITY INDICATORS**

Evaluations for Blairgowrie High School:

Blairgowrie High School:

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Learners' experiences	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

Evaluations of the following aspects of the work of the school:

The curriculum	weak
Improvement through self-evaluation	weak

## **5 CONCLUSION**

HMI will return to evaluate aspects of provision and the progress in improving provision within one year of publication of the inspection.

For further information contact:

Bev Leslie, Quality Improvement Officer, Education Services (ext 76221).

26 February 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

**Blairgowrie High School  
Perth & Kinross Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well young people are learning and achieving and how well the school supports young people to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including approaches to evaluating the work of staff, young people's progress in learning from S1 to S6, and how well the school takes account of young people's individual needs. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving young people's education.

**How well do young people learn and achieve?**

Almost all young people are well-behaved, polite and eager to learn. They enjoy working together in pairs and groups. They show one another respect and mutual support. Young people are pleased that behaviour and relationships in the school have improved. Most young people feel safe in school. They do not have a clear enough understanding of their progress in learning and what they could do to improve. Young people's independent learning skills could be developed further.

Young people are developing as responsible citizens, gaining important skills for work and an understanding of the needs of others through charity fundraising events. Senior pupils support and visit Malawi schools to assist with building work and provide football coaching. Through performing well in choirs, brass and string groups, young people gain confidence and a sense of audience. Across the school, staff do not yet collect enough information about young people's literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing, or about their achievements, to ensure they are making appropriate progress. Overall, by the end of S6, young people's attainment in national examinations is improving. From S4 to S6, performance in some measures relating to national examinations is better than, or much better than, schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. In other measures, the school performs less well. The attainment of boys has improved in a number of national measures. Young people with more complex additional support needs are making suitable progress. The proportion of young people going on to positive destinations after school is improving and is now above the national average.

The school needs to work more effectively with partners to support the small number of young people at risk of missing out on their learning.

### **How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?**

Staff know young people well and most form positive relationships with them. A few teachers are using imaginative contexts to support young people's learning. Teachers are now provided with information to help them meet their pupils' needs better. There is scope to develop this further and ensure all staff are aware of how they can help all young people learn. Staff would benefit from professional learning about additional support needs to help them support young people more effectively. Class teachers are not aware enough of learners' experiences, progress and achievements at primary school and as a result not all young people's needs are being suitably met.

Young people are benefiting from a broad general education in S1. In S2/S3, the curriculum is too narrow and, as a result, young people are missing out on important learning experiences and opportunities to develop key skills. With the aim of improving attainment, the school presents young people for Standard Grade examinations in S3. As the school moves towards the full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, it now needs to review its policy of presenting young people for national examinations in S3. The school is at the very early stages of developing a whole school approach to young people's literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across learning. The curriculum could be enriched through more interdisciplinary learning. From S4 to S6, a significant number of young people are enjoying increased opportunities for extended work experience placements which are developing important skills for life, learning and work. Young people are also able to choose vocational courses such as the Formula One challenge which inspires future engineers. The school now needs to review these options to ensure that all young people are benefiting from making these choices in their learning. There is considerable scope to increase partnership working to enhance young people's learning and achievement and the extent to which the school meets young people's learning needs. The school is at the early stages of developing plans to ensure all young people benefit from personal support in relation to their learning.

### **How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

The school has a number of processes in place to evaluate the quality of its work. These processes are not yet leading to sufficient improvement. Most teachers reflect on what they do well and what they could do better. A few departments work well together to ensure consistent approaches to assessment. In a few subjects, young people are asked their views about their learning and teachers make changes as a result. Senior managers now need to lead the improvements required in learning, teaching and meeting needs across the school. The headteacher is committed to raising attainment to improve young people's life chances. He has been successful in improving the reputation of the school within the local community. However, he has not provided strong enough strategic leadership to develop Curriculum for Excellence in line with national expectations. Consultation about changes to the curriculum with young people, staff, partners and parents requires improvement. Young people across the school would welcome more opportunities

to take on leadership roles and develop important skills of communication and teamwork.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Young people who are friendly, polite and motivated to learn.
- Improvements to behaviour, and success in improving the reputation of the school within the local community.
- Many staff who are committed, hard-working and keen to make changes and improvements.

We discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Ensure young people's learning in S1 builds more effectively on the levels they have achieved in primary school.
- Continue with recent improvements to support for learning and ensure that all staff understand better how to meet young people's learning needs.
- Develop a culture of self-evaluation which leads to improvements in learning, teaching and young people's achievements.
- Provide stronger leadership for the school, including for the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

### **What happens at the end of the inspection?**

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Our Area Lead Officer along with the local authority will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will return to evaluate aspects of provision and the progress in improving provision within one year of publication of this letter. We will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the school has improved.

Elizabeth Morrison  
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/BlairgowrieHighSchoolPerthandKinross.asp>.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at [enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: [feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk).







**Perth and Kinross Council  
Education and Children's Services**

**Extended Learning and Achievement Visit  
Blairgowrie High School  
December 2010/January 2011**



## **BACKGROUND**

To support the school in the process of self-evaluation, a team comprising Education Services staff and Peer Assessors visited Blairgowrie High School during December 2010 and January 2011. The themes for the review were Achievement, Learning and Leadership. These themes were subject to scrutiny through core Quality Indicators from *How good is our school?*

The focus departments were English, mathematics, science, home economics and physical education. Support for pupils across the school was also evaluated.

The School Improvement Plan 2010-2011, STACs and the school and departmental self-evaluation pro-formas formed the core documentation for scrutiny and discussion during the visit.

During the Extended Learning and Achievement Visit, the team carried out discussions with school staff, made classroom observations, reviewed documentation including children's work and met with groups of young people and parents.

The key strengths and recommended improvement actions resulting from this visit are recorded below. The report is organised into 2 main sections:

1. Departmental findings
2. Whole school key messages

## **1 DEPARTMENTAL FINDINGS**

### **English**

#### **Strengths**

- All teachers demonstrated a good knowledge of the pupils with whom they worked
- Pupils were co-operative in their learning and strong teacher-pupil relationships were observed.
- Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to Continuing Professional Development
- In all classes observed, teachers demonstrated a knowledge of co-operative learning techniques

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The attainment in English, particularly in S5 and S6, must be improved
- Pupils should have more experience of the different aspects of the examination completed under timed conditions in order to raise attainment
- The presentation policy for senior pupils should be reviewed to ensure that all pupils are following an appropriate level of course
- Teachers should ensure that learning activities are well matched to the needs of all learners
- All teachers should be actively involved in the process of department self-evaluation to ensure a more collegiate approach to improvement planning
- The principal teacher should continue to develop a culture of leadership at departmental level

### **Mathematics**

#### **Strengths**

- Overall attainment in mathematics is good
- Most teachers in the department provide effective direct teaching to which most pupils respond well
- Teacher - pupil relationships were generally positive and pupils were well-behaved and courteous
- Teachers in the department are committed and hard-working

### **Areas for improvement**

- Attainment in mathematics in S5 and S6 must improve.
- More feedback should be given to pupils on an individual basis to help them improve
- The department self-evaluation pro-forma should be kept under review and regularly updated
- More work needs done to contextualise learning in mathematics so that pupils can demonstrate when learning is 'secure'
- More creative, interactive use could be made of Smartboards to support learning and motivate pupils
- Consultation and communication within the department must be improved in order to ensure that teamwork is more effective and all staff share in the improvement agenda
- Homework policy and practice needs to be reviewed and agreed by all and implemented consistently
- Strategies should be put in place at the earliest stage possible to support pupils who are underachieving

### **Sciences**

#### **Strengths**

- In S4 in 2010, attainment in Chemistry at both Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 showed encouraging improvement compared with previous years
- The attainment of pupils in Intermediate 2 Physics in 2010 was above the national pattern
- Pupils are treated equally and fairly and encouraged to support each other
- In almost all classes the learning intention and success criteria were shared with pupils and explanations and instructions were clear
- In almost all lessons the learning was well paced with appropriately organised resources and some varied teaching approaches
- All three science departments have produced self-evaluation statements which accurately reflect the issues relating to the attainment of pupils
- Some useful transition work has been done with Primary colleagues to support the delivery of Level 2 experiences and outcomes in science

