

**Grange Academy
Kilmarnock
East Ayrshire Council
26 June 2007**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Grange Academy in April 2005. 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 revisited the school in March 2007 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

2. Continuous improvement

Since the inspection in December 2004, the senior management team and staff had worked hard and responded very well to the main points of action. Provision of information and communications technology (ICT) had greatly improved and almost all staff and pupils were using ICT to enhance their teaching and pupils' learning. The school had considerably advanced its approaches to monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. It had successfully developed the personal and social education programme (PSE). Pupils spoke positively of the content and relevancy of the programme although they had felt that there were some topics that required further development. The senior management team had ensured that the self-evaluation process was carried out systematically and with an appropriate focus on the quality of learning and teaching in departments. Some departments need to develop further the monitoring and self-evaluation of their work. Accommodation had improved and many areas around the school were in better condition than they were during the time of the last inspection.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in Grange Academy 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 Provide more opportunities for pupils to be more actively involved in their own learning and extend the use of information and communications technology to enhance pupils' learning.

The school had made good progress with this main point for action.

Teachers now provided a wider range of opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning in class. In addition, the school had actively developed and supported a number of out of school activities and projects at local, national and international level. As a result of their involvement and learning, pupils identified positive impacts such as increased confidence in public speaking, more responsible attitudes to human rights, care and concern for the environment and fund raising for charity on a regular basis. The school had purchased significant amounts of ICT equipment following the last inspection. This equipment was being used imaginatively in a variety of classes such as drama, maths, English and arts.

Pupils made good and imaginative use of software packages in learning, and in some subjects, such as drama, a more interactive approach was adopted using multi-media. ICT was also being used to support pupils with hearing disabilities. The school should extend the creative and multi-media approaches being used in drama and English to other areas of the curriculum and ensure that pupils receive appropriate guidance on internet safety.

3.2 Develop further the school's approaches to quality assurance including the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress.

The school had made very good progress with this main point for action.

Across the school, staff had effectively developed their existing approaches to monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. The school had successfully carried out many surveys with pupils, staff and parents in relation to learning and teaching and incorporated the results into their improvement plans. The school had succinctly updated pupils' early warning letters to inform parents when their children were not performing to the best of their ability. When analysing SQA results, subject departments were now indicating the action they would take in the light of the analysis. Most departments had produced a suitable monitoring and evaluation calendar indicating relevant and related tasks. They had surveyed pupils on what they had learnt and asked them how the department could improve their performance. They had used pupils' logs and progress sheets to help pupils monitor their own performance and set their own targets. Pupils responded positively to these approaches and to opportunities to discuss their progress in detail with their subject teachers.

3.3 Improve the curriculum for S5 and S6 to include a personal and social education programme and a continuing element of religious and moral education.

The school had made very good progress with this main point for action.

There was now a comprehensive and varied programme of PSE for the S5 and S6 year groups. The curriculum addressed a range of personal and social issues, including anti-discrimination, drugs, health and personal safety. There was regular involvement from a local church minister in the programme for religious and moral education. Staff in PSE had worked closely with the S5 and S6 year groups to survey, evaluate and develop the programme. This survey showed that pupils responded positively to the PSE programme and they provided constructive and evaluative comments. As a result of this survey, a new, more extensive programme had been prepared. The S5 and S6 pupils noted positive changes to personal behaviour as a result of their learning. The use of guest speakers from external organisations was particularly welcomed. The pupils were working with the school staff to introduce sustainable development and fair trade issues.

3.4 Strengthen senior management links with departments to ensure greater rigour and effectiveness in improving attainment and in self-evaluation.

The school had made very good progress with this main point for action.

The senior management team had developed stronger links with departments and provided very good leadership in promoting self-evaluation. There was now a whole-school approach to self-evaluation which had become a major part of the school's improvement agenda. All

staff were knowledgeable of current self-evaluation approaches and had successfully incorporated the main aspects into their learning and teaching. The senior management team had undertaken a well-planned programme of lesson observations to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. Faculty heads and principal teachers had also produced a similar calendar of visits for their departments. A number of teachers had effectively participated in peer observations within and without their department. In all cases, visits to observe lessons were discussed with the class teacher and written feedback was provided. Teachers were now evaluating their own lessons and had improved the quality of feedback they gave to pupils. Pupils had experience of self-evaluation in all departments. They spoke positively of the various approaches that helped them to know how they were progressing and how to improve their performance. Across the school, pupils had evaluated lessons and provided written feedback to their teachers. They had also evaluated their own and others progress and set targets for themselves. All of these developments had a strong impact on pupils learning and teaching and there were signs of improvement in attainment.

3.5 Address the weaknesses in accommodation identified in the report.

The school and the authority had made very good progress with this main point for action.

As part of East Ayrshire's Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programme the council was building a new school to replace the existing building and which was scheduled to open in August 2008. The authority had carried out appropriate improvements around the school. These included introducing a soundfield system which helped teachers greatly in their teaching. A number of areas, as indicted in the previous report, had been upgraded, such as pupil toilets, classroom furniture, and making the school building wind and watertight. The authority had carried out a number of repairs around the school, for example to the roof, the gym, staff bases, dining hall, drains and fire doors. With this improvement the school now provided a better environment for learning and teaching.

4. Conclusion

The headteacher, senior managers and staff had shown high levels of commitment and teamwork and had made very good progress in addressing the main points of action in the initial inspection report. The school had now established an environment in which the quality of learning and teaching had improved considerably. The education authority had supported the school well in its improvements. In view of the progress made in addressing the main points of action, HM Inspectors will not carry out any further inspection visits in connection with the report of April 2005.

Hakim Din
HM Inspector

26 June 2007

How can you contact us?

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Should you wish to comment on any aspect of follow-through inspections, you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, at the above address.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management Unit, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk

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