



QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

# CRAIGMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL

APRIL 2005

◆ EDINBURGH ◆  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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## THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Craigmount High School is a non-denominational secondary school, built in 2003, which serves the area of north west Edinburgh. It draws most of its pupils from Corstorphine, Drumbrae, East Craigs, Fox Covert, Gylemuir, Hillwood and Roseburn primary schools. The catchment area is mainly middle class but contains areas of social deprivation.

The school building includes a full range of practical and non-practical teaching areas. The concourse is the only social area for students. The school grounds have three grass pitches and an all-weather pitch.

The current school roll is 1338. Three non-district requests were granted for places in S1 and 19 district requests were granted for places in other authority schools. The resulting S1 roll was 260.

The absence rate for 2002–2003 was 38 half days per pupil. This compares with authority and national averages of 53 and 41 respectively. There was one formal exclusion during 2003–2004.

The teaching staff in 2003–2004 was:

Basic Complement	PA*
87.46 FTE**	0.3 FTE
Ad Hoc	Absence Cover
0 FTE	1.85 FTE

\*Positive action

\*\*Full time equivalent

The pupil : teacher ratio is 14:1.

The senior management team (SMT) consists of the headteacher (HT), five deputy headteachers (DHTs) and the business manager. In addition, 30 support staff are allocated to a range of whole-school responsibilities.

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The HT, senior staff and some members of the teaching staff have taken part in the authority's professional review scheme. The support staff have not been reviewed but the school plans to have all staff reviewed by the end of session 2004-2005.

The pupil unit cost for 2003-2004 was £3335, compared to authority and national averages of £3970 and £3770 respectively. There is a School Board.

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National testing in reading, writing and mathematics is fully established. The school's current performance in relation to national 5–14 attainment targets at level E is:

	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05*
Reading	72%	69%	67%	74%	83%	75%
Writing	75%	69%	66%	69%	68%	75%
Mathematics	57%	76%	67%	64%	75%	75%

\* 2005 target

The school's performance in relation to national attainment targets was as follows:

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Key:

Level 7:	Advanced Higher A–C
Level 6:	Higher at A–C
Level 5:	Intermediate A–C; Standard Grade at 1–2
Level 4:	Intermediate 1 at A–C; Standard Grade at 3–4
Level 3:	Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5–6

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	'99-'01	'00-'02	'01-'03	'02-'04	'05*
% of the original S4 cohort who, by the end of S6, have attained SCQF level 3 or better both English and Mathematics	96%	96%	93%	95%	97%
% of the original S4 cohort who, by the end of S6, have attained 5 or more awards at SCQF level 3 or better	95%	95%	92%	94%	96%
% of the original S4 cohort who, by the end of S6, have attained 5 or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better	83%	83%	80%	83%	86%
% of the original S4 cohort who, by the end of S6, have attained 5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better	48%	50%	53%	58%	55%
% of the original S4 cohort who, by the end of S6, have attained 1 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better	53%	54%	54%	56%	56%
% of the original S4 cohort who, by the end of S6, have attained 3 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better	36%	37%	38%	42%	42%
% of the original S4 cohort who, by the end of S6, have attained 5 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better	22%	22%	23%	27%	27%

\* 2005 target

During 2003–2004, 13 pupils, nine of whom have a Record of Needs, were referred to psychological services.

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## THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The current school development plan covers the period 2004–2005 and includes the following main objectives. To:

- ❁ continue to develop courses to match the needs of students;
- ❁ enhance the status of education for citizenship throughout the school;
- ❁ continue to consider curriculum flexibility in S3/S4;
- ❁ ensure effective progression at all stages in all subject areas;
- ❁ continue to develop strategies to raise attainment;
- ❁ continue to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in all areas;

- ❁ continue to provide appropriate support for all students;
- ❁ continue to develop a positive ethos;
- ❁ consider the implications for the continued development of information communications technology (ICT) resources;
- ❁ enhance accommodation in the new school;
- ❁ develop the use of Phoenix;
- ❁ increase the use of standard tables and charts (STACS) to interpret examination performance;
- ❁ launch and maintain a school website to extend communication with the wider school community; and
- ❁ provide support to all staff and in particular principal teachers (PTs) in monitoring the work of departments.

The review programme, based on the standards and quality (S&Q) report, comprised two key areas:

- ❁ attainment;

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- ❁ management, leadership and quality assurance;
- plus the authority theme:
- ❁ continuity and progression in learning including transitions.

## REVIEW PROCEDURES

Craigmount High School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Services and Education Support Services Groups of the Education Department during October 2004. The review was based on the school's own S&Q report for session 2003–2004. This was considered by the team to be of a good quality and to form an acceptable basis for review.