### **Areas for improvement**

- *Assessment is for Learning* techniques should be applied with greater consistency across the three departments
- At appropriate times in young people's learning, greater use should be made of co-operative learning strategies
- Attainment in biology at all levels must improve
- The physics department's pupil tracking system should be shared with biology and chemistry colleagues to allow early intervention strategies to be put in place for pupils identified as being at risk of underachieving.
- All class teachers should be actively involved in the process of departmental self-evaluation
- Opportunities should be provided to allow staff to demonstrate leadership with a specific area of responsibility

### **Home economics**

#### **Strengths**

- Overall attainment in home economics is very good
- The Principal Teacher has excellent leadership skills and there is an excellent team ethos
- The department offers a wide range of courses to ensure that all pupils are given every opportunity to succeed
- All pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and very positive pupil - teacher relationships exist
- Learning activities undertaken are of high quality and meet the needs of most of the learners
- Outside partners and agencies are used to enhance the learning experiences for pupils
- Pupils are aware of the purpose of lessons and have a clear understanding of learning intentions
- There is evidence of robust planning across the department

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The department should further develop Level 3 Experiences and Outcomes and identify appropriate interdisciplinary learning opportunities

- The home economics department should be represented on the Health and Wellbeing/Health Promoting School group
- The process of departmental self-evaluation should be considered throughout the session

## **Physical Education**

### **Strengths**

- The department continues to attract a high number of pupil entries at Standard Grade
- Pupils' wider achievements are recognised through extra-curricular activities and involvement in various sporting events
- Opportunities to address the 4 Capacities of Curriculum for Excellence are offered to pupils on a regular basis through extra-curricular and curricular events in sport and dance
- All staff show a clear understanding of the importance of strong pupil-teacher relationships
- Pupils are using self and peer evaluation techniques

### **Areas for improvement**

- Approaches to self evaluation need stronger professional commitment and teamwork, including effective monitoring and review of projects / tasks
- Action must be taken urgently to address the mismatch between pupil potential and actual attainment at all levels and teachers should have higher expectations of pupil achievement
- More effective departmental communication is required and careful consideration given to the structure and purpose of departmental meetings
- *Assessment is for Learning* techniques need to be introduced and implemented consistently, including verbal checks on pupil understanding of tasks and providing more individual feedback to pupils
- The department should seek to develop interdisciplinary learning opportunities
- Approaches taken to form class groupings should ensure the best learning experience for all pupils.

## **Support for Pupils**

### **Strengths**

- Staff in the Support for Pupils Faculty have a positive ethos

- Relationships between the Depute Headteacher (Support) and faculty Principal Teachers are very positive.
- Imaginative and effective use is made of the accommodation available, and there is an increasing range of provision to meet pupil needs
- The contribution of Support for Learning Assistants is of a high quality
- Community link workers are effectively deployed

### **Areas for improvement**

- The Additional Support Needs audit should be used as a dynamic tool to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated and reviewed in line with SMT priorities
- Faculty improvement planning should be more focused on extending the range of provision (eg Nurture) and improved integrated working
- Support for learning assistants should be involved in the whole team approach where appropriate, including review meetings
- Communication standards should be monitored to improve the professionalism of language used to report on pupils
- There is a need to measure the impact of support in relation to planning, target setting and achieving positive outcomes for children and young people
- Support for learning should be provided for pupils with additional support needs in physical education classes
- The deployment of support for learning staff needs to be more carefully planned across the school to ensure young people's learning needs are effectively met within the full range of learning experiences

## **2 WHOLE SCHOOL**

### **Strengths**

- Attainment in 2010 showed good improvement in a number of areas
- The school's reputation in the local community is positive and improving
- Some very good lessons were observed, with clear learning intentions and motivated pupils
- There is a growing commitment among most staff to quality assurance and to distributed leadership
- Teacher-pupil relationships are generally positive and pupils are well-behaved

