



**Uddingston Grammar
School
South Lanarkshire Council
5 May 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 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.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit 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.

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

Uddingston Grammar School is a non-denominational school which serves the communities of Uddingston and Bothwell in South Lanarkshire, and Tannochside and Viewpark in North Lanarkshire. The roll was 1085 when the inspection was carried out in March 2009. Young people's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008. The school includes a Visual Impairment Unit (VIU) which serves 19 young people from across five education authorities. The school moved to a new building in January 2009.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The curriculum, including many opportunities for young people to achieve both in and out of class.
- The quality of support provided by staff for all young people.
- Productive partnerships with a range of agencies.
- The positive ethos for learning across the school.
- The very positive contribution of young people in S5/S6 to the life of the school.
- The senior management team's effective management of considerable recent change.

3. Examples of good practice

- Inclusion of young people with a visual impairment (VI).
- Promoting leadership through school committee structures.
- Enthusing young people about history using film.

4. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Almost all young people are motivated and show an interest in lessons. They often ask questions confidently and volunteer answers during discussions. Most teachers share the purposes of lessons well to focus learning. Young people are increasingly learning how to work independently and work effectively in groups through well-planned activities. In a few courses, young

people need to be given more responsibility for their work and to be made more aware of how to improve their learning. The school now needs to build on existing good practice in learning and teaching more widely.

Young people across all stages are developing self-confidence and a variety of skills through taking part in a wide range of sporting, musical and other cultural activities. Many have achieved success in local and national competitions. In S1, young people are taught how to develop their study habits, decision-making and listening skills through weekly monitoring classes. Visually impaired and sighted young people are working together to achieve John Muir awards and to take part in outdoor activities such as skiing, horse riding and water sports. Young people in S6 play a very active role in the life of the school. They are developing important skills, such as responsibility, leadership and citizenship, through a high level of involvement in school committees, community and charity work. The school now needs to gather information about young people's wider achievements systematically, and introduce formal awards where it can.

In most areas of the curriculum, young people in S1/S2 are making good progress in lessons. The school needs to monitor progress better between P7 and S2 to help build fully on prior learning. The majority of young people are achieving appropriate levels in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of S4, the proportion gaining General or Credit awards is above the national average but below that of schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. At S5/S6, results in national examinations are above the national average and better than in schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. Young people with additional support needs are progressing well. Almost all young people leave school for further or higher education, or employment.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school provides a very good range of appropriate courses which allow progression across stages. The school is providing increased opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. The curriculum has been developed appropriately in consultation with parents, young people and staff. For example, young people's needs are better met since staff introduced ASDAN awards and increased the range of skills for work and pre-vocational courses. Staff have made a positive start in introducing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Young people now have more opportunities to link their learning across a range of their subjects, for example in areas such as anti-smoking. The provision of physical education at S5/S6 is insufficient and needs to be improved. The school has well-established pastoral links with its partner primary schools but curricular links need further development. Young people preparing to leave school are given effective support.

Young people are well supported by pupil support staff. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of individuals with a visual impairment and communicate effectively to address their needs. A range of equipment and appropriately adapted resources allow these young people to access the curriculum. Pastoral care staff know young people well and ensure their social, emotional and pastoral needs are well met. To continue building on these strengths, the school should further structure links between all support staff to include joint departmental meetings and improvement planning. Teachers across the school know most of the young people with additional support needs, but a few teachers need to make better use of the information they are given to help meet young people's learning needs more effectively. Teachers across the school need to match learning experiences more directly to young people's needs, particularly at S1/S2.

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

The school works very well with a wide range of partners to support young people's learning. Local businesses make valuable contributions to developing young people's enterprise skills. A number of partners contribute well to the Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme. The VIU has effective links with specialist staff from a number of education authorities to provide support for young people in their own communities. The local authority youth service and a private sector provider deliver programmes that provide effective alternatives for young people who are at risk of disengaging from education. The Parent Council and the Parent Teacher Association contribute well to the life of the school. The Parent Council, for example, helped to ensure an effective move to the new building. Some parents feel that the school does not seek their views often enough.

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

The school has made recent improvements to its procedures for quality assurance. Staff are becoming more involved in evaluating the work of the school. Within a few departments, teachers visit each other's lessons and share ideas about how to improve learning and teaching. This good practice needs to be spread across the school. Many members of staff organise out-of-class activities including, for example, highly-valued study support classes. They also lead or take part in committees. Young people in S6 are supported to take full responsibility to chair and manage a wide range of committees that contribute to the positive ethos of the school. Young people across stages are involved in the pupil council. Whilst the council has contributed to recent improvements, less than half of young people thought that it was effective at doing so.

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

The school has a very positive ethos. Young people respond well to high expectations of behaviour and attendance. Staff expectations are high regarding the completion and standard of homework set. Relationships between staff and young people are strong but the high number of exclusions needs to be reduced. Young people appreciate their new building and feel that it stimulates learning. The school raises young people's self-esteem by celebrating their success in a variety of ways. The PSE programme covers several aspects of equalities but needs to cover disability more fully. Most young people feel safe and cared for and that staff treat them equally and fairly. The school has appropriate arrangements for religious observance. Young people have a strong awareness of health and wellbeing, which is promoted strongly across the school. The school has an effective system for dealing with complaints.

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

The recently-appointed headteacher and the senior management team have effectively led the school through a period of considerable change, with minimal disruption to learning and teaching. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and has identified appropriate priorities and actions for improvement. The depute headteachers are well respected for their commitment to the care and welfare of young people. They have adapted well to new remits and are working well as a team to improve learners' experiences. Staff need to continue to improve procedures for monitoring and evaluating all areas of school performance, including young people's progress. The school has the capacity to improve.

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.

- Work with partners to ensure young people gain appropriate recognition for their voluntary work.
- Improve attainment, particularly from S1 to S4.
- By building on good practice and self-evaluation, further improve the quality of learning and teaching and the way young people's individual needs are met.

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 Uddingston Grammar School.

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Marie McAdam

5 May 2009

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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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