

Report

Report to:	Clydesdale Area Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 May 2008
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	HMle - Biggar High School
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise of the outcome of the inspection of Biggar High School by HM Inspectors.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) to note the HMle Report on Biggar High School.

3. Background

3.1. Biggar High School was inspected in November 2007 as part of a national sample of secondary education.

3.2. HM Inspectors evaluated how well the school was raising achievement for all pupils, taking into account the extent to which pupils learning needs were met by the curriculum and teaching. They also analysed pupil attainment, the school's processes for self-evaluation and its overall effectiveness and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on English, mathematics, computing and modern languages. The inspection team also evaluated aspects of schools meals provision.

3.3. HM Inspectors observed teaching, learning and achievement in lessons and other contexts. They examined pupils work, interviewed groups of pupils, (including representatives of the pupil council), staff, a group of parents, local community learning workers and the chairperson of the Parent Council. They analysed questionnaires issued to a sample of pupils and to all staff.

4. Findings of HM Inspectors

4.1. The Inspectors made comment under the following headings:

- Key strengths
- How well does the school raise achievement for all?
- How good is the environment for learning?
- Leading and improving the school.

4.2. The Inspectors highlighted the following key strengths of the school:

- The innovative curriculum with strengths in enterprise and opportunities for pupils to integrate their learning across subjects in S1/S2.
- The successful approach to developing pupils' personal and social skills through having a broad range of wider curricular opportunities.
- The strong relationship with local businesses and the community.
- The strategic lead of the Head Teacher.

4.3. Inspectors found the overall quality of the curriculum to be very good with a clear rationale at every stage and constructed to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The school evaluated aspects of its curriculum on an ongoing basis and consulted staff, pupils and parents as part of an annual review.

4.4. Overall the quality of teaching was good, with very good practice evident in some departments. Most lessons were well planned and teachers included a variety of activities. However, across the school inspectors felt lessons did not always provide sufficient personal challenge particularly for higher attaining pupils. Most teachers worked hard to support individual pupils but in some cases individual learning difficulties needed to be identified more precisely and better learning programmes to meet specific needs provided. As a result inspectors felt the school's arrangements for meeting pupils' needs were adequate.

4.5. The overall quality of pupils' learning was good with very good displays of pupils' work in corridors and classrooms. The quality of pupils' personal and social development was very good, promoted through the very good personal and social education programme (PSE). The school provided a wide range of well attended wider curricular activities which helped pupils to develop social skills and self-confidence.

4.6. Inspectors found relationships between staff and pupils to be good. The school worked effectively with external agencies to support pupils.

The morale of staff was high and they respected and valued pupils. The school celebrated pupils achievements in displays in corridors, daily assemblies and at award ceremonies.

Partnership working with parents and the community was very good with very positive links developing with community organisations and local businesses.

4.7. The Inspectors reported that the Head Teacher provided very good leadership. He had a clear vision for the school, shared effectively with parents and stakeholders. He was strongly committed to supporting the achievements of pupils through the wide range of learning experiences delivered within a broad and innovative curriculum.

Leadership was shared widely and effectively across the school and senior managers worked together closely as a team.

The school had a range of procedures and processes to monitor and evaluate its strengths and development needs. However, consistency and rigour varied across

managers and as a result the quality of pupils' experiences required to be reviewed more systematically resulting in the quality of self evaluation being adequate.

- 4.8. HMI identified the following as main points for action to be addressed by the school and the Education Authority:
- Build on the very good practice in the school to improve Learning and Teaching throughout the school.
 - Identify the learning needs of pupils with additional support needs more accurately and plan and deliver more appropriate programmes with suitable short term and long term targets so that progress can be evaluated.
 - Build on existing learning and teaching strategies to challenge higher attaining pupils throughout the school, especially those in mixed ability settings in S1/S2.
 - Focus self-evaluation procedures more sharply on improving the quality of pupils' learning experiences.
- 4.9. An action plan to take forward these points will be drawn up by the head Teacher and Education Resources.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. None

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. None

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. None

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. The Parent Council and elected members will remain fully consulted of progress.

There is no requirement to carry out an impact assessment in terms of the proposals contained within this report.

Larry Forde
Executive Director (Education Resources)

11 March 2008

Link(s) to Council Objectives

- Supporting Communities

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

- HMIe Report of 11 March 2008

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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