### **Areas for improvement**

- Provision for lower attaining pupils needs to be considered carefully as the school moves towards the full implementation of its plans for early presentation
- There is a need to review the mentoring system to ensure that its purpose and its potential benefits are clearly understood by staff and pupils
- The school should continue to develop ways of recording and celebrating pupils' wider achievement
- An audit of courses from S1 to S3 should be carried out to ensure that the entitlement to a broad general education is being met
- More opportunities for meaningful interdisciplinary learning should be created across the school
- In order to promote numeracy across the curriculum, a higher profile needs to be given to the *Numeracy Across Learning* guidelines
- More direction is required to help address staff, pupil and parental concerns regarding early presentation
- Cooperative learning and *Assessment is for Learning* must be used more consistently across the school.
- The excellent practice in planning and assessment and pupil self-evaluation in home economics should be shared with other departments.
- Perth and Kinross Departmental Self-evaluation expectations need to be embedded in the whole school Quality Assurance Calendar
- All teachers should be actively involved in the collegiate process of departmental self-evaluation and opportunities should be sought to include the views of learners and parents in this process
- An induction process should be implemented for teachers who are on long term supply, similar to that which exists for new teachers
- There is a need to enhance the status of Pupil Support across school by making it more central to the SMT priorities
- Greater departmental involvement in Health and Wellbeing policy formation and improvement actions
- The school should work with those parents who are already engaged in the life of the school to explore ways of ensuring wider parent involvement





Quality indicators help CLD providers, partners and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the learning community. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How Good is Our Community Learning and Development?* (HGIOCLD?2). These were revised and updated in 2012. Updated versions can be found at [http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CLDbriefingnote191012\\_tcm4-684959.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CLDbriefingnote191012_tcm4-684959.pdf)

Education Scotland evaluates four important quality indicators to help monitor the quality of learning communities across Scotland. Here are the results for the learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	good
<b>Impact on participants</b>	very good
<b>Impact on the local community</b>	very good
<b>Improving services</b>	very good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgments made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

A copy of the full report is available on the Education Scotland website [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk).

Sheila Brown  
HM Inspector  
22 January 2013



**Inspection of the learning community  
surrounding Blairgowrie High School  
Perth and Kinross Council  
22 January 2013**

## 1. Context

The learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School is located within Eastern Perthshire and has a population of around 17,500. It covers the towns of Blairgowrie, Alyth and Coupar Angus as well as a number of small settlements. Rattray which is close to Blairgowrie has been identified by the Community Planning Partnership as a priority area for regeneration. Local health practitioners have identified concerns about lower life expectancy than the rest of Perth and Kinross, a higher percentage of teenage pregnancies and high suicide and self-harm rates. School leavers destinations in 2011 showed that less young people from Blairgowrie High School went on to Higher and Further Education than the rest of Perth and Kinross. However, a higher percentage of young people from the school moved to employment or training than compared to the rest of Perth and Kinross.

Community and Learning Development (CLD) partners within the area of Blairgowrie High School were inspected by Education Scotland during November 2012. During the visit, Education Scotland staff talked to children, young people and adults. We worked closely with local CLD managers, CLD providers, partners, paid staff and volunteers. We wanted to find out how well partners are improving the life chances of people living in the community through learning, building stronger more resilient communities and improving the quality of services and provision. We also looked at how well, paid staff and volunteers are developing their own practices and how well partners, including schools are working together. We looked at some particular aspects of recent work which were identified by partners including.

- The effectiveness of partnership working across the learning community.

## 2. How well are partners improving learning, increasing life chances, promoting and securing wellbeing?

CLD providers target their resources very well and are improving outcomes for learners. The number of literacy and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners is increasing. Young people are achieving well through a good range of accredited programmes such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Youth Achievement Awards, and Community Sports Leaders awards. Some participants are gaining employment and others are going on to volunteering. This approach could helpfully be extended to other youth provision, for example the *Coupar Angus Youth Activities Group* (CAYAG). Measures relating to community health are improving. Sports development staff are successfully engaging more adults and young people in sports activities. This is helping to improve wellbeing. Young people completing the *Tobacco and Safe Choices* project are now more aware of the dangers of smoking. Parents of the young people involved noted a positive impact on their own smoking habits. Older people, some with dementia who took part in sports taster evenings are now more active. New jobs are being created through the work of Growbiz which effectively targets individuals and supports them to set up new businesses. CLD staff are routinely using their management information system

to target and plan their work. They now need to interrogate the data more clearly at learning community level to demonstrate improvement. Setting joint targets with partners would help monitor performance against local outcomes. Comparing data with other local authorities could also help drive improvement.

