

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

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

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

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the content of the inspection report.
- (ii) Note that Education Scotland are trying out some new approaches to inspection and this inspection followed one of the new approaches called the short, more focussed school visit as outlined in section 2.2.
- (iii) Note the key strengths outlined in the report.
- (ii) Note the significant areas for improvement.
- (iii) Note the background factors outlined in section 2.5.
- (iv) Note that Education Scotland will not return to the school in connection with this inspection.
- (v) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

11 May 2018

Report Contact:

Maria Lloyd Tel No: 0131 271 3724

E-mail: maria.lloyd@midlothian.gov.uk

Background Papers: Appendix 1 – Education Scotland Letter

Declaration Box

Instructions: *This box must be completed by the author of the report. The box will be copied and saved by the Council Secretariat who will delete it from the report prior to photocopying the agenda.*

Title of Report: *Inspection of Dalkeith High School*

Meeting Presented to: *Cabinet –May 2018*

Author of Report: *Dr Grace Vickers, Head of Education*

I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-

- X All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Human Resources.*
- X All risk implications have been addressed.*
- X All other report implications have been addressed.*
- X My Director has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.*

For Cabinet reports, please advise the Council Secretariat if the report has an education interest. This will allow the report to be located on the Cabinet agenda among the items in which the Religious Representatives are entitled to participate.

Likewise, please advise the Council Secretariat if any report for Midlothian Council has an education interest. The Religious Representatives are currently entitled to attend meetings of the Council in a non-voting observer capacity, but with the right to speak (but not vote) on any education matter under consideration, subject always to observing the authority of the Chair.

