



**Govan High School
Glasgow City Council
5 May 2009**

We published a report on Govan High School in June 2007. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action.

This follow-through report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in February 2009. It 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.

A copy of this report has been placed on the HMIE website www.hmie.gov.uk. Where applicable, you will also find descriptions of good practice in the school and analyses of questionnaire returns.

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

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. Example of good practice
4. How well do young people learn and achieve?
5. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?
6. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?
7. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?
8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
9. What happens next?

1. The school

Govan High School serves an area in the south-west of the City of Glasgow.

Since the inspection of January 2007, attendance has improved and fewer young people are excluded from school. The school roll has fallen by more than ten per cent over the past two years.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Very effective partnerships to help develop young people's learning.
- Preparation of young people for the world of work.
- Recognition and recording of young people's wider achievements.
- The commitment of all staff to the care and welfare of young people.

3. Example of good practice

- Development of an extensive set of 'Future Skills' that allows the school to identify, develop, record and report the achievements of individual young people.

4. How well do young people learn and achieve?

The school has made important changes to what young people learn. Young people develop a range of valuable life skills including those that prepare them for the world of work. From S2 onwards, young people have opportunities to choose what they will study each year. Very helpful information on what young people have already learned is made available to staff. They now need to use that information more fully to help them provide all young people with learning activities suited to their needs. Since the original inspection, more young people attend school regularly and behave well in lessons. Young people's attainment by the end of S2 in reading, writing and

mathematics has improved. There have also been some improvements in young people's attainment at other stages. Overall, however, attainment at S4 to S6 remains below that of young people with similar needs and backgrounds in other schools. Following on from the examination results at S4 and S5 in 2008, the school and education authority have made changes to the curriculum. Most young people attain well in courses provided by partner organisations. The school recognises and carefully records what young people achieve outside the classroom. From S2 onwards, young people do not always follow programmes of study that are sufficiently demanding. Some choose courses that do not build on their earlier learning and achievements. The school needs to review the impact of recent changes it has made on young people's learning. Choices made by young people should be guided to make sure that they study enough courses in sufficient depth to achieve their potential.

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

Staff are now working and planning more effectively with colleagues in associated primary schools. Primary and secondary staff know more about learning and teaching in each other's schools. Secondary staff have started to make good use of the detailed information they receive to plan the learning of young people entering S1. Primary and secondary staff are now well placed to plan jointly further improvements in what young people learn. The school works hard to involve parents more directly in their children's learning. Regular, high-quality publications tell parents what is happening in the school. The school issues helpful monthly reports telling parents how their children are getting on in their learning. The school has increased the number of valuable partnerships with businesses and other organisations. These help young people develop important skills and increase their knowledge of the world of work. Since the inspection, the proportions of young people finding jobs or continuing with their learning have increased steadily. The school successfully provides its young people with appropriate role models by involving former pupils

and well-known national and international figures. Through the 'Positive Destinations' programme, the school works with partners to support young people at risk of missing out on their education.

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

The school regularly asks young people, staff and parents for their views on how it is doing and about proposed changes. Teachers regularly visit one another's classes to observe learning and share good practice. As a result, the quality of teaching and of learning activities is becoming more consistent. Some senior pupils support younger learners through, for example, helping with paired reading activities. Young people develop citizenship skills through a wide range of activities and charity work. The school council provides a few young people with opportunities to discuss possible improvements to the school. The school should consider how to provide further opportunities for young people to have more say about their learning.

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

The headteacher and staff are committed to raising young people's expectations and aspirations. Young people's achievements are carefully recorded and celebrated. Every young person benefits from a helpful meeting with a teacher once a week to discuss their progress and to plan next steps in their learning. Young people's progress is carefully tracked from one year to the next. The school now needs to use this information fully to ensure that all young people are sufficiently challenged and reach their full potential. Most teachers help young people to think about their learning and the progress they are making. Many help young people to become more successful learners through good use of technology. The school is well placed to share and spread this good practice more widely.

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

The headteacher and staff have a sound knowledge of their school and community. They have a clear vision for the school. Staff and parents have been consulted on the future direction of the school. Faculty leaders and pastoral support staff contribute well to moving the school forward. Young people in the senior years would benefit from more opportunity to put their leadership qualities and skills into practice. Many of the important changes made by the school are improving learning and effectively preparing young people for adult life. It now needs to ensure that it rigorously and consistently addresses the learning needs of all its young people.

9. What happens next?

There is clear evidence of improvement since the initial inspection in January 2007. Overall, the school is now performing better. There have been significant improvements in a number of important areas, including links with associated primary schools and the school's approaches to checking the quality of its work. The way in which the school meets young people's learning needs, which previously was weak, is now at a satisfactory or better level. The attainment of young people has improved at several stages and there are signs of further improvement. With the continued commitment of staff, and further support from the education authority, the school has the capacity to improve further. The District Inspector will continue to monitor the extent to which the learning experiences provided by the school enable all young people to achieve their full potential. In September 2009, HMIE will ask the education authority for a report on the attainment and achievement of young people. Parents will be informed of progress.

Managing Inspector: Douglas Marr
5 May 2009

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