Learners are achieving and progressing well. There is an important focus on early intervention and prevention by CLD providers. Parents completing the Handling Children's Behaviour course are now able to better manage their child's behaviour. Young people attending the 16+ LINC course are much more positive about their futures and most move on to positive destinations. Older learners in the Digital Photography group noted a significant improvement in wellbeing through attending the group. Young women in the Core Spirits Group are more now aware of the impact of alcohol on their lives. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award group aimed at young people with additional needs at Blairgowrie High School is leading to better school attendance and more positive behaviour. The lunch time drop-in at Blairgowrie High School is helping a few young people settle better into their first year. Parents attending the *Homestart PEEP* project now relate better to their children and feel less socially isolated.

Across the learning community young people and adults are gaining attributes related to the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. Learners are well supported by skilled and dedicated staff and volunteers. Young people attending the Alyth Youth Partnership (AYP) are gaining in confidence. A few are progressing to secure employment. Others are now volunteering as youth workers. ESOL learners are becoming more confident in speaking, reading and writing in English. Almost all participants in the literacy and information and communications technology groups are achieving their learning goals. There is scope for staff at Blairgowrie High School to more effectively collaborate with CLD providers to ensure improved outcomes for learners. In some cases young people are not yet clear about how learning outside school is recognised and celebrated. CLD need to now work with Blairgowrie High School to ensure that they make a full contribution to the development of the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence.

Community organisations across the learning community are active, confident and skilled. Strong links exist between community groups and CLD providers. However, a strategic plan across the learning community would help ensure that all partners are working to agreed outcomes. An impressive number of groups, estimated at over 200 are serving the community well and delivering high quality services. Older people are well supported by partners to reduce isolation and improve health. A focus on community arts is increasing learning opportunities. The *stART* project is well established and gives people in rural communities access to public art and performance. One thousand four hundred people took part in 2011. Volunteers in the Blairgowrie and Rattray Genealogy group are learning research skills and helping others trace their family history. As a result social history is being recorded and celebrated. They recognise that involving younger volunteers including schools will help ensure the work continues. The *Loon Braes Parknership* is improving a neglected local park which is now being used more by the community. Community open days in the park have attracted large numbers of people.

### 3. How well are partners working together and improving the quality of services and provision?

CLD providers use a good range of methods to gather feedback from stakeholders. Joint projects such as the *Loon Braes Parknership*, Strathmore Centre for Youth Development (SCYD), CAYAG and AYP are leading to better outcomes for the community. CLD and Perth College work together well to plan and deliver programmes such as Digital Learning in Blairgowrie. CLD and SCYD are successfully delivering 16+ LINC courses in conjunction with Skills Development Scotland. Most youth workers across partnerships contribute to experiences and outcomes for young people. Most can articulate how this fits with Curriculum for Excellence. Young people's achievements are celebrated annually at the Spirit of Youth Awards. The *Men and Kids* project was positively profiled in a Spotlight on Equality newsletter.

CLD partners plan their work well. Young people in CAYAG plan and review their activities regularly. All sports clubs have development plans that are regularly monitored by Sports Development staff. The *Loon Braes Parknership* has a well-designed plan that measures progress against objectives. Parents of young people in the *Tobacco and Safe Choices* project completed a 360 degree evaluation. CLD staff regularly reflect on their practice and self-evaluation is well established. An Improving Services group is helping staff better understand outcomes. This is helping to improve planning across CLD and partners. Learning and achievement visits conducted by managers are identifying strengths and areas for improvement. CLD providers have good access to training and development opportunities. There are increasing opportunities for volunteers to improve their skills, for example in working with young people. Joint continuous professional development with schools remain limited. There is scope for further embedding joint self-evaluation across partners.

This inspection of learning and development in the learning community surrounding Blairgowrie High School found the following key strengths.

- Strong and effective partnerships at learning community level leading to very successful outcomes for learners.
- Committed staff and volunteers.
- Very wide range of active and successful community groups delivering a wide range of provision.
- The range of highly effective learning and achievement opportunities for young people.
- Innovative practice in building community capacity, for example Growbiz and *Loon Braes Parknership*.

We discussed with partners how they might continue to improve their work. This is what we agreed with them.

- Further improve joint self-evaluation and partnership planning with partners.
- Further enhance joint working with Blairgowrie High School to ensure transition from the Broad General Education to the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Greater interrogation of data at a local learning community level to confidently determine if performance is improving.

