



**West Lothian
Council**
Education Services

The James Young High School

HMIE Progress Report

November 2015

The Inspection

Education Scotland published a report on the inspection of The James Young High School on the 30 September 2013. Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action included in the original inspection report.

Continuous Improvement

The James Young High School is working hard to continue to improve the quality of education it provides for its pupils. The Head Teacher and staff are working to ensure that pupils learn effectively in a positive and stimulating learning environment.

The 2013 report noted that the school has well-behaved young people who enjoy positive relationships with each other and staff.

The work of the staff in creating high-quality opportunities for young people to extend their personal achievements was mentioned, as was the effective partnership working to secure positive destinations for young people who are at risk of missing out. These both continue to be strengths.

The school is maintaining high standards and continues to introduce initiatives in line with Curriculum for Excellence, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning and motivation.

All staff responded positively and enthusiastically in implementing the action plan following the report. There have been key changes in the leadership structure of the school which have helped to continue to develop and improve aspects of the work of the school.

Progress towards the main points for action

- **Improve arrangements for assessing, tracking and monitoring progress to raise attainment**

The school has made very good progress towards this point of action.

There is a clear focus on improving attainment trends in comparison with similar schools. The school introduced Attainment Action Plans, pupil focussed meetings with the extended leadership team and a Senior Phase Tracking and Monitoring Policy and procedures. These strategies are supporting significant improvement in attainment in all levels.

Good progress has been made in developing an understanding of progress across the S1 to S3 curriculum amongst all teachers - departments focus on how they plan and assess progress, and how they make sure that standards are consistent across the department. They are working on how they discuss progress with pupils, help them to identify their strengths and work with them on next steps in their learning. Additionally, staff are working on how best to report this progress to parents and track it at whole school level.

The school is making effective use of available data, to support raising attainment and achievement for all pupils.

Very good progress has also been made in supporting the number of young people leaving school to go to Higher Education.

- **Improve additional support needs provision and practice to better meet the needs of all young people**

The school has made very good progress towards this point of action.

The school has changed the pupil support structure to one with a house system. This allows greater consistency and progressive support for pupils S1 – S6. The teaching of personal and social education by house heads, which helps to improve relationships and meet pupil needs, is prioritised.

Monthly additional support needs meetings and weekly house meetings take place to allow more opportunities for support staff to plan for pupils' needs. A Targeted Support Forum has been introduced to allow greater partnership working with external agencies. There is also now a nurture base for vulnerable pupils, and an i-aspire base for pupils for whom the curriculum is challenging, or who have greater social, emotional or behavioural needs. In addition there is autism in-reach, where staff in our autism resource work with some of our mainstream autistic pupils as appropriate. Young people in the autism resource are well supported by their teachers.

The school uses the guidelines on Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). There are new procedures on working with other partners to support pupils, as well as using the wellbeing indicators - Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included (SHANARRI).

- **Improve the curriculum to ensure all young people experience an appropriately broad curriculum**

The school has made very good progress towards this point of action.

There have been significant improvements to the curriculum in both the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase.

The school day structure changed to a 32 period week. This has led to several improvements including increasing to 10 subjects and including new i-choose options in S3. This has provided a greater breadth of subjects studied in S3, and has targeted every curriculum area.

Time allocation to Modern Languages in the Broad General Education has been increased to support the Scottish Government's 1 + 2 language strategy.

Additional time for literacy and numeracy S1 – S3 has been provided primarily for challenge and recovery.

There is also now a challenge week for S1 – S3 and a strategic approach to inter-disciplinary learning is in place to provide additional opportunities for pupils.

Individual curriculum planning for pupils has been improved with a focus at the end of S3 on progression pathways in both curricular and personal achievement.

In the Senior Phase, the range and levels of qualifications for pupils has increased. Pupils now benefit from increased opportunities for alternative qualifications with external partners. In addition provision in S6 continues to be enhanced. Furthermore, some pupils in S4 gain an Employability Award. The development of an i-work employability pathway is underway.

Very good progress has been made in terms of increasing awareness of young people's levels of involvement in personal achievement activities. The new school website promotes opportunities for achievement and celebrates success. The James Young 'i-journey' has been introduced which is the way the school highlights all the additional activities that take place outwith traditional subject teaching, under one pathway. This allows planning and celebration of personal and wider achievement for pupils, whilst developing skills for learning, life and work. The school is now developing the role of staff in tracking this information.

- **Improve outcomes for young people through self-evaluation**

The school has made very good progress towards this point of action.

All departments/faculty areas now produce self-evaluation summaries and Standards and Quality reports, and link these to their departmental improvement plans enabling a consistent commitment to continuous improvement for young people.

A collaborative school improvement approach has been introduced which is based on a self-evaluation approach, thus ensuring appropriate future improvements for young people.

New procedures for the professional review and development for teachers have been introduced to ensure that career long professional learning is understood and established, to support improvements for pupils.

As mentioned above, significant progress has also been made in the area of tracking and monitoring pupils in the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase.

Conclusion

In conclusion, The James Young High School benefits from clear leadership shown by the Head Teacher, and has a strong capacity for further improvement.

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November 2015