



**Williamwood High School
Clarkston
East Renfrewshire Council
24 November 2009**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, young people and the local community know whether their school provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities which young people are involved in. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its 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 from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. 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

Williamwood High School is a non-denominational school which serves the areas of Busby, Clarkston and Netherlee. The roll was 1604 when the inspection was carried out in October 2009. Young people's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Young people's achievements, including very high levels of success in national examinations.
- The school's lively, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.
- Young people's confidence in their leadership roles.
- Imaginative approaches to developing the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Staff commitment and effectiveness in using self-evaluation to improve outcomes for young people.
- Senior managers' effectiveness in sharing good practice and encouraging innovation.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher.

3. Examples of good practice

- Improvement through self-evaluation.
- Leadership amongst staff and young people.
- Transition from primary to secondary.

4. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Young people are highly motivated and often enthusiastic in class. They cooperate very well with their teachers and show very good skills in working independently and in teams. They learn well from activities which help them to think for themselves and enjoy expressing their opinions and summarising findings. They frequently make very effective and independent use of information and communications technology. Young people are developing a good understanding of their strengths and needs as learners. Teachers should now build on existing best practice to further improve the consistency and quality of their written and oral feedback. Throughout the school, young people enhance their own and each other's learning by taking a lead role in planning and organising events and activities. Young people relate very well to staff and to each other. They feel valued, respected and safe.

Across the school, large numbers of young people take a full part in activities to promote their achievement. These include an extensive range of sporting and cultural teams and clubs, school trips and residential experiences. Young people develop their personal and social skills well through activities such as enterprise and Eco-School events and competitions. Many have been successful individually and in teams in local and national competitions. They have a very good understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Senior students in particular take on a high level of responsibility in the S6 "Committee of Management". They show commendable initiative and responsibility in planning and organising a wide range of volunteer activities, including extensive charity work and helping young people who attend the Isobel Mair school. The school now needs to build on existing approaches to track and record young people's achievements as they progress from stage to stage.

Across the curriculum in S1/S2, young people make very good progress from their prior learning. By the end of S2, most young

people achieve appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics with a significant proportion achieving above these levels. From S4 to S6, young people achieve very highly. For key measures at these stages, examination results are well above national averages and above those of schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. Over recent years, the quality of young people's attainment has improved notably, especially at grade A at Intermediate 2 and at Higher. Most young people go on to further or higher education and almost all the others go into employment or training.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum very successfully combines learning experiences in class with wider opportunities. This approach ensures challenge, enjoyment and choice and helps young people to learn and develop personal skills. From S3 to S6, the school provides all young people with a very wide choice of courses including some delivered in partnership with local colleges. At all stages, young people benefit from over two hours of high-quality physical education, from religious and moral education and from classes in personal and social development. Teachers are actively engaged in development work in line with *Curriculum for Excellence* including promoting literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. They have introduced innovative and well-planned projects to help young people make links across their learning. The school librarian supports subject departments well to help young people develop research and information handling skills. Staff have put in place strong arrangements to support young people at key transition points.

In almost all classes, teachers set tasks that interest and challenge young people. Teachers have very effective arrangements to provide extra help for any young person from S4 to S6 who is at risk of missing agreed performance targets. The school uses very effective approaches to identify young people with additional support needs at entry to S1. Learning support staff work closely with other teachers to share information about how to help young people make progress.

Pupil support assistants provide sensitive and valuable help for young people with additional needs. Learning support staff, in collaboration with subject teachers, ensure that young people's targets are appropriate and that they make good progress towards meeting them.

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

The school has worked very well with others in the Williamwood cluster to take forward *Curriculum for Excellence* developments. The school's extensive range of business contacts gives strong support for young people through work experience placements, mentoring, and careers events. Young people also benefit from supportive links with local sports clubs and organisations. The school keeps the Parent Council well informed and consults it appropriately. The parent-teacher association is very active and successful in raising funds. The school consults parents regularly on a range of issues, including sensitive health issues. Staff have worked well with parents to develop approaches to support home study. The school deals with complaints promptly and effectively. It has effective joint-working arrangements with an extensive range of partner agencies.

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

Young people and staff work very well together to improve the school. Class captains and pupil council members gather young people's views on a range of issues, communicate very well with the student body and have taken a lead on whole school initiatives. Taking account of the views expressed by young people in annual questionnaires, teachers have taken very effective action to improve learning experiences across the school. Almost all teachers participate in school working groups. Members of the school's "Leadership for Learning" team of over 50 teachers take a lead role in sharing good practice and promoting innovation in subject teaching. Very thorough subject reviews and learning observations have been very effective in improving practice.

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

Young people and staff are proud of their school and share very high expectations of behaviour and performance. Staff provide a very high level of pastoral care which meets young people's social and emotional needs. Young people often show consideration and care for each other in class and around the school. Staff successfully promote equality and diversity. The programme for religious observance has been awarded a national prize by the Church of Scotland. Young people are expected to give of their best in lessons and many take part in supported study and revision classes. Teachers analyse the performance of young people and have been very successful in setting challenging targets and raising expectations of what individuals can achieve. Staff plan very effectively to improve young people's health and nutrition. All staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities for child protection. Young people are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and their successes and achievements are celebrated in displays and at assemblies.

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

The headteacher's leadership of improvement is outstanding. He communicates his vision for the school very clearly to the staff and young people. He inspires them to work together to continuously improve the quality of learning and achievement. The highly-skilled senior leadership team encourages innovation and the sharing of good practice across the school. Principal teachers are very effective and highly committed to ensuring improvement in their areas of responsibility. Across the school, many unpromoted staff lead change and improvement very successfully. Overall, the school has a very high capacity for continuous improvement.

9. What happens next?

The inspection team was able to rely on the school's self-evaluation to make its evaluations and the school agreed with these at an early stage of the inspection. As a result, the inspection team was able to

change its focus during the inspection to help the school plan to improve even more. The school provides an excellent quality of education. Therefore, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

We have agreed the following area for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Build on existing strengths and continue to make improvements to young people's learning in line with *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 Williamwood High School.

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

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

The curriculum	Excellent
Improvement through self-evaluation	Excellent

HM Inspector: Grant Mathison
24 November 2009

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

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

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