



**West Lothian  
Council  
Education and Cultural Services**

**DEANS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL  
HMI FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT 2010**

**Deans Community High School  
West Lothian Council  
March 2010**

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## **1 The Inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education published a report on the inspection of Deans Community High School in March 2009.

The report recognised the many changes which had been put in place and the recommendations required the school to continue with the work outlined in the School Improvement plan for 08-09 to ensure that these impacted on learning. These recommendations also form the basis of the plan for 2009-10.

## **2 Continuous Improvement**

At the time of the inspection the school was under the leadership of an acting head teacher, seconded from her head teacher post in another of the authority's schools. Since then, the post has been advertised and the acting HT has been appointed on a permanent basis. She has continued, as recognised in the original report, to lead the school in improving its provision for its young people. She has built effective partnerships with the Parent Council and partner agencies. She has been very successful in supporting staff and students in raising expectations of what they can do and has ensured that the achievements of the school are recognised in its own community and beyond. Examples of this recognition include personal, team and school achievements. The school's assertive mentoring programme won the "Work Smarter" section of West Lothian Council's Celebrating Success Awards; the Pupil Support Manager, Student Support was named Educational Supporter of the year.

A new chaplain is now working with the school and has extended the opportunities for pupils to be involved in religious observance. The chaplain participates in the school's programme of assemblies and also works with departments.

In October 2009 the school moved to a new school building, which has significantly improved the learning environment. The new facilities include substantially enhanced IT provision, which has removed barriers to the effective use of ICT as a learning tool. There are also high quality sports and PE facilities and the school has been able, as planned, to ensure that all students receive 2 periods per week. Partnership with the local health club has been developed and instructors from the club provide instruction in a range of activities.

## **3 Progress towards meeting the main points for action**

The inspection identified 3 main points for action. The school has made very good progress with all action points.

### **3.1 The school should continue to take action to improve the attainment of young people at all stages.**

Links with the school's associated primary schools have been strengthened through improved opportunities for collaboration and shared training to support the cluster improvement priority of developing numeracy.

The % of pupils attaining appropriate levels by the end of S2 rose in all areas. Reading improved by 8% to 70%, Writing improved by 3% to 55% and Mathematics improved by 2% to 67%. Attainment in Reading is now in line with the West Lothian average and Mathematics is above the average. Improving writing is a focus for the school. An additional 1FTE in English allows the deployment of staff across the curriculum to support the development of extended writing skills.

The strategies, which had been put in place to raise attainment, had not had their full impact at the time of the inspection. In Diet 2009, however, attainment at all levels by the end of S4 was the best in 5 years. Attainment at level 5 and level 4 in particular showed significant improvement. For all S4 indicators the school was in the top 25% of similar schools.

Attainment in S5 had dropped from the previous year's high point but was, nevertheless, in line with comparator schools and in line with the authority's expectations based on the attainment of the cohort in S4.

### **3.2 Continue to improve the quality of learners' experiences and raise expectations of what they can achieve**

The quality of learners' experiences has been further improved. Young people now have more consistent opportunities to participate in self and peer evaluation. There is greater use of research and project based work to encourage independent learning and offer elements of choice for individual pupils including S1 and S2.

HMIe had noted good practice in planning for *Curriculum for Excellence*. This has been further developed and there is now more cross curricular planning to support literacy and numeracy e.g. maths and technical departments have collaborated to produce "In the Doghouse" showcased at the Scottish Learning Festival.

Social and Vocational skills based on interdisciplinary learning has been successfully introduced and young people have taken responsibility for community events as part of their learning.

The school has extended the assertive mentoring approach, which had been successful in improving attainment in S4, S5 and S6 at the time of the inspection. This approach sets challenging targets and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and progress. The success of the approach is evidenced in the attainment data above.

The recognition and celebration of the wider achievement of pupils has been improved. Developing this aspect of the school's work is now part of the remit of one of the PTC team. Wider achievement now forms a part of the formal process for reporting to parents. There are more opportunities for young people to participate in after school clubs and activities. Deans TV, an initiative for S1 pupils, produced a video on the old and new schools, which was shown at the official opening of the new building.

The work of the school in raising pupils' expectations is reflected in the destinations of school leavers. The percentage of pupils entering Higher Education has significantly increased and there has also been an increase in leavers going into training opportunities. Although leavers entering employment has shown a decrease, this is in line with the pattern across West Lothian.

At the time of the inspection more pupils had continued at school into S5 than had previously been the case. Indications from current roll data are that this improvement has been maintained in session 09-10.

### **3.3 Continue to extend the consistent use of self evaluation throughout the school**

The school has increased both the range and consistency of its self evaluation processes.

Students are systematically involved in evaluating not only their own learning but also the quality of their learning experiences. Students work on their action plans, which are discussed with class teachers/mentors and with senior staff and there is also regular consultation through focus groups. Results from the most recent of these in November 09 evidence students' positive views of the school and the support and opportunities provided for them. They indicate an awareness of an improved range of learning experiences, better feedback on learning and more opportunities to think and talk about how they learn.

There are clear structures to support teachers in reflecting on their practice and systems to allow senior staff to gather information, identify common issues and ensure that learning experiences are improved. Senior staff and the PTC team regularly observe teaching and learning and the outcomes of observations are discussed at a weekly meeting. All staff participate in producing and implementing the school Improvement Plan through membership of improvement groups. There are more opportunities for teachers to share good practice within the school and with their primary colleagues.

Examination results are rigorously analysed at meetings, which are attended by the Head Teacher, the senior staff link and the entire teaching team. Following these discussions, meetings with SQA assessors have been put in place in specific departments to give guidance on standards and moderation.

## **4 Conclusion**

West Lothian Education Services are pleased with the very good progress with the recommendations the school has made to date. The authority will continue to work with and support the school in its work and a further progress report will be made to parents in January 2011.

Gordon Ford  
Director of Education and Cultural Services  
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