

Children and Community

Standards and Quality Review

Belmont Avenue Campus

January 2009

Purpose of this report

This report is the result of a Standards and Quality Review and focuses on certain quality indicators contained within the national evaluation framework *How Good Is Our School 3* (sometimes referred to as *HGIOS 3*) and *Child at the Centre 2*. It highlights where the school is doing well and points to actions that will bring about improvement. The purposes of Standards and Quality reviews are to:

- support, validate or challenge the school's or establishment's own self-evaluation;
- provide support and challenge to schools and establishments in their journey to excellence;
- acknowledge the effective work and practice in learning and teaching, management and leadership ongoing in schools and establishments and highlight any areas for improvement;
- share good practice across the authority;
- inform stakeholders of the quality of education in our schools and establishments;
- bring together internal self-evaluation and external moderation as a support to our schools and establishments; and,
- provide a mechanism for the authority to assure the quality of education within its schools and establishments.

Information about the campus

Belmont Avenue Campus consists of Craigpark and South Park schools and is part of the Belmont cluster of schools. It serves South Ayrshire and provides education for pupils aged three to 19 years. All pupils have complex additional support needs and in some instances, complex medical and health needs. At the time of the review the combined roll was 81 pupils, including four children in the nursery class. All pupils are provided with free school meals in line with the Authority's policy.

At the end of last session the Authority, in partnership with parents and staff, undertook a consultation exercise and, as a result, has established procedures to enable the schools to work as a single campus in order to more effectively meet the needs of all pupils.

How good is the Belmont Avenue Campus?

- ✓ There is a very positive, caring and supportive ethos in the campus and the work of staff is very child-centred.
 - ✓ The pupils are happy, welcoming and friendly and feel valued as part of the campus community.
 - ✓ The head of campus has a clear strategic vision for the way forward for the campus and has the support of staff and parents.
 - ✓ Staff work very hard, are very supportive of the pupils and have a very good knowledge of them as individuals. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
 - ✓ There are very strong and effective links with the Parent Council and with parents through regular meetings. These links are underpinned by the high quality two-way communication in the daily diary that goes between the home and the classroom.
 - ✓ There is very good partnership working with other agencies for the benefit of the pupils.
- The following sections of this report provide more detailed answers to each of the six key questions that form the basis of *HGIOS 3* and *Child at the Centre 2*.

What outcomes has the campus achieved?

- ✓ The campus has made good progress towards implementing the Government's policy of ensuring that all pupils are safe, nurtured, healthy, active, included, achieving, respected and responsible.
- ✓ The campus provides opportunities for children and young people to develop as confident individuals and in some instances successful learners and effective contributors.
- ✓ Most pupils progress successfully to college and are well supported by staff and other agencies in their next steps beyond school although there is a concern regarding post school provision for young people with more complex additional support needs.
- ✓ Almost all young people achieve success in some National Qualifications units at Access 1, most youngsters at Access 2, and a number of young people have achieved an Access 3 award in Drama.
- ✓ Almost all young people are involved in enterprise and vocational skills activities providing them with valuable skills for their future lives.
- ✓ Individualised educational programmes (IEPs), provide clear learning targets and in some instances of best practice targets are challenging, aligned with national guidelines and children are making very good progress in achieving these.
- ✓ The young people learn effectively from a wide range of opportunities for personal achievement to improve their levels of confidence and independence.
- ✓ Children in the nursery class are making very good progress in their personal development and learning.



A number of individual young people benefit from the support and encouragement to travel independently and are learning to do so.



Children and young people take part in a range of outings in the community to extend their personal achievement and life skills.



The campus should promote and recognise further pupils' wider achievements through extending the range of certification for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Caledonian Award and Young Achievers' Award.



Where appropriate, the campus should increase the number of young people attempting certification at levels above Access level 2.



The campus should extend its use of the local community as a context through which to develop the skills of young people and enable them to achieve certification through vocational and practical skills.



The management and staff should progress their plans to review IEPs in order to ensure that:

- there is consistency across the campus
- the targets link appropriately to learning activities within the classrooms
- assessment information is used consistently to evaluate progress and plan next steps.



