



**Crieff High School
Perth and Kinross Council
9 December 2008**

We published a report on Crieff High School in January 2007. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action. This is the report of the follow-through inspection which took place in September 2008.

This follow-through report tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on how the school is getting on with the main points for action. First we focus on changes in the core work of the school. We explain how the school has got better at helping young people to learn and benefit from being at the school. Next we look at the key processes which enable this to happen, including the involvement of parents¹. Our report also describes developments in the 'ethos' of the school, by which we mean how well young people are cared for and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally we comment on improvements in leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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1. The school

Crieff High School serves the town of Crieff and the surrounding area. The school has improved its accommodation and work is under way on a new school building.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Young people's opportunities to achieve.
- Examples of innovative learning approaches.
- Young people's contribution to their school and community.
- Support from parents for improving the school.

3. Examples of good practice

- Stimulating approaches linking art and modern languages.
- Development of young people's leadership skills.
- The increasing use of new technology to share good practice.

You can find out more about these examples of good practice at www.hmie.gov.uk.

4. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Across the school, young people's behaviour and attitudes to learning have continued to improve. More young people receive praise for their efforts and there are fewer exclusions. The curriculum has improved. For example, Perth College lecturers provide Skills for Work courses in the school on hairdressing. Young people can travel to The Community School of Auchterarder to take courses in construction. The quality of young people's experiences in physical education is

much better. Across the school there are examples of effective practice in learning and teaching and meeting learning needs but practice is not consistent enough. Increasingly teachers are beginning to build on prior learning from primary school and encourage young people to be more independent in their learning. Better facilities for the library, support for learning, drama, music and other areas are helping young people to become more confident and effective learners.

Attainment by S1/S2 has risen significantly in reading and writing and stayed the same in mathematics. At S3/S4 and S5, the highest achievers are attaining more. However, lower achieving young people are attaining less. Girls in particular are doing well but boys' attainment has fallen. Staff have introduced a wider range of awards and after-school sports, especially for girls. As a result, more young people experience success and win recognition. Young people continue to be successful in local and national competitions.

5. How well do staff work with others to improve young people's learning?

Teachers are introducing innovative approaches which are deepening young people's understanding and enjoyment as they learn. For example, young people have had stimulating opportunities to develop their skills in art and design alongside music and modern languages. Support for learning staff work with colleagues in Crieff Learning Centre, the community link worker, Fairview Special School, and other agencies to match learning better to the needs and interests of young people with significant additional support needs. Staff work well now with employers and the local college to prepare young people for work.

6. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?

Staff, young people and parents support a wide range of charities, school and community events. For example, the headteacher contributes to a range of groups planning community improvements. Senior students help in S1 classes. They also help organise the school's popular 'open days'. Young people and staff regularly display their artwork in the local library. Young people organise popular 'snowflake and daffodil teas' for elderly local residents. Links with schools in China, France, Germany, and Kenya are developing understanding and positive attitudes towards the language and culture of other peoples.

7. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?

New arrangements for promoting positive behaviour, healthy choices and celebrating success are all helping to raise expectations. Parents support improvements in the school's dress code, discipline and approaches to raising attainment. Regular assemblies organised by prefects give young people productive opportunities to display their talents. Young people value opportunities to win awards and prizes for responsible behaviour. Almost all young people leave school for education or work. Across the school individual teachers and departments set high standards to which young people respond very well. This good practice is not yet consistent enough. Senior staff recognise the need to intervene earlier to help boys and lower-achieving young people in particular to achieve more.

8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The school has a much clearer sense of direction under the current leadership team. It has benefited from support from the education authority and much more stable staffing. Staff, parents and pupils have responded well to the headteacher's drive to improve the school.

Since the inspection, the education authority has made the headteacher permanent and has appointed a new senior management team including a business manager. The education authority and a teacher from Perth Academy have effectively contributed to improving physical education. The majority of staff have reviewed their professional and development needs. Several staff are undertaking leadership training either leading towards the Scottish Qualification for Headship or an authority award. Six are working to become chartered teachers. Others mentor new teachers to develop their skills. All teachers lead initiatives or contribute to school improvements and sharing good practice. Similarly, young people now have greatly increased opportunities to act as leaders of groups. In addition, the new prefect system develops young people's leadership skills. Staff have begun to make better use of evaluation in planning improvements and taking account of parents' and young people's views.

9. What happens next?

There is clear evidence of improvement since the original inspection. The school now performs well overall and aspects which previously had important weaknesses are satisfactory or better. With continued strong leadership, more coordinated use of self-evaluation, ongoing staff commitment and support from the education authority, the school is well placed to continue to improve. We will make no further visits in connection with the original inspection.

District Inspector: Frances Corcoran
9 December 2008

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