

**Johnstone Technical Education  
Centre  
Johnstone  
7 March 2006**

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## **1. Background**

Johnstone Technical Education Centre is located in Johnstone, Renfrewshire. The school opened in April 2004 and was provisionally registered in August 2004 with the Registrar of Independent Schools to provide full and part-time education for boys at S3/S4/S5. HM Inspectors conducted a preliminary inspection in May 2005. This report follows a further inspection carried out in December 2005 and will provide evidence for the Registrar of Independent Schools in making the decision about full registration for the school.

The inspection covered key aspects of the provision of the school, including the adequacy of school premises, resources and staffing, the efficiency and suitability of the curriculum, learning and teaching, the quality of pupil care and the appropriateness of management arrangements. HM Inspectors also evaluated the extent to which the school's provision met its stated aims. HM Inspectors spent time with pupils in classes and discussed the work of the school with the headteacher and staff.

The school is managed and owned by the headteacher. At the time of inspection there were 17 pupils at S3, S4 and S5 on the roll. The school aims to re-engage in their learning pupils who have experienced difficulties in mainstream education. The school also aims to equip pupils with skills for their future, including, where appropriate, gaining apprenticeships in the construction industry.

## **2. How good are the curriculum, learning and teaching?**

### **Structure of the curriculum**

The school offered an adequate breadth and balance of subjects. The curriculum covered mathematics, English, graphic communication, information and communications technology (ICT), enterprise through craft, woodworking skills, physical education, personal and social education (PSE), art and design, and construction skills. The school gave pupils good opportunities to gain a range of formal qualifications from Access 2 to Intermediate 2. There were also firm plans to accredit pupils' work through ASDAN<sup>1</sup>. The school made good use of activities which linked art and design, and woodworking. The construction course was developing pupils' awareness of employability skills such as time-keeping, customer care and basic organisation. Pupils had very good opportunities to take part in different physical activities such as rowing, golf and archery in addition to swimming and football. Programmes for some subjects, particularly PSE, English and ICT, were still at an early stage of development. The length of the school week was not yet in line with that of mainstream schools and pupils did not yet have opportunities for choice within the curriculum.

### **The teaching process, pupils' learning experiences, meeting needs**

The quality of teaching was good overall with very good teaching in some classes. Teachers gave clear instructions and provided very good individualised support throughout lessons. They used praise well and provided firm boundaries and high expectations to encourage pupils to work well and complete tasks. Teachers planned their lessons well and effectively recorded pupils' progress. Some teachers provided good opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively. Some

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<sup>1</sup> Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)

use was made of ICT to support pupils' learning, for example in researching interesting inventions. However, teachers did not yet consistently use ICT to improve pupils' understanding and skills across all subjects. Pupils worked at a good pace and were showing good progress in their course work. They talked positively about their learning experiences in the school. They were particularly proud of the products they had made in woodwork and art and design. Pupils were provided with homework but the overall purpose of this needed to be clarified so that more pupils were motivated to complete meaningful tasks.

The school was committed to meeting the needs of a wide range of pupils. Teachers were sensitive in supporting pupils with additional learning needs and, along with classroom assistants, provided a high level of support to help them succeed in class activities. However, they had not yet developed an effective approach to assessing individual needs on admission to the school. They had not worked sufficiently with pupils to set individualised learning and behaviour targets to help them take more responsibility for their own learning.

### **3. How suitable are accommodation and resources?**

#### **Accommodation and facilities**

The accommodation was based in two buildings in close proximity and had effective secure entry arrangements. Pupils were supervised when moving from one building to the other. The facilities were well suited to the needs of the curriculum offered and the number of pupils in the school. Accommodation consisted of two classrooms and a large space which contained a computer suite and a teaching area. Pupils had access to a well-equipped workshop with safe storage areas, and a common room. The school made good use of a local sports centre and swimming pool for physical education. Good arrangements were in place for fire safety. Appropriate risk assessments were in place for the health and safety of pupils in the workshop.

#### **Provision of resources**

The overall range of resources was generally sufficient to ensure that courses were delivered appropriately. The workshop was equipped with a good range of appropriate power and hand tools. The school had good quality ICT equipment, and pupils were able to access the Internet safely. Resources for art, and craft and design were sufficient. Staff and pupils made good use of digital photography to display their work. However, pupils had insufficient access to a suitable range of texts and software to develop communication skills and support their learning in English and mathematics. The school had yet to identify appropriate resources to effectively deliver the PSE course and its proposed ICT programme.

