

Foreword

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) visit a sample of primary and secondary schools every year to find out how they are performing. They publish a report giving evaluations of pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school and the environment for learning. The report informs you about the key strengths of the school, its capacity for further improvement and sets out the main points for action.

HMIE inspected Speyside High School in April and May 2003 and published their report in September 2003. The report can be accessed either from the school or on the HMIE website (www.hmie.gov.uk).

Following publication of this report, the school and the authority are required to address the HMIE recommendations (Main Points for Action) and thereafter the authority is required to inform parents on progress.

This report tells you about the progress made by the school in addressing each of the main points for action identified in the original HMIE report. It also includes evaluations of other areas where the school is improving or has the capacity to improve.

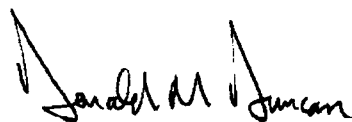
This report uses the following word scale to make clear the evaluations made by Quality Improvement Officers in partnership with HMIE.

Very good	Major strengths
Good	Strengths outweigh weaknesses
Fair	Some important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

Where used the following words describe numbers and proportions:

Almost all	=	Over 90%
Most	=	75-90%
Majority	=	50-74%
Less than half	=	15-49%
Few	=	Up to 15%

I hope you find this report helpful and informative



Donald Duncan

Director of Educational Services

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Educational Services

Follow-through report for Speyside High School August 2005

Introduction

Speyside High School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in April and May 2003 and the resulting report was published in September 2003. As required, this follow-through report is produced by the local Education Authority within two years of the publication of the original report. The report has been validated by HMIE following a visit to the school in June 2005.

Continuous Improvement

Attainment

The overall quality of attainment has improved from good to very good at S1 and S2 and remains good at S3 to S4 and very good at S5 and S6.

Since the initial inspection, levels of attainment in S1 and S2 in reading and writing have risen significantly while mathematics has shown some improvement. Attainment in reading at the end of S2 is well above the national and Moray schools' average. It is also well above the average level of performance in schools in similar authority areas in Scotland. In writing standards at S2 have risen significantly from 2003 and are now well above the national and authority averages. Attainment in mathematics has improved since 2003 and continues to be well above the local and national averages. However performance at the end of S2 in these three areas is still below the levels achieved by the school in 2002.

In national qualifications there is a downward trend over the past three years in the number of pupils attaining five or more credit passes in Standard Grade examinations at the end of S4. However Attainment at general and foundation levels remains very good. All S4 pupils in 2004 achieved five or more Standard Grade awards at foundation level or better. Boys have performed significantly worse at Standard Grade level than girls. Overall performance at this level is better than the national average and better than that in schools with similar characteristics. At Higher Grade performance has continued to be very strong with improvements in the numbers of students achieving three or more and five or more passes at grades A-C. Performance at Advanced Higher level has fallen from 2003 and is now more in line with national averages and schools with similar characteristics.

Detailed analysis of attainment at each level and in each subject area is the basis for action across the school. These activities are aimed at maintaining or improving performance and to acknowledge good practice and address identified weaknesses. This area will continue to be addressed by the school and education authority staff working together.

Leadership and Self-evaluation

The leadership of the school by the headteacher continues to be very good. He provides clear strategic direction through his purposeful leadership of the senior management team (SMT) and delegates responsibility well. Members of the SMT are clear in their current remits and have acquired a greater role in school improvement activity through their links with subject departments. All members of the SMT have a shared focus on improving learning and teaching in the classroom.

The school has reviewed practice in a number of areas that have resulted in improvements for the school. These include:

- the introduction and implementation of target setting for S1/S2 and for S3/S4. All pupils now have attainment targets, discussed, agreed, monitored and reviewed by senior staff. Overall attainment at S2 has improved and the high level of performance at S4 has been maintained overall.
- members of the SMT and principal teachers have introduced more consistent monitoring of learning and teaching. The focus for this activity is agreed with staff and written records are maintained and feedback given more systematically. Senior staff are better able to identify priorities for development at departmental level intended to improve learning and teaching and pupil attainment.
- departmental planning procedures have been improved which in turn support whole school improvement planning;
- there is evidence of increased enterprise activities across a number of stages in the school;
- staff are more engaged in and committed to continuous professional development activities, including Assessment is for Learning.

Progress with Main Points for Action.

1. The provision of changing facilities for physical education should be improved, including the prevention of access to them by members of the public.

The school and the authority have made good progress with this main point for action.

The authority, in consultation with the headteacher, has developed a proposal which, in the medium term, will fully meet this main point for action. This will involve additional changing and showering accommodation being provided as part of an additional sports facility. Funding for this is identified within the Council's capital programme. In the interim school use of the swimming pool changing rooms has been optimised which together with the installation of digital locks will safeguard children's privacy and welfare.

The authority will ensure that these developments are progressed without undue delay. HMIE has asked to be kept informed about progress with these planned improvements to accommodation at the school.

2. The very good practice in target-setting in S5/S6 should be extended to other stages to help in raising attainment.

The school has made very good progress with this main point for action.

Target setting has been implemented in S1/S2 and in S3/S4. Targets have been set for individual pupils at the end of S2, expressed in terms of 5-14 levels in English and Mathematics, using assessment information gained from standardised tests, primary school transfer information and the professional judgement of staff. Targets for the end of S2 in science are to be implemented in session 2005/2006. Individual student targets have been set for each Standard Grade or Intermediate course. These are used to monitor pupil progress through S3 and into S4, especially after S3 examinations and prelims in S4.

Attainment in S2 has risen significantly in English and mathematics and the school has in place a number of strategies to secure the continuing high levels of performance at S4.

3. Principal teachers and the SMT should improve their approaches to quality assurance through:

- **more focused and consistent monitoring of learning and teaching; and**
- **the consistent recording of agreed action points as result of departmental reviews and classroom visits.**

The school has made very good progress with this main point for action.

Senior staff have introduced a more consistent and comprehensive approach to monitoring learning and teaching. Principal teachers have undertaken regular classroom visits, with structured feedback to staff and clear points for action agreed. SMT members have focused on monitoring the learning and teaching of both linked departments and specific year groups. The format of the feedback sheet used following classroom visits has been modified to include action points for the teacher. The agendas of departmental reviews have included these agreed action points.

These revised procedures have given senior managers more information on the quality of learning and teaching and added to the range of quality assurance strategies aimed at supporting school improvement activity.

4. Development Planning should be improved, particularly at departmental level

The school has made very good progress with this main point for action.

A new standard format for departmental development plans has been prepared and implemented. The level of detail in the whole-school development plan has been increased to include more evidence and objectives relating to departmental activities and priorities. Guidelines for principal teachers on departmental plan construction have been revised and now contain more detail on specific targets, implementation strategies and the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. Departmental plans now provide senior managers more information on improvement activity and outcomes.

5. The education authority should review arrangements for joint planning between the school and community learning and development staff. The aim should be to provide the best possible access to the facilities in the building for all users.

The education authority has made good progress with this main point for action.

Senior authority staff and the headteacher have met on a number of occasions to identify the key issues around the management of community facilities. Revised procedures now include the establishment of regular, monthly meetings to review local arrangements and to respond to changing local need. Some good progress has been made towards improving access to community facilities within the building and a review of joint planning arrangements has been completed.

This remains an area for continuing improvement action for the school and the authority.

Conclusion

Overall the school has made good progress in addressing the main points for action. Consequently neither the authority nor HMIE will publish any further reports in connection with the 2003 HMIE report. Authority staff, however, will continue to be involved with the school on an on-going basis to help make further improvements and address the issues raised in this report.

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