Penicuik High School: Follow-through Inspection

Report by Donald MacKay, Director, Education and Communities

1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines the outcome of the above inspection as carried out by HMIE in February 2008.

2 Penicuik High School

HMIE published a report on standards and quality in Penicuik High School in May 2006. HM Inspectors revisited the school in February 2008 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

3 Main Points for Action Arising from the Report of March 2005 and Progress Towards Meeting the Main Points for Action

The original inspection report identified 5 main points for action.

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<tr>
<th>Main Points for Action</th>
<th>Review and Evaluation of Progress by HMIE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Improve the quality of learning and teaching, including the use</td>
<td>The school had made good progress in addressing this main point for action.</td>
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<td>of information and communications technology.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raise the expectations of some staff and pupils of what pupils</td>
<td>The school had made very good progress with this main point for action.</td>
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<td>can achieve.</td>
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<td>Promote pupils’ positive behaviour and recognition of their</td>
<td>The school had made good progress with this main point for action.</td>
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<td>achievement.</td>
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<td>Improve the corporate effectiveness of those staff who carry</td>
<td>The school had made very good progress with this main point for action.</td>
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<td>leadership responsibilities at all levels in the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure that self-evaluation has a positive impact at all levels</td>
<td>The school had made good progress with this main point for action.</td>
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<td>on the quality of learning and teaching and attainment.</td>
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At the time of the original inspection, the Headteacher and two of the three Depute Headteachers had been in post for only a few months. A further Depute Headteacher had recently been appointed. The senior management team had had a very positive effect on the school. The Headteacher was well regarded by staff, pupils and parents. They appreciated his open and approachable style. He had created a climate in which staff were more involved in decision-making and more able to contribute to the improvement of the school. Senior managers and staff had worked well together to take forward a range of developments.
Standards of attainment were improving, overall. The proportion of pupils achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in mathematics and reading by the end of S2 had risen over the last three years. Standards of attainment at S4 were now in line with schools of similar characteristics at SCQF levels 3 and 4. While there had been improvement in attainment at S5, at S6 the school performed less well than schools with similar characteristics.

4 Conclusion

The HMIE report notes that the school and education authority had made good or very good progress in addressing the main points for action. Strong corporate leadership, more effective quality assurance approaches, improved learning and teaching, and raised expectations contributed to an increase in the school’s capacity for improvement. As a result of the progress made, HM Inspectors will not carry out any further inspection visits in connection with the report of May 2006. Through District Inspector links, HM Inspectors will maintain contact with the education authority about levels of attainment, particularly at S3-S6.

5 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

(i) note the content of the follow-through inspection report;

(ii) pass this report to the Performance Review Committee for its consideration; and

(iii) welcome the work of all involved in progressing the action points in the original report.

25 April 2008
6 Report Implications

6.1 Resource Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report at this time.

6.2 Risk Implications

HMIE visit a sample of primary and secondary schools every year to find out how they are performing. A report is published which informs parents about the key strengths of the school, its capacity for further improvement and sets out the main points for action.

Following the publication of that report further visits may be made to the school, either by HMIE or by the Education Authority to assist improvement and monitor progress. A follow-through report on the progress of the school is published by either HMIE or by the Education Authority, normally within 2 years of the date of publication of the original report.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by Education Officers in the Quality Improvement Team is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of the school to demonstrate its capacity to improve.

6.3 Policy Implications

Strategy

The school will continue to improve its work in line with its improvement plan and the Education and Communities will continue to challenge and support the school in relation to developing and implementing a range of quality improvement strategies.

Consultation

Copies of the follow-through report have been made available to Elected Members, parents of children currently in the school and the other recipients of the original inspection report.

Equalities

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

Sustainability

The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

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Background papers: File: Penicuik High School