

Inspection of Penicuik High School

Report by Mary Smith, Director, Education, Communities and Economy

1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines the outcome of the above inspection as carried out by HM Inspectors in February 2014.

2 Background

2.1 Penicuik High School Centre was inspected in February 2014 as part of a national sample of secondary, primary and nursery education. The report was published on 25 March 2014 and has been distributed to all Elected Members and Church Representatives on the Cabinet for their information. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It should be noted that due to ill health the Headteacher was not at school during the inspection period.

2.2 Following a school inspection the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing. Noted below are the evaluations for Penicuik High School:

Improvements in performance	Very good
Learners' experiences	Good
Meeting learning needs	Very good

The Inspectors also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school:

The curriculum	Good
Improvement through self-evaluation	Good

2.3 The following key strengths were indicated by the inspection team:

- An inclusive school ethos, built on the shared values of PRIDE (Participation, Respect, Inclusion, Determination and Excellence), which supports young people to achieve very well.
- Confident and courteous young people who enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other.
- The effectiveness of support provided to young people requiring additional support with their learning.
- The range of opportunities, including international experiences, for young people to develop skills for life and work.

2.4 The following areas for improvement were agreed between Education Scotland, the school and the Directorate:

- Continue to develop the curriculum to provide all young people with their full entitlement to a broad general education, including appropriate personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities provided by the school.
- Continue to develop arrangements to assess and monitor young people's progress and achievement from S1 to S3 to ensure they achieve as highly as possible.

3 Conclusion

Education Scotland have indicated that they are confident that the school's evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, they will make no further visits in connection with this inspection.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource

There are no financial and human resource implications associated with this report.

4.2 Risk

Education Scotland visit a sample of 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.

Following the publication of that report further support will be given to the school by Education Scotland and by the Education Authority to assist improvement and monitor progress. A follow-through report on the progress of the school will be published by either Education Scotland or by the Education Authority, within 1 year of the date of publication of the original report.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by the Schools Group Manager and members of the 3-18 Improvement Team is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of the school to demonstrate its capacity to improve.

4.3 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

4.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The work of the school supports a number of outcomes within the Single Midlothian Plan including ensuring that young people are better educated, more skilled, successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

4.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Young people in Penicuik High School achieve very well in a range of contexts. They are highly active contributors to the life of the school and the wider community. Through an extensive range of opportunities provided by the school, they are developing skills and attributes to prepare them for life and work. The school has seen notable success with the number of young people entering higher education.

4.5.1 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The school displays major strengths in meeting the learning needs of young people. It will continue to develop this area of strength to ensure that it meets the needs of all groups within the school community.

4.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

During their visit Inspectors spoke to parents and young people and worked closely with the Acting Headteacher and staff. As a result they noted particular aspects of the school's recent work, including the development of pupil voice and participation. Staff regularly seek the views of young people to inform improvements in the school.

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

4.8 Ensuring Equalities

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

4.9 Supporting Sustainability Development

The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

5 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

6 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) note the content of the inspection report;
- (ii) pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration;
- (iii) congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with Penicuik High School Centre on the key strengths highlighted in the report; and
- (iv) note that, whilst acknowledging progress reflected in this report, the Council will continue to challenge, support and monitor the service in relation to achieving excellence through further improving performance.
- (v) instruct the Director, Education, Communities and Economy to ensure that the School Improvement Plan incorporates the recommendations of the inspection team.

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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 Penicuik High School

Meeting Presented to: Cabinet on 22 April 2014

Author of Report: Peter McNaughton

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

- ☒ ***All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Integrated Service Support.***
- ☒ ***All risk implications have been addressed.***
- ☒ ***All other report implications have been addressed.***
- ☒ ***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.