



**Dalziel High School
Motherwell
North Lanarkshire Council
11 November 2008**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school. We describe how young people benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the school is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the school does this. We describe how well the school works with other groups in the community, including parents¹ and services which support young people. We also comment on how well staff and young people work together and how they go about improving the school.

Our report describes the ‘ethos’ of the school. By ‘ethos’ we mean the relationships in the school, how well young people are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally, we comment on the school’s aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the school’s success in achieving these aims.

HMIE would like to thank the education authority, headteacher, all staff, young people and parents for their constructive contributions to this pilot of new inspection approaches.

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

Dalziel High School is a non-denominational school which serves the southern and central areas of Motherwell. The inspection was carried out in June 2008 at which time the roll was 984. Young people's attendance was well above the national average in 2006/07. The school has a specialist Hearing Impaired Department to support deaf young people.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The outstanding lead given by the headteacher.
- The lively school community which is committed to learning.
- Staff's encouragement to all young people to learn and achieve.
- The strong teamwork within the school and with partners within the community.
- The range of positive approaches to promoting young people's health and wellbeing.
- The school's knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement.
- Young people's contributions to decision making.
- High expectations and high levels of achievement.

3. Examples of good practice

- The support tutor system.
- Support for vulnerable young people through the STAR project (Setting Targets to Achieve Results).
- Young people's academic and personal achievements.
- The extensive programme for promoting young people's personal achievements, notably the very popular Choral Shield.
- The school's work with the community and War Memorial trust to develop and run the sporting facilities at Dalziel Park.

4. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Young people are very interested in lessons. They feel valued, are keen to answer questions, and they share their ideas confidently with teachers and each other. Most are aware of how well they are doing, what they are good at and what they need to do to improve. Almost all young people make very good progress. Over recent years, young people have consistently done well in classwork and examinations, and their skills are recognised through a range of awards. Deaf young people also perform very well.

- In most of the key national measures of attainment, young people's performance is consistently very strong.
- The school has been successful in maintaining consistently high standards of attainment over time.

- Young people's literacy and numeracy skills are being well developed and supported through the Skills for Life course and other activities across the school as well as in English and mathematics.
- When young people leave school, almost all go to university or college, or are successful in getting a job.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Young people study a broad range of courses which enable them to achieve very highly, both academically and in important personal skills. The school has successfully taken significant steps to provide more appropriate courses for all of them. Staff have recently improved the range and variety of activities through which they continue their learning at home. Recently the school has introduced some very stimulating activities, competitions, and workshops for young people. These new and creative approaches have inspired them to achieve even more. Good examples include activities for lower attaining young people in S2/S3 which include college courses and the Duke of Edinburgh award.

In almost all lessons, teachers give young people tasks and activities which are set at the right level of difficulty. They identify their individual needs well, which enables them to support young people who need extra help, including those with social and emotional needs and those who are deaf. Almost all teachers are support tutors. They know the young people very well and work hard to make sure they are making progress and receiving the help they need.

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

Support for learning teachers give class teachers very effective advice on teaching approaches and provide helpful training. Teachers work with a number of outside organisations to provide activities which

challenge young people, stimulate their interest in learning and support them to understand difficult ideas. Staff work effectively with people from other organisations, for example, youth workers, health staff and voluntary groups, to meet young people's learning needs. The school works with employers to provide high-quality work experience. Parents are actively involved in a range of activities in the school. They have contributed to the health promoting schools action plan, are involved in regular whole school surveys and the War Memorial Trust which supports a wide range of social and sporting activities.

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

Young people from across the school take part in a range of volunteering and charitable activities that make a significant difference to the local community. These include aspects of health and wellbeing, the arts and sport. Young people take active roles in the Representative Council and local Youth Council, which develops their confidence and sense of responsibility. At all stages they work together well and can think for themselves. They are developing well as citizens. For example, they are good at organising and making decisions. They contribute well to the wide range of whole school events and activities. Staff also are very active in school activities, including taking part in working groups, helping to stage twice-yearly school shows and voluntarily leading an extensive programme which supports young people in their study outside school hours.

Overall staff, parents and young people know the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. Staff and the wider school community have a very clear idea of the kinds of experiences and achievements they want for the school. Young people also have a strong say in how the school should improve. Staff are strongly committed to improving the quality of education and checking whether young people have benefited from any recent changes. Teachers are skilled at observing learning and share good practice with each other. Staff enjoy the responsibility of leading on aspects of departmental monitoring.

The school has a strong track record of improvement. It is very well placed to improve further.

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

Teachers expect a great deal of young people in terms of their learning, behaviour and attendance, and young people respond very well. Teachers succeed in gaining young people's interest and enthusiasm. Seniors take on areas of responsibility including acting as buddies for their younger peers involved in the STAR project, and as Captains and Vice Captains. Across the school young people learn to be responsible and well organised through taking part in a wide range of innovative enterprise activities. All at S1 take part in activities organised by teachers after school or during lunchtime. A very high number from other stages also take part in the extremely large number of activities organised by the school.

All young people are treated with equality, fairness and respect. They are well cared for and appropriate approaches for ensuring their safety are in place. Almost all find staff approachable and are confident that they can confide in an adult when worried or upset. Commendably, the school's anti-bullying policy includes action taken to address cyber bullying and a pupil contract outlines principles of acceptable use of the internet. Deaf young people and those who need extra help with their learning are fully involved in activities such as the school show, choral competitions and the science fair. Young people are interested in learning about health issues and feel that they are consulted well when decisions are made. They are helped to make positive choices when leaving the school to go to work, college or university. Parents also use some of the services which support wellbeing.

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

Staff, parents and young people have a clear idea of the kind of school they want and work hard to achieve it. The headteacher leads the school outstandingly well, expecting nothing but the best from all young people, staff and others who work with the school. The

headteacher, deposes and other leaders know where the school is doing well and where it could do better. Together they give a very strong lead in making sure the school continues to be the kind of school staff, young people and parents want it to be. Staff willingly take forward key improvements in, for example, homework, raising young people's achievement and developing the range of courses available.

9. What happens next?

Because the school has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and young people are achieving very highly, we shall end the inspection process at this stage. To enable the school to build on the many aspects of excellence already identified, we have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Further develop links with local primary schools so that young people can build more effectively on their learning.
- Support further improvements in learning by involving senior managers directly in the process of evaluating learning.
- Continue to extend opportunities for young people to link their learning across several subject areas, and to prepare for the world of work.
- Provide religious and moral education for young people in S5 and S6.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing. Here are the evaluations for Dalziel High School.

Improvements in performance	excellent
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	excellent

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	excellent

HM Inspector: Donald Macleod 11 November 2008

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This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

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