

Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	10 May 2011
Report By:	Corporate Director Education & Communities	Report No:	EDUC/23/11/AH
Contact Officer:	Albert Henderson	Contact No:	01475 712761
Subject:	HMIe Report on Inverclyde Academy		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of an HMIe external evaluation of Inverclyde Academy.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Inverclyde Academy has received a positive report from the HMIe. Members should note that in the indicators of quality two aspects of the school were judged to be 'good' and three aspects were judged to be 'satisfactory'. The report was produced on 22 March 2011.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee approve the HMIe report on Inverclyde Academy.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director Education & Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Inverclyde Academy was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) in February 2011. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages, identified key strengths and main points for action using the following 6-point scale:

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

4.2 HMIe assessed and reported on the views of parents, staff and pupils, the quality of learning and teaching, how well the school is raising achievement for all pupils, achievement in national examinations, the school's processes for self evaluation and innovation and the school's capacity for improvement. HMIe are confident that, with support from the Education Authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, HMIe will make no more visits to the school in connection with this inspection.

4.3 The report on Inverclyde Academy was published on 22 March 2011 and is attached as an appendix to this report. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.

4.4 Inverclyde Academy was inspected under the evaluation framework 'How Good Is Our School 3?'

4.5 In assessing the indicators of quality, HMIe found all two aspects of the work of the school to be 'good' and three as 'satisfactory'. The evaluations of the indicators of quality can be found on page 7 of the appended report.

4.6 The report lists five particular strengths of the school:

- Confident, helpful young people who are keen to learn
- Health promotion across the school
- Partnerships to enhance learners' experiences and achievement
- High-quality accommodation and facilities for learning
- The success of senior managers and staff in establishing a positive climate for learning

4.7 The report lists four areas for improvement:

- Improve attainment at all stages
- Improve the strategic direction and rate of development of the curriculum
- Improve the focus and impact of self-evaluation to ensure appropriate pace and challenge in young people's learning
- Staff, led by senior managers, continue to develop teamwork to ensure consistently high-quality learning experiences

4.8 A detailed Action Plan is in the process of being produced by the Head Teacher which outlines how the areas for improvement will be addressed. The implementation of this Action Plan will be closely monitored by the Head of Education and members from the Quality Improvement Team. A further report will come to the Committee on the progress of the Action Plan.



**Inverclyde Academy
Greenock
Inverclyde Council
22 March 2011**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, young people and the local community know whether their school provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities which young people are involved in. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. Where applicable there will also be a report on the learning community surrounding the school.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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1. The school

Inverclyde Academy is a non-denominational school which serves the east, central and south-west areas of Greenock and the villages of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. The roll was 933 when the inspection was carried out in February 2011. Young people's attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010. The school was founded in July 2007 from the amalgamation of Greenock High School and Wellington Academy. The school moved to a new building in December 2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Confident, helpful young people who are keen to learn.
- Health promotion across the school.
- Partnerships to enhance learners' experiences and achievement.
- High-quality accommodation and facilities for learning.
- The success of senior managers and staff in establishing a positive climate for learning.

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Across the school young people are willing to learn. Most behave well and work effectively with each other and staff. They are becoming more confident learners by working in groups and learning from each other. Information and communications technology is increasingly being used well to enhance learning. The quality of learning across the school is variable. In some lessons, staff give useful feedback which helps young people to reflect on their progress and identify how they could make their learning better. This positive feature of learning is not yet applied consistently across the school. Young people would benefit from a greater say in how to improve their learning experiences further.

Young people achieve highly across a wide range of stimulating out-of-class activities which are developing their confidence and leadership abilities. These include many opportunities for personal development through arts, sports, production of the popular annual

school show and residential trips. At the upper stages young people are becoming increasingly responsible by successfully taking on roles such as prefects, buddies and coaches. Across all stages, young people achieve success in a range of local and national competitions. They have developed their knowledge of healthy lifestyles. This includes having a sound understanding of the importance of eating well and exercising regularly. Those participating in 'skills for work' and 'skills for life' courses, including Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards, achieve notable success.