The campus should further develop *A Curriculum for Excellence* in order for children and young people to maximise their achievement and potential.



National Assessments should be implemented for those young people for whom it is appropriate.



Staff should use the opportunities afforded by the wide range of visits to develop further pupils' learning and achievements.

How well does the campus meet the needs of the campus community?



The campus has successfully developed a caring, friendly and welcoming ethos and environment.



The children and young people are very happy in school, enjoy their experiences in classrooms and work co-operatively with one another.



Pupils feel safe and secure on the campus and are treated with dignity and respect.



Parents feel very welcome on the campus and relationships among parents, young people and staff are extremely positive.

- ✔ The campus enjoys the support of the Parent Council and the wider parent body who work hard to raise funds to provide additional resources and activities for children and young people.
- ✔ The home-school diaries provide an excellent means of communication between home and school and are used effectively by both partners in meeting the needs of the young people.
- ✔ An *Open Door* policy operates and is much valued by parents for the support it provides for them.
- ✔ In best practice, useful curricular information and guidance are provided for parents to assist them in supporting their children's learning.
- ✔ Staff ensure that pupils' needs for intimate care are handled very sensitively and with respect for pupils' dignity.
- ✔ The high quality of care and welfare of the children and young people is a particular strength of staff at all levels.
- ✔ There is excellent on-going teamwork in class teams to support the needs of the children and young people.
- ✔ Staff are caring, hard working, committed and sensitive in their work with children and young people.
- ✔ Staff have a very good knowledge of the children, their needs, and their backgrounds and value them as individuals.
- ✔ Relationships amongst staff, pupils and parents are very good and staff morale is high.
- ✔ Staff are committed and very supportive of the move towards working together as one campus team.
- ✔ A significant strength of the campus is the very good relationships and multi-agency working with a wide range of partners, including: speech and language and occupational therapists; school nurse; physiotherapist; educational psychologist; visiting specialist teachers; social workers; the emergency services; and, Ardfin House who all contribute positively to meet learning needs of the pupils.
- ✔ Opportunities to enhance pupils' learning are extended through work with Ayr College staff, the Supported Learning Centre at Queen Margaret Academy, Kincaidston, St. John's, Struthers and Tarbolton Primary Schools, and pupils from Queen Margaret Academy.
- ✔ The campus has established good links with a range of local businesses.
- ✔ Campus pupils benefit from interactions with a number of pupils on work experience placements from a range of local secondary schools in South Ayrshire.



Young people receive good support for the transition beyond school through the Transition Team, Careers Scotland, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and the STEP Programme in order to ensure they enter future training or placements which fully meet their needs.



Staff should give pupils more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and development by enabling them to:

- identify their own strengths through feedback they receive;
- contribute more effectively to their own IEPs;
- consistently develop focused opportunities to become more independent learners; and,
- exercise more choice and personalisation of learning.



The campus should take steps to establish a Pupil Council to ensure involvement, consultation and decision-making by the children and young people.



The campus should develop further opportunities for pupils to engage regularly with their local mainstream schools.



The campus should work with the authority to review the procedures for admission.

How good is the education the campus provides?



The quality of teaching overall is good to very good with class teams working very effectively in supporting the learning and behaviour of young people.



The focus on the care and welfare of young people is a particular strength of staff at all levels.



The pupils interact well with the adults and have access to a broad range of learning experiences including physical activities, music therapy, the MOVE programme, sensory experiences, hydrotherapy and swimming.



In some instances ICT is well used to develop pupils understanding of concepts.



Effective use is made of a range of strategies including, Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS), Communication Passports and TEACCH approaches to improve the pupils' learning.



Staff use a good variety of learning and teaching strategies to motivate pupils.



Individual behaviour plans are used effectively to support children and young people.



Children and young people understand and are secure in the well-planned routines and boundaries operational in classrooms. Visual timetables assist them and give them confidence.



The PSHE programmes are well developed and well implemented throughout the campus and impact significantly on the personal development of children and young people.



Health education is given a high profile across the campus and promoted through PE, PSHE, outings and the weekly café.



