

## Inspection of Dalkeith High School

### Report by Dr Grace Vickers, Head of Education

#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines the outcome of the above inspection as carried out by Education Scotland, which was communicated in their letter dated April 2018.

#### 2 Background

**2.1** Dalkeith High school was inspected in February 2018. The report will be published on 22 May 2018 and has been distributed to all Elected Members and Church Representatives on the Cabinet for their information. A copy is included in appendix one.

**2.2** Following inspection, Education Scotland gathers evaluations of the core quality indicators to keep track of how well all schools are doing. This Inspection was the full inspection model lasting 5 days. Education Scotland published a statement about the confidence they had in the school's capacity for improvement. Noted below are the evaluations for Dalkeith High School:

##### School

<b>QI 1.3 Leadership of change</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>Good</b>

**2.3** The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The headteacher is highly committed and has a clear vision for improvement at Dalkeith High School. She is working well with young people, staff, parents and partners to ensure that young people are benefiting from positive experiences and outcomes.
- Staff work well together. They are engaging in a range of professional learning and leadership activities to improve their practice, and are contributing enthusiastically to whole-school improvement.
- The school is developing a creative and enriched curriculum to provide learning pathways for young people to succeed as resourceful and resilient learners. It is making considerable efforts to ensure all young people achieve accreditation for the skills which they gain through an extensive range of opportunities.

**2.4** The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and representatives from Midlothian Council.

- Continue to enable staff to engage in professional learning, which includes opportunities for them to engage further in moderation activities. This will assist them to develop their understanding of standards associated with the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- Evaluate the success of curricular developments on an on-going basis to ensure they continue to provide an appropriate range of learning pathways to help young people to achieve and attain successfully.

- Align the school's work in refreshing the promoting positive behaviour policy with its work in developing and promoting restorative approaches. This should provide staff with a clear framework to support them to ensure positive learning experiences for all young people.
- Improve the consistency of how systems and procedures are used to ensure the wellbeing, inclusion and equality of all young people. Monitoring and tracking the progress of all young people should be carried out in a rigorous and structured way to ensure that barriers to learning are considered regularly and addressed.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

As outlined in the inspection letter, Education Scotland are confident that the school has effective arrangements for ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of education for all learners. As a result Education Scotland will not make any further visits to the school in connection with this inspection.

## **3 Report Implications**

### **3.1 Resource**

The local authority has increased the level of support given to Dalkeith High School for Quality Indicator 3.1 to ensure that areas identified by Inspectors are addressed as a priority. A Senior Manager is working directly with the new DHT Pupil Support and the Headteacher to address issues raised. There has already been significant improvements in this area in the school since the February inspection visit.

### **3.2 Risk**

Education Scotland visit a sample of nursery, primary and secondary schools every year to find out how they are performing. A report is published which informs parents about the key strengths of the school, its capacity for further improvement and sets out the main points for action.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by Schools Group Managers and Senior Education Managers is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of a school to demonstrate its capacity to improve. In the case of this report, direct support has been put in place to ensure that the school implements a robust action plan, based on the recommendations from this inspection report, with agreed timescales for action.

### **3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

### **3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

The school will continue to improve its work in line with its improvement plan and the Education Service will continue to challenge and support the school in relation to developing and implementing a range of quality improvement strategies.

### **3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

The Education (Scotland) Act aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities. Midlothian is highly committed to closing the attainment gap which compliments the strategies employed by Midlothian which are highlighted in the National Improvement Framework report which was presented to Council on 3 November 2015.

### **3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

Copies of the report have been made available to Elected Members, parents of children currently in the school and other interested parties.

### **3.7 Ensuring Equalities**

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

### **3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

### **3.9 IT Issues**

There are no IT implications.

## **4 Recommendations**

Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the content of the inspection report.
- (ii) Note the key strengths outlined in the report.
- (ii) Note the areas for improvement outlined in the report.
- (iii) Note that Education Scotland will not return to the school in connection with this inspection.

**22 May 2018**

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Background Papers: Appendix 1 – Education Scotland Letter

22 May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

In February 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Dalkeith High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher is highly committed and has a clear vision for improvement at Dalkeith High School. She is working well with young people, staff, parents and partners to ensure that young people are benefiting from positive experiences and outcomes.
- Staff work well together. They are engaging in a range of professional learning and leadership activities to improve their practice, and are contributing enthusiastically to whole-school improvement.
- The school is developing a creative and enriched curriculum to provide learning pathways for young people to succeed as resourceful and resilient learners. It is making considerable efforts to ensure all young people achieve accreditation for the skills which they gain through an extensive range of opportunities.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Midlothian Council.

- Continue to enable staff to engage in professional learning, which includes opportunities for them to engage further in moderation activities. This will assist them to develop their understanding of standards associated with the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- Evaluate the success of curricular developments on an on-going basis to ensure they continue to provide an appropriate range of learning pathways to help young people to achieve and attain successfully.
- Align the school's work in refreshing the promoting positive behaviour policy with its work in developing and promoting restorative approaches. This should provide staff with a clear framework to support them to ensure positive learning experiences for all young people.
- Improve the consistency of how systems and procedures are used to ensure the wellbeing, inclusion and equality of all young people. Monitoring and tracking the progress of all young people should be carried out in a rigorous and structured way to ensure that barriers to learning are considered regularly and addressed.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

## Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Dalkeith High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
<b>Leadership of change</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition)</a> , <a href="#">Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a> .	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings will be available on the Education Scotland website at <https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/midlothian/5545838>.

### What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Midlothian Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Celia McArthur  
HM Inspector