By the end of S2, the majority of young people attain an appropriate national level in reading and writing. Around a half do so in mathematics. The school recognises that it needs to do more to monitor the progress young people are making in S1/S2 in all areas of the curriculum. Young people with additional support needs are making appropriate progress in their learning. In recent years, the success of young people in S4, S5 and S6 in national examinations has generally been below or well below national averages. In a few subjects young people are performing much better than in their other studies. Results in a few subjects have shown recent improvement. The school has begun to take positive steps to improve the school's overall attainment such as introducing a mentoring programme and providing a much valued supported study programme. However, results in key measures of attainment across the school do not yet show clear signs of improvement. Almost all young people leave school for employment, training or further study.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum provides a broad range of courses from S1 to S6 to help young people make progress in most areas of their learning. Young people are positive about the programme of personal and social education. Staff plan activities and events to develop skills in enterprise and citizenship. The school is making slow progress in planning for *Curriculum for Excellence*. Subject departments are currently developing S1 and S2 courses in line with this national initiative and promote health and wellbeing well. More needs to be

done to develop young people's literacy and numeracy skills in a planned way across curriculum areas. Young people have too few planned opportunities to study in ways which help them make connections between learning in different subjects. A high number of young people from S3 to S6 have the opportunity to gain valuable skills for work through courses at educational establishments such as James Watt College. Not all young people in S5/S6 take advantage of the opportunities offered to benefit from sufficient high-quality physical education or religious and moral education (RME).

In most classes, teachers set tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for most young people. However, the pace of learning is too slow in some classes. Staff know young people well and can readily access helpful information on their learning needs and ways to support them. Learning support and behaviour support teachers offer effective support in small groups for aspects of skills in reading and spelling and promoting personal development. Support assistants effectively help young people learn in classes. Learning targets in individualised educational programmes (IEPs) are not always focused well enough on the specific needs of the young person.

4. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?

Pupil support staff work well with a range of agencies to ensure that young people and families are supported. A range of partnerships such as those with River Clyde Homes Housing Association and Scottish Youth Theatre increase choices and improve learning for young people. Learning in health and wellbeing is well supported though the work of the Home School Link and the Health Development Teams. The school communicates regularly with parents in a variety of ways, including through text messaging. It successfully works in partnership with many parents, offering a wide range of consultation meetings, to support young people as they progress through the school. The supportive Parent Council is an effective forum for discussion. It should continue to work together with the school across

a wider range of aspects of school life. Young people who are supported through IEPs, and their parents are not always appropriately involved in setting targets to help them make progress. The school has appropriate procedures in place for dealing with complaints.

5. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?

Young people in S5/S6 have led improvements such as the introduction of an assessment diary to help them plan their learning. The school recognises the need to change the focus of the pupil council to make better use of young people's ideas to lead improvements. Young people value the high numbers of staff who provide extra-curricular activities and mentoring support. Staff are increasingly reflective about their own practice and are improving young people's learning experiences in some areas. Priorities for improvement are identified through a range of appropriate procedures. The school now needs to ensure that these have a clearer focus and have a greater impact on improvement. Staff need further focused discussions about learning and teaching, particularly in relation to *Curriculum for Excellence*. They should share good practice better to achieve consistent high-quality learning experiences. The school should extend the range of ways young people, parents and partners are involved in evaluating its work and influencing its direction.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?

Young people are friendly and polite. High-quality facilities provide a stimulating learning environment. Exclusion rates are declining and attendance is improving. The revised positive behaviour system is improving behaviour further. Staff need to make sure it is used consistently to achieve maximum effect. They understand fully their responsibility for protecting children from harm. Most young people feel safe and cared for in school and believe that they are treated fairly and with respect. The school promotes equalities through regular

themed assemblies, the RME programme and school events. Young people's achievements are regularly celebrated, for example through issuing 'DREAMS' certificates. Expectations of what young people can achieve are variable across the school and are sometimes too low. There are appropriate arrangements for religious observance. These arrangements are enhanced very well by the chaplaincy team.

7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The headteacher is committed to inclusion and has developed a vision for the school which encourages all young people to achieve their best. Senior managers have managed the school through a period of challenging circumstances. Depute headteachers are hard-working and highly committed to the school. They have enthusiastically taken on new remits. The senior management team need to work together with staff more consistently to drive forward the improvements identified through self-evaluation. Many staff respond well to opportunities to join or lead working groups. This gives the school a sound foundation for continuous improvement. Most staff feel supported, involved and encouraged. There is a need to build on this now to achieve maximum improvement. The school's capacity for improvement will be enhanced further by closer partnership working with the education authority and the wider school community.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education. Our District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements in learners' achievement.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Improve attainment at all stages.
- Improve the strategic direction and rate of development of the curriculum.
- Improve the focus and impact of self-evaluation to ensure appropriate pace and challenge in young people's learning.
- Staff, led by senior managers, continue to develop teamwork to ensure consistently high-quality learning experiences.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Inverclyde Academy.

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

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: Marie McAdam

22 March 2011

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

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

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