

**Keith Grammar School
Interim follow-through
The Moray Council
6 February 2007**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Keith Grammar School in January 2006. The report indicated that HM Inspectors would engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress and would publish an interim report within one year of the publication of the original report.

Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original HMIE inspection report. HM Inspectors carried out an interim follow-through visit to the school in November 2006. The team assessed the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and evaluated progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

2. Continuous improvement

The education authority had taken a number of effective steps to provide support to the school. A member of the education authority's quality improvement team had met with principal teachers to further develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Principal teachers were devoting more time to identifying and spreading good practice within the school.

The education authority had engaged an external provider to work with members of the senior management team to develop effective teamwork. The senior management team had improved communications within the school and had involved staff in decision making. Members of the management team had further developed their role in quality assurance with their link departments.

School staff had taken some useful steps to improve aspects of the school's timetables. Most pupils were now able to follow appropriate courses. They had not yet consistently developed the curriculum for vocational pupils in the upper stages. The headteacher had brought about some improvements in management and communication but work remained to be done. He will require the continued support of the education authority to ensure that he has the capacity to improve the school further.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in January 2006 identified five main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

3.1 Review the curriculum to ensure choices offered to pupils are appropriate and can be successfully delivered by the school and associated outside organisations.

The school had taken some promising steps towards meeting this main point for action, but more remained to be done.

School staff had improved the range of course options available to pupils. Almost all pupils were now able to opt for their preferred subject choices. Staff had placed a range of short term courses more appropriately within the structure of course choices. Staff had reviewed vocational options and pupils choosing these were now required to undertake a rigorous selection process. This process included pupils making formal applications and undergoing interviews by both the school and college staff. School staff had not yet ensured that pupils choosing vocational options undertook appropriately challenging activities during the two days each week which they spent in school.

3.2 Involve all staff more effectively in delivering initiatives to improve the school, particularly in relation to attainment and new courses.

The headteacher and staff had made a sound start to addressing this main point for action.

The school had formed a number of useful staff working groups to deal with issues such as learning and teaching, attainment and behaviour management. The senior management team had appropriately consulted and involved principal teachers in making changes to the school timetable. More remained to be done to ensure that staff were able to meet the learning needs of all pupils fully. The headteacher now had regular timetabled meetings with principal teachers and had coopted two members of the group onto the senior management team. Staff were now consulted on items for inclusion at senior management team meetings and regularly received written records of these meetings. The headteacher required to take further steps to ensure that all staff were consistently consulted about planned improvements to the school.

3.3 Ensure that all staff use consistent approaches to promoting positive behaviour.

Progress in addressing this main point for action had been slow and more work remained to be done.

The senior management team had set up a useful working group to review the promotion of positive behaviour across the school. The working group had proposed plans which involved significant changes to the school's behaviour management policy. These plans were at an early stage of development and had not yet had significant impact. Most staff used praise more effectively to motivate pupils. Staff in a number of departments regularly acknowledged and celebrated pupils' achievements. This good practice was not yet consistent throughout the school.

3.4 Further develop the quality assurance role of principal teachers in order to improve pupils' classroom experiences.

Useful progress had been made in addressing the main point for action.

The education authority had provided helpful training for staff. Principal teachers had worked with an education authority officer to develop their awareness of their roles and responsibilities. The school had provided a support pack to staff, giving further advice on taking forward initiatives to raise attainment and improve classroom practice. A number of principal teachers were now using their departmental meetings to share good practice such as peer checking of teachers' assessments of pupils' work observing classroom practice and giving effective feedback to pupils. The school, supported by the authority, had recently introduced a promising tracking system to assist departments in monitoring pupils' progress and attainment. This system had not yet had time to have significant impact.

3.5 Ensure senior managers work more closely as a team and with other staff to share best practice and improve further the overall quality of learning and teaching across the school.

There had been some progress in addressing this main point for action but more remained to be done.

The headteacher had undertaken interviews with all principal teachers to discuss pupils' performance in external examinations. Members of the senior management team had worked to improve their teamwork with the help of an external provider engaged by the education authority. The senior management team met regularly to discuss the work of the school and new initiatives. The headteacher had not yet taken a sufficiently central role in planning improvements, taking forward key initiatives, and auditing their success. He did not always consult fully with his team prior to making changes in key aspects of the school's provision. As a result, the senior management team were not yet working fully effectively as a team. The depute headteachers were now playing a stronger role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Principal teachers and senior promoted staff were increasingly monitoring the quality of learning and teaching in departments through a range of initiatives including direct observation of lessons. Overall, procedures for quality assurance and development had improved. Staff now needed to ensure that these procedures had a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning across the school.

4. Conclusion

The headteacher and staff, with the support of the education authority, had taken positive steps towards meeting some of the main points of action. They had made progress in improving aspects of the curriculum and in involving staff more in reviewing the work of the school. The headteacher had not given a clear enough lead to staff in planning and implementing improvements in some areas. He had not yet ensured that senior managers worked effectively as a team to improve the school's provision. Overall, progress towards fully meeting the main points for action had been slow and much remained to be done. HMIE will continue to engage with the school and education authority and will provide another report on progress for parents and carers within one year of the publication of this report.

David Martin
HM Inspector

6 February 2007

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