The review team considered statements made by the school about two key areas in the S&Q report, along with the authority theme, and made their evaluation on the basis of their own

observations and evidence provided by the school. The results of their findings are given below as a commentary on the school's report.

In order to make their evaluation, the team consulted a number of documents, including the school development plan, interviewed samples of pupils, staff and parents, and observed learning and teaching. In total, 40 lessons were observed. A questionnaire was issued to a sample of parents.

Two hundred and seventy one questionnaires were sent to parents, including four which were individually requested, and 146 were returned.

### PARENTS' VIEWS

Almost all parents said that:

- ❁ their children enjoy being at school;
- ❁ their children are encouraged to work to the best of their ability;

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- ❁ their children are treated fairly by their teachers;
- ❁ the school has explained what part they could play in their children's education;
- ❁ they are content with the part they are asked to play in their children's education;
- ❁ they come away from parent-teacher meetings feeling they had learned something useful;
- ❁ the school is well led;
- ❁ the school has good materials and equipment for learning and teaching; and
- ❁ the school has a good reputation in the community.

Most parents said that:

- ❁ their children find school work stimulating and challenging;
- ❁ they are satisfied with the homework their children receive;

- ❁ they know that if their children are having difficulty they will be helped;
- ❁ the school is good at explaining its work to them;
- ❁ they are confident that if they raise a matter of concern the school will do something about it;
- ❁ pupils are generally well behaved;
- ❁ teachers deal effectively with bad behaviour; and
- ❁ the school has good accommodation.

The majority of parents said that:

- ❁ teachers know their children as individuals;
- ❁ they get regular, accurate and helpful information about their children's progress in school work and personal development; and
- ❁ teachers are good at letting them know about their children's strengths and weaknesses.

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### 1 ATTAINMENT

The review team agreed with the following statements from the school's S&Q report:

- ❁ Overall, attainment is very good.
  - ❁ S1 students coped very well with the transition from primary to secondary school and many worked to a good standard in most departments.
  - ❁ The overall quality of attainment in S1 and S2 is good but still requires further improvement. Effective liaison with primary schools facilitates greater pace and rigour in many courses.
  - ❁ At S3 and S4 stages the overall quality of attainment was very good.
  - ❁ At S5 and S6 the overall quality of attainment was good.
- ❁ There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including a homework club.
  - ❁ The points system introduced in session 2002–2003 for students returning to S6 was again adopted and is having a positive impact.
  - ❁ The arrangements for monitoring students' progress and achievements are good.
  - ❁ The quality of learning and teaching in personal and social education (PSE) is good.
  - ❁ The provision of support for learning is very good, particularly the identification of students' needs. Individualised educational programmes (IEPs) for a number of students are shared with departments.
  - ❁ Relationships between students and staff were almost always very good enabling effective learning and teaching to take place.
  - ❁ Students are generally well motivated, demonstrating commitment to their work and a positive attitude to their studies.

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- ❖ Teachers ensure lessons proceed at a good pace.
- ❖ Most students make good progress in their learning.
- ❖ In many subjects students made good progress in applying ICT skills.
- ❖ A large number of departments offer students opportunities of study support at lunchtimes and after school. Many offered general revision classes, weekly topic-by-topic support or drop-in help sessions.
- ❖ A number of departments eg. geography, biology, history, mathematics and art arranged for students to attend residential courses which complement and enhance curricular work.
- ❖ The Easter holiday revision programmes are very successful.
- ❖ Good use is made by many teachers of the well-resourced library and the skills of the librarian to enhance learning and teaching.

- ❖ The homework club is utilised by a small number of students.

Overall, the quality of attainment was good with some examples of very good practice.

**Strengths in attainment**

The school had made good progress in raising pupils' attainment. The overall trend in recent years was one of steady improvement. As a result, almost all pupils, including those with additional support needs (ASN), made good progress from their prior levels of attainment.

At S2, performance in 5–14 reading, writing and mathematics was well above national averages. Reading attainment was above that for comparable schools. Attainment in writing and mathematics was broadly similar to that for comparable schools. The overall trend in recent years was one of steady improvement in reading and mathematics.

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Performance in national examinations was good overall, with many instances of very good performance. At S4, standard grade attainment was very good in biology, history, home economics, Italian and mathematics. At intermediate 1, attainment in mathematics was very good. At S5, higher grade attainment was very good in mathematics and good in art and design, biology, French and health and food technology. At intermediate 2, attainment was good in biology and very good in mathematics. At S5/S6, higher grade attainment was good in history. At intermediate 2, attainment was good in history and physical education. At advanced higher grade, attainment was very good in mathematics.

