

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Lifelong Learning Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>13 March 2012</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education &amp; Communities</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUC/13/12/AH</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>HMIe report on Mearns Centre</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of an Education Scotland external evaluation of Mearns Centre.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Mearns Centre has received a good report from Education Scotland. Members should note that in the indicators of quality one aspect of the centre was judged to be 'very good', two aspects as 'good' and two aspects as 'satisfactory'. The report was produced on 31 January 2012.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee approve the report on Mearns Centre.

**Albert Henderson**  
**Corporate Director Education & Communities**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Mearns Centre was inspected by Education Scotland in November 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 six-point scale:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 6 | - | Excellent – outstanding, sector leading                    |
| 5 | - | Very Good – major strengths                                |
| 4 | - | Good – important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| 3 | - | Satisfactory – strengths just outweigh weaknesses          |
| 2 | - | Weak – important weaknesses                                |
| 1 | - | Unsatisfactory – major weaknesses                          |

4.2 Education Scotland assessed and reported on the views of parents, pupils and staff, the quality of learning in teaching, how well the centre was raising achievement for all pupils, achievement in national examinations, the centre's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, the centre's capacity for improvement.

4.3 The report was published on 31 January 2012. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.

4.4 Mearns Centre is inspected under the evaluation framework "How Good Is Our School 3?"

4.5 In assessing the indicators of quality, Education Scotland found one aspect was judged to be 'very good', two aspects as 'good' and two aspects as 'satisfactory'

4.6 The report lists three particular strengths of the centre:

- Positive and nurturing relationships across the centre helping young people grow in confidence
- Joint working between social work staff and education staff to provide total support for the young person at school, at home and in the community
- Enthusiasm and energy of the whole staff team ensuring young people achieve well
- The dedication to young people's achievement shown by the centre's principal teacher

4.7 The reports lists three areas for improvement:

- Develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence
- Continue to develop a shared approach to self-evaluation and planning across social work and education teams
- Continue to develop approaches to early intervention and inclusion so that young people are supported in their local school

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31 January 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

**Mearns Centre  
Inverclyde Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleague and I visited and inspected your child's centre. Throughout our visit, we talked to parents and young people and we worked closely with the centre's managers and staff. We wanted to find out how well young people were learning and achieving and how well the centre supported young people to do their best. The principal teacher and senior social worker shared with us the centre's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the centre's recent work, including health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy and financial education. As a result, we were able to find out how good the centre was at improving young people's education.

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

Almost all young people learn and achieve well in classes and outwith the centre. They enjoy their lessons and are actively involved in their learning. Young people are clear what they are learning and how they can improve. They reflect on what they have learned at the end of each day using 'learning logs'. They are getting better at working well together and encourage each other to work harder. Learning experiences outside the centre are well planned and help young people to learn in relevant and interesting situations. In addition to using local libraries and leisure facilities, young people visit the Scottish Parliament, Science Centre and Glasgow Climbing Centre. Young people feel safe and cared for in the Mearns Centre. Strong support from social work and education staff is helping them to attend, participate and learn.

Most young people achieve success in a range of learning experiences which is helping them to grow in confidence. They are successful in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) at bronze and silver levels and also in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. A majority also gain certificates in first aid, food hygiene and youth work. Almost all improve their attendance while at the centre, but for a few, attendance is still too low. Almost all young people achieve success in a range of national qualifications at Access 3 and Intermediate 1 levels, with a few achieving success at Intermediate 2 and Standard Grade general level. They apply their literacy and numeracy skills well in real-life situations, for example, shopping locally as well as on-line ordering of food for breakfast. More of the young people's activities could lead to qualifications.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as this will not connect.

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

Education and social work staff support young people well at home, in school and in the community to ensure they benefit from their learning. Teaching staff are skilled at removing barriers to young people's learning. Most learning tasks and activities are set at the right level to motivate and encourage young people to achieve more. All young people have detailed individualised educational programmes (IEPs). Learning targets set within IEPs need to focus better on young people's health and wellbeing. Almost all parents are very happy with the support for their child and the level of support given to families. Young people's learning is supported by a range of partners outwith the centre including health staff, educational psychology and Skills Development Scotland. A few young people benefit from shared placements with their local school. The centre is further developing approaches to getting involved earlier and supporting young people to stay in their local school.

The centre is making steady progress with improving young people's learning in line with Curriculum for Excellence. It provides positive learning opportunities in a limited range of curriculum areas, with the focus mainly on English and mathematics. Learning within the centre is enhanced by projects outwith, such as, the RIG arts project focusing on making films about Inverclyde public sculptures. Young people develop good skills for life and work through work experience and college links. Overall, young people do not have enough opportunities to deepen their learning in a number of important areas including technologies, science and home economics. Young people are well prepared for the move into the centre and for life after school. The centre needs more support from local schools to extend the subjects and resources available to the young people.

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

Following a local authority review of the centre, improvement planning is much more focused on key issues which will make a difference to learning and teaching. Staff in the centre work hard to identify new and creative ways to involve young people and improve their learning. All staff take on leadership roles and work hard to develop learning in line with Curriculum for Excellence. The principal teacher's enthusiasm and energy give strong direction to improving the daily learning experience for young people. The senior social worker and his team are very well focused on improving support for the young person at home and in school. There is scope for a more joined up approach to self-evaluation involving social work staff, education staff and partners. Young people have a strong say in what works and what needs to improve in the centre.

This inspection of the centre found the following key strengths.

- Positive and nurturing relationships across the centre helping young people grow in confidence.
- Joint working between social work staff and education staff to provide total support for the young person at school, at home and in the community.
- Enthusiasm and energy of the whole staff team ensuring young people achieve well.
- The dedication to young people's achievement shown by the centre's principal teacher.

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

- Develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence.
- Continue to develop a shared approach to self-evaluation and planning across social work and education teams.
- Continue to develop approaches to early intervention and inclusion so that young people are supported in their local school.

## What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the centre's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The local authority will inform parents about the centre's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

Douglas Hutchinson  
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your centre can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=7971&type=3>

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).

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 publication *How good is our school?*<sup>2</sup>. 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 Mearns Centre.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk) or by clicking this link <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=7971&type=3>.

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<sup>2</sup> *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence: part 3*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2003, <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/Publications.aspx>.