

Report

Report to:	Hamilton Area Committee
Date of Meeting:	26 August 2020
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Education Scotland Report - Larkhall Academy
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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 Larkhall Academy by Education Scotland inspectors

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the Education Scotland report on Larkhall Academy be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. Larkhall Academy was inspected in March 2020 as part of a national sample of secondary education.
- 3.2. As part of the revised approach to inspection, the Education Scotland inspectors evaluated the leadership of change; learning, teaching and assessment; raising attainment and achievement and ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.
- 3.3. The inspection team analysed questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, pupils and to all staff. Inspectors observed class lessons and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met parents and members of the local community.
- 3.4. The report by Education Scotland was published on 16 June 2020.

4. Finding of HM Inspectors

4.1. Education Scotland made comment under the following headings:-

- ◆ quality of leadership and management
- ◆ learning provision
- ◆ children's successes and achievements

4.2. Education Scotland found that Larkhall Academy Staff understand the local community and context in which the young people live and know the young people and their families well. Staff, parents and young people feel confident in the vision for improving learning and teaching and there is a caring and supportive ethos, which is underpinned by the school's values.

4.3. The particular strengths of the school were identified as follows:-

- ◆ The headteacher's leadership has brought much needed stability. He has successfully built trust in the school community. Young people, staff, parents and partners recognise and welcome the improved ethos, relationships and stronger teamwork.
- ◆ Young people who are increasingly proud of their school and the recent improvements. They value the support which teachers and support staff provide for them. They are well supported into positive destinations. Almost all young people leave school to go to higher education, further education or employment.
- ◆ The whole school focus on improving learning and teaching experiences. Increasingly, engaging approaches to digital learning are contributing well to these. This is making learning more accessible and motivating.
- ◆ The school's approaches to promoting mental health for all young people. Young people are leading on this valuable work and this is resulting in greater awareness of positive mental health, including through the "wall of support".

4.4. An effective distributed leadership model ensures that staff throughout the school participate in a range of positive leadership opportunities and are able to make suggestions for areas they would like to take forward.

4.5. Young people feel their teachers are approachable and treat them fairly and with respect and there are positive and purposeful interactions between staff and young people.

4.6. The majority of young people engage well in their learning and respond positively in lessons with teachers sharing the purpose of the learning with young people.

4.7. The school has a clear strategy in place to make use of digital technology and this has resulted in improvements in approaches to revision, learning and homework. This has also promoted motivation and inclusion with young people showing a greater level of engagement.

4.8. Staff track and monitor the progress of vulnerable groups of young people and the school's nationally recognised work with young people from the Gypsy Traveller Education Group is leading to increased attainment and positive destinations to employment or further education.

4.9. Education Scotland identified the following areas for continued improvement:-

- ◆ Senior leaders should continue to develop approaches to improving the work of the school. This includes continuing, as planned, to develop the curriculum and a whole school approach to meeting the needs of all learners.
- ◆ Continue to develop approaches to learning, teaching and pupil participation which involve young people more meaningfully. Young people are now ready to take on more responsibility for their learning and leading aspects of school life.
- ◆ As part of its strategy to raise attainment, the school should continue with its drive to reduce exclusions and increase attendance. Staff should also develop further their approaches to support young people to identify the skills they are developing to prepare for their next steps in learning, life and work.

- 4.10. As well as welcoming the strengths of the school it should be noted that the areas for continued improvement have already been incorporated into the school's improvement plan. Progress on the identified areas for improvement have and continue to be shared with parents.
- 4.11. Education Scotland have intimated that they are confident that the school will be able to take forward the areas for improvement and will make no more visits in connection with this report. The local authority has informed parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.
- 4.12. Additional inspection evidence can be accessed by clicking the following web link:-

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=3362>

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. None

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. None

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. None

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. There are no direct risks associated with this report which is provided for information only.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. There is no requirement to carry out an assessment in terms of the proposals contained within this report.
- 9.2. The content of Education Scotland reports are shared with parents and discussed at Parent Council meetings.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

5 August 2020

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Get it right for children and young people
- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Education Scotland Report of 16 June 2020

Contact for Further Information

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

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