Overall, the school performed well in 2004 in relation to 30 comparable schools nationally. In particular, attainment was in the top quarter of this group of schools at:

- ❖ 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 5 or better by the end of S4; and
- ❖ 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 4 or better by the end of S4.

Girls' attainment was in the top quarter of these schools at:

- ❖ 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better by the end of S6; and
- ❖ 3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better by the end of S6.

The highest performance for five years was achieved at:

- ❖ 5 or more awards at SCQF Level 5 or better by the end of S4; and
- ❖ 3 or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or better by the end of S6.

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Overall, the quality of learning and teaching in the school was good and often very good. Around half the lessons observed were in the good category and half were very good. Teachers planned their lessons well and most made effective use of homework. Teachers matched their teaching well to pupils' learning needs. They made good use of whole-class, group and individual approaches and almost always explained the purposes of the learning clearly.

The school had rightly invested in ICT to enhance learning and teaching. Effective use of ICT was evident in some classes, but was limited overall and uneven across different subjects. This was at least in part due to a lack of sufficient appropriate hardware. The school had planned intentions to further extend the use of ICT in classrooms. In so doing, the school should take steps to invest further in contemporary hardware.

Support for learning staff contributed well to meeting the needs of pupils with ASN by providing advice on teaching strategies, assessment, resources, curriculum development and giving support in classes. Widespread use was made of praise and most pupils were motivated to work well.

Although the pace of learning was appropriately challenging for most pupils S3 to S6, expectations were lower of pupils in some S1/S2 classes. In implementing its learning and teaching policy, the school should continue with its intentions to strengthen learning and teaching at S1/S2 to ensure that pupils are challenged in line with their abilities. The expertise of very effective teachers should be shared with others to support overall improvement.

Pupils were well behaved, polite and courteous and had good relations with staff. The school's positive behaviour policy was broadly well implemented

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although some inconsistencies between different departments were present. A sense of fairness was evident throughout and parents approved of the work of the school. This contributed to the school's very good standing in the community.

Overall, the school had a strong, and improving ethos of achievement. Staff expectations of pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour were high. A supportive parent body allied to a range of successful school strategies had helped to bring this about. These strategies included:

- ❁ a curriculum which more closely reflected pupils' needs;
- ❁ an effective positive behaviour policy;
- ❁ a strengthening of departmental self-evaluation;
- ❁ a focus on cross-curricular skills, incorporating linguistic, mathematical, ICT and those linked to study methods; and

- ❁ additional support for pupils which included homework and breakfast clubs.

**Areas for development in attainment**

The school should continue to strengthen learning and teaching, particularly at S1/S2, to ensure that pupils are challenged in line with their abilities.

The school had planned intentions to further extend the use of ICT in classrooms. In so doing, steps should be taken to invest further in contemporary hardware.

**2 MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The review team agreed with the following statements from the school's S&Q report:

- ❁ Overall the quality of leadership is very good.
- ❁ Members of the SMT have clear remits. They

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provide good leadership in meeting the targets identified in the school development plan.

- ❁ The SMT work cooperatively with PTs and have developed very good links with their designated departments.
- ❁ PTs provide very good leadership and manage their departments well.
- ❁ Departmental reviews, as part of monitoring and evaluation procedures between the HT and subject leaders, are very good.
- ❁ The student support team provides very good pastoral care for students and has in place good arrangements for monitoring students' progress.
- ❁ There are strong SMT links with subject departments and the student support team.
- ❁ A continuing professional development (CPD) working group has raised the

awareness of CPD, including professional review and development with all staff.

- ❁ Professional reviews have been conducted in many departments. On two inservice days a very good, varied menu of workshops was made available to members of teaching staff.
- ❁ Implementation of the national agreement is very good.
- ❁ Communication with parents is very good through increased use of e-mail, information newsletters and, particularly, student reports.
- ❁ The school is well supported by a proactive School Board.
- ❁ Overall ethos is good.

Overall, the quality of management, leadership and quality assurance was good.

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**Strengths in management, leadership and quality assurance**

The school aims were clear and consistent with national and local authority priorities. They were widely understood among staff and pupils and provided a reliable basis for policy making.

School policies were comprehensive and were produced with the involvement of relevant staff and took account of the views of parents and pupils, as appropriate.

Staff were involved in self-evaluation at departmental and whole school level.

The annual departmental review focusing on attainment was a particular strength.

This involved the head of department in discussion with the SMT link person and the HT. At this meeting, very good use was made of examination results and other data to identify and agree strategies to raise future

attainment. Staff were engaged in this process at departmental level through prior discussion of results and consequent implications for development. Staff were also involved in aspects of whole school self-evaluation through a range of working groups. Views of parents, pupils and other interests were taken into account in evaluating the service provided by the school.