Staff make very good use of praise to recognise effort and success in order to encourage and motivate pupils.



The Expressive Arts curriculum is enriched through the contribution of staff and visiting specialists from Ayr College.



Pupils in the secondary department benefit from work experience placements.



The campus should implement its plans to review forward planning in order to ensure consistency across the stages and to identify clearly the skills that pupils are expected to learn.



The campus should develop a coherent framework for the curriculum and assessment that ensures challenge and progression for pupils as they move through the key stages of their learning.



Programmes and teaching strategies for the development of literacy and numeracy should be devised for the whole campus.



Learning and teaching strategies and differentiated approaches in classroom practice should be developed in order to address more fully the individual needs of pupils.



In order to raise attainment and achievement, teachers and managers should closely monitor pupils' learning experiences in order to ensure:

- challenge for pupils;
- active learning;
- an increase in the pace of learning;
- more independent learning; and,
- more choice for pupils and more opportunities for them to exercise responsibility.



Building on the examples of good practice in evidence, the campus should develop formative assessment strategies across all stages.



In order to impact significantly in supporting pupils' learning, staff should continue to develop ICT.

How good is the management of the campus?

- ✔ Good progress has been achieved in developing one improvement plan for the campus.
 - ✔ A good start has been made to developing a sense of team across the campus.
 - ✔ Staff have made very good progress in developing partnerships in order to support needs of pupils.
 - ✔ Relationships between senior managers, principal teachers and teaching and support staff are generally strong with lines of communication and consultation strengthening.
 - ✔ The campus is very well staffed and many staff are very experienced.
 - ✔ The janitorial, cleaning, catering, and clerical staff make a very positive contribution to the life of the school and to the learning experiences of young people.
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- ▶ The management and staff should build on the good practice evident in the policy framework and curricular guidance in Craigpark School and, through co-operative working, develop a clear and concise set of policies and guidelines for the whole campus.
 - ▶ In order to further improve outcomes for pupils and further develop the skills of staff, the campus should devise a programme of staff development to share good practice and to access further training in learning and teaching and in curricular initiatives.
 - ▶ Departmental meetings should focus on the curriculum and on learning and teaching.
 - ▶ Outdated resources should be removed and remaining materials reviewed, centralised and organised to ensure accessibility by staff and pupils.
 - ▶ Management and staff should ensure that all resources used for learning and teaching are of high quality, relevant and age appropriate.
 - ▶ Staff should further encourage and motivate pupils by displaying more of their work and activities in classrooms and open areas.
 - ▶ The Authority, with both schools and the parent body, should work together in progressing and consolidating the move towards one campus.
 - ▶ Roles and responsibilities of promoted staff should be reviewed to reflect the new campus working.

How good is the leadership of the campus?



The recently appointed head of campus has been in post for three months. She knows the two schools which make up the campus very well and is aware of key strengths and areas for improvement. She has a clear, strategic vision to improve the campus and has already gained the support and confidence of staff and parents.



The head of campus has made a good start to developing teamwork, improving communication and has recognised the need for constructive curriculum advice to staff.



A good start has been made to involving all staff in decision-making for the campus.



Good progress has been achieved in appointing a campus management team consisting of a head of campus, two depute heads and three principal teachers who all have remits to lead learning across all stages.



All staff are very enthusiastic and are committed to the changes which are necessary to take the campus forward in order to improve attainment and achievement for all learners.



There is very good practice in self-evaluation and monitoring of learning and teaching in one part of the campus.



As a matter of urgency all staff should work together to develop and establish a systematic and rigorous approach to self-evaluation of learning and teaching.



The head of campus and the management team should ensure that learning and teaching is monitored closely in order to progress excellence in practice and to improve outcomes for pupils.



The Authority requires to work closely with the head of campus and staff in supporting them to lead change and secure improvements.

What is the capacity for improvement within the campus?

The leadership of the head of campus, together with the commitment of senior management, all staff, parents and the Authority ensures a very good capacity for improvement. The campus is very well placed to take forward the recommendations of this report and to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of its work.

