

**Plockton High School Residence  
The Highland Council  
18 December 2007**

## **Contents**

## **Page**

<b>1. The inspection</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Continuous improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4. Conclusion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How can you contact us?</b>	<b>4</b>

## **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and Care Commission published a report on the inspection of Plockton High School Residence in October 2005. An HM Inspector visited the residence in May 2007 to assess the extent to which the residence was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

## **2. Continuous improvement**

Important changes had taken place to the leadership and staffing of the residence since the original inspection. Following significant restructuring of council services, an overall manager to direct and support the five residences in the Highland council had very recently been appointed. The acting manager continued in post. To improve the management capacity of the residence, two further team leaders were to be appointed in the near future.

The arrangements for staff development and review were being improved. The acting manager had undertaken a professional review and was improving her professional qualifications. The overall manager of residences had begun to work towards improving training opportunities for all staff and introducing procedures for supervision visits by managers.

Information and communications technology (ICT) resources in the residence had been increased. Four new computers had recently been acquired, ensuring pupils had better access to ICT. In response to requests from pupils, the education authority and the acting manager of the residence were currently exploring ways of enabling pupils to access the Internet more readily and to use e-mail, with appropriate safeguards.

Improvements had been made to the arrangements for pastoral care. Pupils had been offered a range of counselling services, and a few had taken advantage of this opportunity. There remained scope to improve the involvement of health professionals in offering services to pupils in the evenings.

The recent reorganisation of the structure of the Highland Education Authority central support systems had led to slow progress in several aspects of the residence's planned improvement, notably in development planning. This restructuring was now almost complete and, with consequent improved support from the education authority, the residence was well placed to continue to improve its provision for young people.

## **3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action**

The initial inspection report published in October 2005 identified three 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 Improve the leadership of the residence and approaches to self-evaluation.**

The residence had made adequate progress towards meeting this main point for action.

In her short time in post, the overall manager of residences had outlined a clear strategic vision for their development and identified appropriate areas for support and improvement. She had gained the confidence of the residence staff and shared this vision with them. Communications among the acting manager of the residence, the headteacher of the high school and the director of the music school had improved. All three managers had met to plan approaches to pupils' wellbeing and to ensure the optimum use of resources, including space in the residence. The acting manager of the residence had regular contact with the Plockton High School guidance team. This improved partnership enabled all staff to offer better support to vulnerable pupils. The acting manager of the residence recognised the need to refine further the residence's systems for recording and filing confidential information.

The residence's approaches to self-evaluation were in the very early stages of development. Some consultation with pupils had been carried out on aspects of the residence's work. However, the acting manager had yet to carry out a full audit, involving staff, parents and residents. This was planned to take place in the near future.

### **3.2 Ensure that pupils are systematically consulted and their views taken into account in improving the residence.**

The residence had made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

A pupil council had been established to consult pupils and engage them in making appropriate decisions about improving the residence. The council had been successful in securing improvements to the social areas and amenities in the residence. Although a few residents did not always agree with the outcome of discussions, all agreed that their views were taken into account. Pupils had made complaints about the shower facilities through the pupil council and full account had been taken of their views. The education authority had made clear plans and identified funding for the refurbishment of the shower area. Pupils and staff had been consulted on the plans and appropriate action taken to meet their few concerns.

### **3.3 Ensure that staff, pupils and parents are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities, for example on the residence code of conduct and the provision of weekend activities.**

The residence had made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

Staff and residents together had drawn up a code of acceptable conduct, including rewards, rules and sanctions. The code had been shared with parents and clearly displayed in the residence social areas. Pupils accepted that these were appropriate and necessary for communal living. The residence's improved procedures for induction days had ensured that staff, pupils and parents were fully aware about their respective roles and responsibilities. Pupils were regularly consulted about weekend outings, and several outings had taken place in response to their requests. The residence undertook to provide transport, where possible, for weekend outings. Pupils and parents were aware that any additional costs incurred on trips and outings would not be funded by the residence.

## 4. Conclusion

The authority and the residence had shown a clear commitment to improving key areas of the residence's work in response to the main points for action in the original inspection report. The recent appointment of an overall manager for residences had already improved leadership and had raised staff morale and confidence significantly. A clearer strategic direction for the residence was shared by all staff. Communication between the residence and both the high school and the music school had improved, enabling for example, good progress towards agreeing the uses of shared areas within the residence. Managers and staff of the residence were developing effective means of evaluating their work, although they still had work to do in this area. Staff systematically consulted pupils on improving the residence and took full account of their views. Pupils, parents and staff were clear about their respective roles and responsibilities, for example in relation to the new and appropriate code of conduct. Staff worked very well as a team and were committed to the continuous improvement of the residence. As a result of the good overall progress achieved in addressing the main points for action, HM Inspectors will not carry out any further visits in connection with the report of October 2005. The education authority should continue to support and monitor the arrangements for self-evaluation within the residence. Care Commission officers will continue to carry out statutory twice-yearly inspections of the residence.

Anne M McGachey  
HM Inspector

Philip Yeaman  
Care Commission Officer

18 December 2007

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

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If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail [HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

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