

Department of Education,  
Culture and Lifelong Learning

## Standards and Quality Review

Prestwick Academy

Prestwick

January 2007

## How Good is Prestwick Academy?

The purpose of this report is to provide an answer to the question – how good is our school?

The report highlights the main findings from the Standards and Quality Review of Prestwick Academy that was carried out by South Ayrshire Council's Department of Education, Culture and Lifelong Learning in January 2007.

The programme of Standards and Quality Reviews is used by the Department to validate and confirm the school's self-evaluation of the quality of educational provision. The review was commissioned by the Departmental Management Team and was carried out by a review team comprising of a lead independent educational consultant, an independent educational consultant, a South Ayrshire Council Secondary Depute Head Teacher and two South Ayrshire Council Quality Improvement Managers. The review team spent six days in the school and assessed the school's processes for self-evaluation, observed learning and teaching in a sample of departments, evaluated pupils' attainment and interviewed groups of pupils and staff. The review covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages.

The review and the report were structured to follow the seven key areas of the national school self-evaluation document *How good is our school?* (HGIOS) published by HM Inspectorate of Education.

The seven key areas are:

- Curriculum
- Attainment
- Learning and Teaching
- Support for Pupils
- Ethos
- Resources
- Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

A number of quality indicators are associated with each key area. This report concentrates on them and highlights where the school is doing well and points to actions which will bring about improvement.

The school, working with the Council's Department of Education, Culture and Lifelong Learning, will now prepare a plan which outlines the actions that will be taken to bring about the improvements highlighted in this report.

## What the school does well

- ✔ The Head Teacher, the Senior Management Team (SMT), teachers and support staff are hard working and teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils.
- ✔ The school curriculum is broad, balanced and generally in line with national guidelines.
- ✔ Pupil attainment is good overall and there are positive trends in many aspects of pupils' performance in national examinations.
- ✔ There are very good links between the school and its cluster primary schools, with examples of effective reciprocal working, good pastoral support for pupils at the transitional stage and appropriate use by some departments of pupils' prior learning in primary.
- ✔ The school welcomes the commitment demonstrated by the authority through the planned construction of a new school building. The New School Committee, led by the Depute Head Teacher, is well placed to monitor the progress of the building project.
- ✔ The school offers pupils a wide range of excursions, community events and extra-curricular activities and raises significant sums of money for charities and other worthwhile causes.

## Where the school has areas for development

- ▶ To capitalise on the opportunities presented by the new school building, the Head Teacher, the SMT, staff, pupils and parents should work together to "bring alive" the school's values, to generate greater pride in the school and to develop a culture underpinned by high expectations and positive behaviour.
- ▶ The Head Teacher and the SMT should provide a clear lead in establishing priorities for improvement in pupil attainment, behaviour and ethos.
- ▶ The school should review its procedures for supporting pupils to ensure that support for learning, behaviour support and guidance staff work together coherently thus generating a better understanding by pupils and staff of individual roles and responsibilities.

## Curriculum

- ✓ The curriculum is broad, balanced and generally in line with national advice.
- ✓ In S5 and S6, the school offers a wide and varied range of courses to accommodate the learning needs of pupils.
- ✓ The school offers a good range of enterprise-based motivational programmes to encourage pupils to achieve their potential.
- ✓ There is good articulation between the primary and secondary stages in Mathematics.
- ✓ The commendable decision to reduce class sizes in S1 and S2 is geared specifically towards improving pupils' learning.

- ▶ Building on some good examples of flexibility in the curriculum, the school should extend the opportunities available through the relaxation of age and stage restrictions, in order to address the learning needs of all pupils.
- ▶ Working with its cluster primary schools, the school should extend curricular articulation between the sectors across a wider range of subject areas and, specifically, in English Language.
- ▶ The school should take immediate steps to adopt A Curriculum for Excellence as the foundation for curricular planning and implement its guiding principles in order to provide all pupils with a more holistic curricular experience.
- ▶ The school should expand and sustain vocational and alternative curricular options from S3 to S6.

## Attainment

- ✔ Pupil attainment is good overall and there are examples of positive trends in pupil performance in national examinations.
- ✔ In Mathematics, effective use is made of prior learning to support pupil progression from P7 to S1.
- ✔ Some departments have developed a range of appropriate strategies to raise pupil attainment and achievement.