### **4. How well are pupils cared for?**

#### **Pastoral care**

The quality of pastoral care was good. The school carefully monitored the mood and attitude of each pupil at the start of the day and offered individual emotional support when needed. Almost all staff knew what they needed to do when dealing with child protection issues but had not yet received external training. The school needed to address this quickly. Staff worked very

effectively together to promote pupils' good behaviour and had succeeded in creating a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere. The school had good approaches to improving the fitness of pupils but needed to continue to support them to eat more healthily and to stop a minority of pupils from smoking. It had good links with a range of agencies to support pupils with particular issues such as offending. Close links with parents, including home visits, ensured very good communication between the school and home. Pupils felt safe and secure in the school and knew they could raise concerns with staff. The school had an effective system for recording accidents. However, there was not yet a sufficiently robust method for recording incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Almost all staff were trained in the safe use of restraint but the need to make use of 'safe holding' was infrequent.

### **Climate and relationships**

The school had established a very positive environment in which pupils were re-engaging in learning. Relationships between staff and pupils were very good. Staff effectively and appropriately used humour and praise to motivate pupils. Pupils spoke positively about the school. Breaks and lunchtimes were used well to build relationships. Staff enjoyed working in the school and worked well as a team. Pupils' attendance was good and the school had in place very good strategies to follow up non-attendance. Behaviour was of a good standard and pupils were clear about staff expectations. The school had established very good links with parents, several mainstream schools, the community police and Careers Scotland. Pupils were encouraged to have an awareness of others through raising funds for schools in Malawi, working at a local hospice and building a garden for a local nursery school.

## **5. How well is the school managed and staffed?**

### **Leadership**

The headteacher had a clear vision for the school which he had shared with staff, parents and pupils. He was committed to re-engaging pupils in education, improving their sense of self-worth and providing a vocationally based curriculum within a secure and stimulating school environment. He had developed very good teamwork amongst staff and worked very well with them to meet the needs of pupils. The headteacher paid good attention to care and welfare procedures and had in place a suitably broad curriculum to meet the aims of the school. His fair and consistent relationship with pupils and his good teaching skills were a model of good practice.

### **Aims and policy making**

The school met its declared aims of improving the attendance of almost all pupils and improving their behaviour in school through high expectations and good role models. The school provided a happy and secure environment in which pupils' self-esteem was developing. Staff had been successful in establishing a positive climate for learning and had started to increase the chances of pupils entering further education or employment. The headteacher had developed a good range of policies and procedures for care and welfare and health and safety. He now needed to keep a log of incidents and responses, and develop formal procedures to enable pupils to make complaints. The school planned to work with pupils in developing a pupils' handbook which

clarified for them the school's policies on complaints, no smoking, anti-bullying, drugs and alcohol misuse.

### **Staffing**

The school employed a suitable number of staff to support the curriculum offered. This included teachers, classroom assistants and students on placement. Some teachers were registered with the General Teaching Council and others were working towards relevant qualifications and training. All staff, including students on placement, were approved under the school's safe recruitment procedures. The headteacher was highly committed to supporting staff in further training. He had plans to introduce a formal system for staff review and development.

## **6. Capacity for improvement**

### **Self-evaluation**

Staff met regularly to discuss their work and pupils' progress. The headteacher was frequently in classrooms but did not yet formally monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. Staff had used national quality indicators to broadly evaluate overall provision and identify priorities for development. They had used this information effectively to produce a good strategic plan which was helping to drive improvement. The school now needed to be more focused in self-evaluation to ensure continuous improvement particularly in aspects of learning and teaching. The school did not yet have a system in place to monitor and track the overall progress of pupils.

## **7. Conclusions and advice to Registrar of Independent Schools**

The school has made good progress in developing an appropriate educational provision to meet the needs of pupils from the age of 14 years who had difficulties in maintaining their place in mainstream school. The high quality of relationships among staff and pupils had established a very positive environment in which all pupils were engaging in learning and beginning to achieve. Staff commitment and enthusiasm ensured that pupils chose to regularly attend school. Many pupils talked positively about their chances of an improved future. The school now needed to further develop subject programmes, provide subject choice for pupils, improve approaches to target-setting and more effectively track the progress of pupils to increase their opportunities for attainment and achievement. The headteacher needed to ensure that the length of the school week was in line with that of mainstream schools.

HM Inspectors will refer this report to the Registrar of Independent Schools who will decide whether or not to grant the school full registration.

Lorna Walker  
HM Inspector of Education

7 March 2006

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

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

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, T1 Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD or by telephoning 0131 244 8142. Copies are also available on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **If you wish to comment about registration inspections**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of registration inspections, you should write in the first instance to Kenneth Muir, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

### **Our complaints procedure**

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 01506 600258 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

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. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail [enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk).

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