



**Craigmount High School  
Edinburgh  
The City of Edinburgh  
Council  
17 March 2009**

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 parents<sup>1</sup> 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.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns and details about young people's examination performance. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school and a report on the learning community surrounding the school.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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. Examples 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**

Craigmount High School is a non-denominational school which serves the north-west of Edinburgh. The roll was 1365 when the inspection was carried out in January 2009. Young people's attendance was above the national average in 2006/2007.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- The supportive relationships and climate for learning.
- Motivated, confident young people.
- The extensive range of partnerships with outside agencies which enrich the curriculum.
- The positive impact of the wide range of out-of-class learning opportunities on young people's achievement.
- Young people's overall achievement by the end of S6.
- The staff's contribution to leading developments and improving the school.

## **3. Examples of good practice**

- Team building in physical education.
- Online study resources.

## **4. How well do young people learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Young people are confident and friendly. They feel safe in school. Almost all behave responsibly and are motivated in class. They benefit from experiences beyond the school. For example, a visit by S2 to Dynamic Earth increased their understanding of the planet. Almost half of young people would like to have more say in the way they learn. In a number of lessons they have good opportunities to become independent and develop skills in working with others. A number of teachers give good feedback and explain clearly to them what to do to achieve success. Increasingly, departments are consulting young people about their learning. Staff need to share this good practice more widely across the school.

Young people develop confidence and skills for life through an extensive range of sporting and cultural activities. They achieve very high standards in debating, drama and music performances. Many individuals and teams have gained local and national recognition in sport. The school now needs to ensure that more young people benefit from out-of-class learning. All in S4 benefit from a week of work experience to develop their awareness of the world of work. All young people take part in enterprise activities which encourage them to be creative and work as a team. Some young people are developing leadership skills through membership of the student council and the Eco School group. Those at S5/S6 have opportunities for leadership through serving on the charities committee, for example. The school's focus on appreciating other cultures has helped young people develop a sense of global citizenship. Almost all who have taken practical, skills-based programmes have been successful in gaining awards and moving on to further education, employment or training.

A few departments build very effectively on what young people have learned in primary school. By the end of S2, most attain or exceed expected national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of S4, results in all key national measures of attainment are above the national average and in line with those of schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. By the end of S6, these results are above or well above the national average. Young people with additional support needs are making good progress. The school needs to develop systems for checking continuously that all young people are achieving as well as they can across the curriculum.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The curriculum has important strengths including a wide range of choices enabling young people to follow their interests. The school is aware it needs to ensure courses in all subjects build on prior learning, particularly in S1. A few teachers are beginning to link learning across different subjects. Young people in S2 see too many teachers each week. Course options in S2 are helping teachers to develop popular,

innovative activities, such as producing computer games. Teachers should consider how to build these activities into subject programmes and widen learning opportunities for all. From S3, as well as an impressive range of courses leading to National Qualifications, practical skills-based courses such as ASDAN programmes are also available. Young people at S3 to S6 do not receive sufficient physical education. The school needs to review the programme for religious and moral education at S5/S6 and ensure that programmes across the curriculum promote equalities at all stages. Increasingly, teachers are considering improvements to learning through the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence*. Working groups in areas such as literacy and numeracy are developing helpful advice.

Almost all teachers have very positive relationships with young people. Teachers offer extra help through an impressive range of study support classes and the school website. Staff give very effective support to those who are vulnerable as they move from primary school. The student support team works very well with outside agencies to provide high-quality support for all, including the most vulnerable. Young people in S6 act as buddies to support their younger peers. The school is developing ways of supporting those who are gifted. Many teachers use information from the student support team well to provide suitable tasks for those who need additional support. While some teachers provide a variety of tasks to support and challenge young people, staff now need to ensure that learning activities are set at the right level to meet the needs of all young people.

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

Positive links with primary schools help to ensure young people have a positive experience as they enter S1. The school has developed helpful links with other local secondary schools and further education colleges to provide a wider choice of courses in the senior school. The school works well with a range of partners such as Careers Scotland and local businesses to enhance learning experiences and develop

skills for work. Young people for whom English is not their first language are very well supported. Senior staff use several ways of communicating with parents, including the school website. The school has good arrangements for responding to the small number of complaints it receives but needs to clarify for parents how it deals with concerns. Parents are consulted about school priorities through the Parent Council. A significant number of parents feel that the school takes insufficient account of their views. The school, along with its partners and stakeholders, needs to work to ensure good communication and clear roles and responsibilities.

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

The student council has helped bring about improvements to the school environment, such as providing cool drinking water. However, many young people are not clear what the council has achieved and many do not feel the school takes account of their views on learning overall. Staff across the school need to build on the best practice already happening in some departments in finding out more clearly and as a matter of course, what young people think about their learning experiences. The school consults with its stakeholders through questionnaires but parents and partners would welcome closer involvement in the school's plans for improvement. The senior management team is committed to school improvement and has led improvements in areas such as health promotion. Most staff feel actively involved in the life of the school and take part in working groups linked to school improvement. The school uses a variety of methods to identify its strengths and areas where it could improve. These include visits to classes, departmental analysis of examination results and other performance information. However, staff across the school are not consistent in the way they use these methods. As a result, improvement in learning experiences has been inconsistent.

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

Almost all young people are polite and considerate towards others.

They respond well to the high expectations of their behaviour and attendance. Most feel safe in school and that they are treated fairly. The school recently celebrated the launch of a publication celebrating its multicultural community. The school has very effective systems to ensure the care and protection of its young people. Staff with pastoral responsibilities give very strong support. Young people feel that the school's focus on health promotion is raising their awareness of healthy lifestyles. They would benefit from having a greater input to the choice of health activities. The school encourages young people to aim high and celebrates successes in a range of ways including assemblies, letters and certificates home, and an awards ceremony.

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

The headteacher and the senior management team have worked hard to create a warm, welcoming ethos in school, based on mutual respect. They have focused particularly on improving relationships and have also introduced initiatives aimed at improving learning. They now need to ensure that these initiatives are fully implemented across all departments. Most principal teachers are forward-thinking and enthusiastic about curriculum change. Many staff have taken responsibility for innovative work such as the revised school website and the S6 creative writing weekend. Working collaboratively with young people and their parents, partners and all staff, senior managers now need to set out a clearer vision for the future of the school with well-defined, agreed plans for how the vision will be achieved.

## **9. What happens next?**

We are confident that the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education. We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Involve all stakeholders in developing, sharing and implementing a clear vision for the school and agreed approaches to school improvement.
- Continue to improve the way staff meet the learning needs of all young people and improve their learning experiences, by rigorously evaluating present practice and sharing the best practice from across the school more effectively.
- Continue to improve achievement by building on the best innovative learning and teaching and work already underway to develop *Curriculum for Excellence*.

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 Craigmount High School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

**HM Inspector:** Fiona Pate

17 March 2009

To find out more about inspections or get an electronic copy of this report go to [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Please contact the Business Management and Communications Team (BMCT) if you wish to enquire about our arrangements for translated or other appropriate versions.

If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at [HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk) or alternatively you should write in the first instance to BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or alternatively you can write to our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website at [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk).

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

Crown Copyright 2009  
HM Inspectorate of Education.