- ▶ The school should introduce without delay clear strategies, teaching approaches, systematic tracking, rigorous monitoring and targeted intervention to address the significant challenge of boys' under-achievement.
- ▶ In English Language, greater account should be taken of pupils' prior learning in primary, in order to increase pace and challenge in S1 and S2.
- ▶ In general, teachers should raise their expectations of pupils' achievement, by increasing pace and challenge where appropriate.
- ▶ The school should introduce a more effective whole-school pupil tracking system, in order to adopt a more robust approach to addressing under-achievement.
- ▶ The Head Teacher and SMT should provide more systematic and targeted monitoring of, and greater challenge to, those departments which need to improve performance and pupil attainment.
- ▶ To meet the needs of all S3 and S4 pupils the school should ensure, in all courses, appropriate levels of presentation for national examinations.

## Learning and Teaching



Classroom observation identified a range of very effective learning and teaching which clearly matched the needs of pupils.



A number of teachers shared learning outcomes very well with pupils and revised these at the end of lessons.



In a range of lessons, praise was used effectively as a means of motivating, encouraging and rewarding pupils.



In general, the use of homework diaries throughout the school contributed to supporting pupils' learning.



In some classes good use was made of new technology to enrich the quality of pupils' learning experiences.



In a number of classes teachers should reduce the level of didactic teaching by involving pupils in more active, independent learning and encouraging them to take more direct responsibility for their own learning.



Building on a range of examples of good practice, a more consistent approach should be taken to implementing formative assessment throughout the school.



In order to motivate and encourage pupils and to improve the learning environment, all teachers should build on the examples of good practice observed, namely displaying pupils' work in classrooms and open areas.



To ensure that the quality of pupils' learning is not adversely affected, the Head Teacher, working with staff, pupils and parents, should lead a whole-school strategy to address the extensive occurrence of low-level indiscipline in classes.



The pace of learning should be increased by teachers, particularly in S1 and S2, in order to challenge pupils and address their learning and developmental needs more fully.

## Support for Pupils

- ✓ The commitment of guidance staff is recognised and appreciated throughout the school.
- ✓ The quality of pastoral care for pupils is good.
- ✓ The school and its cluster primary schools work effectively to ensure reciprocal visits of staff and supportive pastoral arrangements for pupils at the transitional stage.
- ✓ There is a good range of effective cluster working in place, well supported by the Cluster Administration Manager (CAM) and a number of teachers and support staff across both sectors.
- ✓ The school has very good links with further and higher education institutions.
- ✓ The school's effective links with a wide range of agencies provide good support for pupils.
- ✓ The Community Involvement Award for S6 pupils is widely recognised and appreciated across the school community.

- ▶ The school should undertake a comprehensive review of guidance, support for learning and behaviour support, in order to improve the articulation of roles and to generate a more coherent approach to supporting pupils' attainment, achievement and development.
- ▶ The school should review its arrangements, including those pertaining to Pupil Councils, for consulting with pupils regarding their views and whole-school experiences.
- ▶ With the support of the authority the school should, as a priority, work to improve pupil attendance.

## Ethos

- ✔ Senior pupils give very good support to S1 pupils through a Buddy Scheme and some provide in-class support outwith their own learning time.
  - ✔ Staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils.
  - ✔ There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their own learning through active participation in a wide range of excursions, community events and extra-curricular activities.
  - ✔ The school raises significant funds to support a range of charities and other good causes.
  - ✔ The School Board and the Parents' Association are very supportive of the work of the school.
- ▶ The Head Teacher, in conjunction with staff, pupils and parents, should lead a whole-school strategy to raise pupil and staff morale, and to generate an ethos of positive behaviour, by:
- “bringing alive” the school's values and giving them greater prominence, thus permeating all aspects of school life more effectively.
  - promoting a greater pupil and staff identity with, and pride in, the school,
  - replacing the school's existing policies on discipline with a whole-school policy which actively promotes positive behaviour,
  - addressing the significant levels of pupil indiscipline in some classes, in corridors and in the playground,
  - bringing an immediate end to the extensive, but inappropriate, practice exercised by many teachers, as a response to poor behaviour, of sending pupils out of class into corridors during lessons,
  - ensuring a more visible and sustained presence of the Head Teacher, the SMT and all promoted staff in classes, in corridors and in the playground, throughout the school day,
  - raising expectations of pupils' aspirations, attitudes and behaviour, and;
  - ensuring that the school's aims are implemented consistently by all pupils and staff.

## Resources

- ✔ The authority has demonstrated great commitment to the future of Prestwick Academy, through the planned provision of a new school building.
  - ✔ The New School Committee, led by the Depute Head Teacher, is well placed to monitor the progress of the building project.
  - ✔ The school is very well staffed by the authority.
  - ✔ The full range of support staff make a valuable contribution to the life of the school and to pupils' learning and development.
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- ▶ The existing school building is unsatisfactory and a range of maintenance issues require to be addressed without delay, by the authority and the school.
  - ▶ The authority should work with the school to address a number of ongoing health and safety concerns in the existing school buildings.
  - ▶ The school should review its arrangements for, and supervision of, pupil movement at period changes, in corridors and between separate buildings.
  - ▶ The authority should work with the school to extend the use of ICT and new technology, in order to enrich the quality of pupils' learning experiences.
  - ▶ The Head Teacher and SMT should develop the school's existing Professional Review and Development (PRD) arrangements, to ensure that the authority's policy and procedures are implemented fully and consistently.

## Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

- ✓ The Head Teacher and SMT are hard-working, approachable and committed to the school.
  - ✓ Teachers and support staff, many of whom have considerable experience, are committed and hard-working.
  - ✓ This review identified a number of well-planned, purposeful and pupil-centred departmental meetings.
  - ✓ Most staff were members of, and participated in, various school committees.
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- ▶ The Head Teacher and SMT should give a clear strategic lead in establishing priorities for improvement in attainment, behaviour and ethos and ensure that all key developments are systematically monitored, evaluated and supported.
  - ▶ Taking account of recent legislative changes, national priorities and local improvement objectives, the school should revise, update and improve its whole-school policy framework and monitor the implementation of key policies in a systematic way.
  - ▶ In planning for the new school building, the Head Teacher should engage with staff, pupils and parents to take this unique opportunity to revitalise the school's vision, values and aims, to generate a clearer school identity and pride, and to develop a culture of high expectations and positive behaviour.
  - ▶ The Head Teacher should develop and implement more systematic and rigorous procedures for assuring quality across all aspects of the work of the school.
  - ▶ The Head Teacher should provide more focused leadership by monitoring, in a planned and systematic way, the work of the SMT, Principal Teachers and their departments, teachers and support staff to facilitate the identification of good practice and address areas in which performance could improve through targeted support and challenge.
  - ▶ The Head Teacher should review management structures, senior managers' functional remits and year group responsibilities, in order to strengthen SMT team identity, and present a clear, uniform "message" to all staff, pupils and parents.
  - ▶ The SMT should adopt a more strategic approach to the planning of key overarching whole-school issues and developments, while continuing to address the day-to-day, operational aspects of school management.
  - ▶ Teaching and support staff should adopt a more collegiate role in the life of the school, thereby providing the Head Teacher with a greater level of whole-school support and enhancing his management capacity, as the school equips itself to face a range of very important challenges.

## Attainment Data

1. SQA examination performance levels - percentages based on S4 roll for awards achieved by the end of S4

English @ level 3 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	97	98	96
South Ayrshire	95	96	96
National	94	94	94

Maths @ level 3 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	99	94	96
South Ayrshire	93	94	94
National	93	92	93

5+ awards @ level 3 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	96	93	92
South Ayrshire	92	93	92
National	91	90	91

5+ awards @ level 4 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	79	76	77
South Ayrshire	78	77	77
National	77	76	77

5+ awards @ level 5 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	42	35	38
South Ayrshire	40	39	38
National	35	34	35

2. SQA examination performance levels - percentages based on S4 roll for awards achieved by the end of S5

3+ awards @ level 6 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	32	24	22
South Ayrshire	27	26	26
National	23	23	22

5+ awards @ level 6 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	15	13	12
South Ayrshire	12	13	12
National	9	10	10

3. SQA examination performance levels - percentages based on S4 roll for awards achieved by the end of S6

English and Maths @ level 3 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	99	96	97
South Ayrshire	93	94	93
National	92	92	92

5+ awards @ level 3 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	97	96	96
South Ayrshire	93	94	92
National	91	91	91

5+ awards @ level 4 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	78	83	82
South Ayrshire	80	80	79
National	79	78	79

5+ awards @ level 5 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	48	54	56
South Ayrshire	49	51	51
National	47	47	48

1+ award @ level 6 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	45	51	51
South Ayrshire	44	47	45
National	44	43	43

3+ awards @ level 6 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	35	38	35
South Ayrshire	32	34	33
National	31	30	30

5+ awards @ level 6 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	27	29	21
South Ayrshire	23	23	22
National	20	19	20

1+ awards @ level 7 or better	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	22	21	13
South Ayrshire	15	14	14
National	12	12	13

4. 5-14 attainment levels - percentages of pupils attaining or exceeding level E by the end of S2

5-14 Reading	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	77.9	74.4	75.4
South Ayrshire	70.8	68.7	68.5

5-14 Writing	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	53.5	58.7	58.0
South Ayrshire	48.1	57.0	56.8

5-14 Mathematics	2004	2005	2006
Prestwick Academy	72.6	60.3	68.3
South Ayrshire	61.6	60.3	60.9