#### **4. What happens at the end of the inspection?**

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the learning community's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified aspects of innovative practice which we would like to explore further. As a result we will work with the learning community and Perth and Kinross Council in order to record and share more widely the innovative practice.

Sheila Brown  
HM Inspector  
22 January 2013

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for this learning community can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/othersectors/communitylearninganddevelopment/BlairgowrieHighSchoolc.asp>.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at [enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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# Inspection of the Learning Community surrounding Blairgowrie High School

## Self-Evaluation Summary Paper

### Context of the learning community and key partnerships

#### Geography and Demography

The Eastern Perthshire area extends to over 73,000 hectares of both urban centres and rural dispersed communities, with a population of approximately 17,500 which is 12% of the total Perth & Kinross population. Blairgowrie is on the approach to the eastern Cairngorm National Park, to the west of Blairgowrie lies the Lunan Valley and to the east is the town of Alyth. The southern part of the area is lowland in character and forms part of Strathmore, at the heart of which is the town of Coupar Angus. Rattray, on the north east side of the River Erich, has been identified by the Community Planning Partnership as a priority area for community regeneration, part of which falls within the worst affected 10% of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones. Through its capital projects programme Perth & Kinross Council is building a community facility attached to Rattray Primary School in 2013/14.

#### Economy

Eastern Perthshire is a less affluent area compared to other parts of Perth & Kinross and levels of deprivation are slightly higher than average. The main areas of higher economic deprivation are in Rattray and Coupar Angus. At the last count 2.1% of the working age population was claiming Jobseekers Allowance which is consistent with the average for the authority (2.1%). Weekly incomes are slightly lower (£468) than the Perth & Kinross average (£472).

In the last year, 18% (50 in total) new business start ups in Perth & Kinross were in Eastern Perthshire during 2011/2012.

#### Education

Around 1,800 pupils attend schools in the Blairgowrie cluster which comprises Blairgowrie High School and nine feeder primary schools.

The 2011 Initial Destination Survey by Skills Development Scotland showed that 90% of school leavers from Blairgowrie High School entered a positive destination an increase on 86.5% in 2010 and in line with pupils from Perth & Kinross as a whole. The survey showed that 54% of school leavers from Blairgowrie High School went on to Higher and Further Education and a further 36% moved on to Employment and Training. This compares to 60% and 27% in 2010 (63% and 27% respectively in Perth & Kinross).

#### Partnerships

There are a large number of community organisations and groups across the Eastern Perthshire area most of which receive support from the Council's CLD teams. There are currently local SLAs in place with 3 voluntary organisations to deliver services in response to community needs, these focussing on young people are Alyth Youth Partnership (AYP), The Blairgowrie Project and Strathmore Centre for Youth Development (SCYD). Homestart is a Perth & Kinross wide SLA which delivers services to parents and families through staff and volunteers in Blairgowrie and Coupar Angus. In addition there is good partnership working with Perth College UHI, Live Active Leisure, Perth & Kinross Housing and Community Care Services

and Cultural and Community Services including local sports and active recreation, libraries and museums teams.

The Partnerships use a range of methods to engage and inform local residents about their work and specific local activities including publishing Annual Reports, Facebook and Pinpoint Newsletter.

**Key priority areas for the Partnerships:**

- Combating disadvantage particularly health and equality in Rattray (Health & Wellbeing)
- Lack of suitable and accessible community facilities (Rattray, Coupar Angus Blairgowrie) (active citizenship/empowering communities)
- Provision of WSOL for migrant workers (Literacy and numeracy information)
- Increasing unemployment rates including youth employment/ sustained positive destinations

**Local Context**

CLD in Blairgowrie is characterised by a belief in and commitment to partnership working by all the stakeholders evidenced by focus groups in the recent Learning and Achievement visit. This is reflected in the strong link between needs and services. A major strength has been the sustainability of community groups which have now been delivering activities over a significant number of years.

**Service Context**

The CLD team is made up of a community capacity worker (1fte) a youth worker (1fte) and an adult and family learning worker (1fte – currently vacant). There are a range of part time staff in the area including community link workers, adult literacy worker, and community learning assistants (a staff list is attached).

Community Learning & Development is part of Cultural and Community Services led by the Communities Service Manager. The service underwent a restructuring during 2011 which was fully implemented by September 2011. As part of the restructure a stronger locality focus was created with Team Leaders given a geographic area of responsibility to provide an overview of developments at local level and to strengthen partnership working as well as ensure alignment with national policy aims.

**Within the particular context of this learning community, how well are partners improving learning, increasing life chances promoting and securing wellbeing?**

There are very good opportunities for young people to develop confidence, personal and social skills contributing to wider achievement. Existing links are strong, however, there is further work to be developed around Curriculum for Excellence and extending the links with wider school staff. There is a strong and active Duke of Edinburgh's Award Unit. SLA providers are very active in the area delivering a range of services. There is a good range of family learning opportunities in the area for parents and families together including men and their children. Communities and community groups are well supported to volunteer and participate in a wide range of opportunities.

### **Existing Strengths (1.1, 2.1, 4.1)**

A recent Learning and Achievement visit was undertaken in the area and through focus groups discussions with staff and evidence of impact through I/O (management information system) the following strengths were identified:

- Increasing numbers of young people participating and gaining awards.
- Number of active community groups and partners supported to deliver improved services.
- Supporting community led projects.
- Diverse approaches to engaging young people by Cultural and Community Services staff and partners.
- Very good range of opportunities to build capacity of young people to become volunteers.
- Very good range of awards and accreditations to prepare young people for employment and further being.
- A good range of ESOL, family learning and parenting opportunities that build resilience in the community and focus on prevention.
- A focus on including opportunities for older adults reflects the rising needs demographically of an ageing population.
- Support for volunteers to build capacity to deliver projects and access funding.
- Very strong local networks support the development of local opportunities for community groups.
- Learners within the community have a range of opportunities to participate in a variety of programmes that improve learning and increase life chances.
- Community groups are well supported to participate in voluntary opportunities.

### **Priorities for future development include:**

- Continual development of I/O (management information system) across CLD and CCS Service to improve information analysis, progression and evidence of impact.
- Continue to develop robust partnership arrangements that meet the needs of local communities.
- Continue to develop Eastern Perthshire Youth Partnership as a means of delivering services to young people through a CLD approach across the partnership and establish better synergies with other partnerships i.e. sports partnership
- Review the Community Learning and Development Partnership arrangements to ensure they meet the needs of local service provision.

### **How well are partners working together and improving the quality of services and provision?**

As outlined there are a number of partnerships in the local areas ranging from local CLD partnerships to wider community partnerships that are very well established. An outcome of the recent learning and achievement visit has identified the need to review existing partnership arrangements particularly with the introduction to the Change Fund around Health Care and Older People. The Change Fund is supported by a partnership including Perth & Kinross Council, Perth & Kinross Community Health Partnership, Scottish Care and Community Planning Partners.

There is a desire and willingness to improve arrangements that will enhance service provision. CLD staff are actively involved in CPD developments and the establishment of the 5.10 themed group has been successful in providing staff with a clear focus on how to improve the quality of ongoing learning and provision. In addition the Upskilling training has also been of benefit and it is recognised that both of these need to be widened out to include more partners.

**Existing Strengths (in this learning community)**

- There is a very good culture of building capacity, knowledge and skills/development of staff, partners, volunteers and community groups.
- There are a wide range of methods, events, networks and consultation with stakeholders to receive feedback from and report progress to participants.

**Priorities for future development (in this learning community)**

- Extend wider understanding of planning evaluation frameworks with partners and staff through Upskilling and 5.10 programmes.
- Review local community planning partnerships arrangements to ensure delivery of improved local services.
- Improve local joint planning arrangements.

**Areas for focused attention.**

The publication of the recent CLD Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partners presents an opportunity to take a closer look at the range of partnerships in the area with high levels of community involvement and activity and evaluate their level of impact on the quality of services locally.

The effectiveness and streamlining of local partnerships is essential to the future development of practice that contributes to the public sector reform agenda. Our area for focused attention is the impact of current partnership arrangements and the future shape of local community planning arrangements that demonstrate clear targets and evidence of impact in a local geographic area. The area has recently benefited from Change Fund monies and a range of community engagement staff have been employed in the area. It is timely that this is an area of focussed attention in order to address workforce development opportunities and joint approaches to planning including development of local leadership.