Members of SMT were linked to groups of subject departments, or in the case of the HT to student support, to assist improvement and to enhance two-way communication. Through SMT attendance at departmental meetings, dialogue took place with subject staff on the curriculum, learning and teaching and progress with planned developments. SMT members also used this arrangement to promote the consistent implementation of whole school policies.

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Although some classroom evaluation of learning and teaching was undertaken by peer and promoted staff, this was inconsistent across the school. More attention should therefore be given to the evaluation of pupils' learning experiences through the systematic monitoring of classroom practice.

The annual S&Q report was clear and contained evaluative statements for each of the key areas of the school's work. Consideration should now be given to extending staff involvement in the preparation of the S&Q report and strengthening the evidence base on which it is founded.

The development plan was well organised and provided a clear account of aims, audit and planned action. The plan contained a range of well-judged priorities that linked well to local and national priorities. Objectives, tasks and timescales were well defined and the majority of

success criteria were specific and measurable. Departmental and other plans contained obvious links to the school development plan and contained resource and CPD requirements.

The impact of the development plan on the work of the school was marked. Progress on the implementation of priorities in previous plans was evident and the quality of pupils' experiences had improved. Staff had been involved in the planning process as had parents and pupils. This staff involvement should now be extended to include the final drafting stage of the plan in order to ensure its wide ownership. In particular, steps should be taken to ensure the involvement of all support staff in the planning process.

The PT support for learning and special educational needs (LSSN) deployed staff effectively to ensure that pupils with ASN received support appropriate to their needs.

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Staff, including visiting specialist services, had meeting time to plan, coordinate and evaluate their contributions to the education of pupils with ASN. Learning assistants were well informed and skilled to meet the educational and social needs of these pupils. Classroom assistants were deployed effectively to support subject departments.

The school was very well led. The HT provided clear direction and possessed a range of positive personal qualities and strong interpersonal skills which imparted confidence and motivated others. He enjoyed a high level of personal and professional credibility among staff, parents and pupils and displayed high levels of competence and commitment allied to a range of contemporary knowledge and skills. He had an effective approach to the development of teamwork and had proved successful

in engaging staff in general, and heads of department in particular, more fully in the overall improvement of the school.

Promoted staff had well defined remits which were mostly well understood by other staff. In general, these remits were discharged well and the staff concerned worked effectively with others in a team approach. Teamwork across the school was well structured and focused on quality improvement.

All staff members had clear remits and staff review had been established for all. The provision of staff development was designed to account for carefully identified needs at whole school, individual and team levels. Overall, CPD was well planned and managed effectively by a member of the SMT. Most new staff had experienced an effective induction process.

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The annual departmental review involving the head of department with the SMT link person and the HT was a particular strength.

The HT had an effective approach to the development of teamwork and had proved successful in engaging all staff in the overall improvement of the school. In particular, the management role of PTs and other staff had been strengthened considerably through this approach.

### **Areas for development in management, leadership and quality assurance**

More attention should be given to the evaluation of pupils' learning experiences through the systematic monitoring of classroom practice.

Staff involvement in the preparation of the development plan and S&Q report should be strengthened and extended to all staff.

### **3 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION IN LEARNING INCLUDING TRANSITIONS**

The review team agreed with the following statements from the school's S&Q report:

- ✿ The quality of the curriculum available to students is good.
- ✿ All subject departments continued to give high priority to improving the S1/S2 curriculum.
- ✿ Courses are effectively revised to provide support and challenge for all students.
- ✿ In S1/S2 the allocation of time to each curricular area is appropriate and good progress has been made in many departments with further implementation or refinement of the 5-14 programme.
- ✿ The 'Thinking Science' course has been developed in S1 and the ICT course was established in S1 and S2.

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- ❁ Opportunities to allow primary pupils to enhance their information handling and library skills are very good.
- ❁ A successful programme of primary/secondary liaison has taken place involving the English, mathematics and modern languages departments to ensure continuity and progression from P6 to S2.
- ❁ National testing was fully implemented in mathematics and developed in English.
- ❁ S1 students coped very well with the transition from primary to secondary school and many worked to a good standard in most departments.
- ❁ There is effective liaison with primary schools, which facilitates greater pace and rigour in many courses in S1/S2.
- ❁ A number of S6 students are 'buddies' to younger students and supported S1 classes during their Induction visit and the first days of the new session.
- ❁ There are very good and regular meetings of cluster HTs with the DHT at Craigmount High School.
- ❁ The school has excellent relationships with associated primary schools and the transition arrangements from primary to secondary are very good.
- ❁ In S3/S4 students follow a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Most students followed eight standard grade courses. A number of departments offer courses at intermediate 1 and intermediate 2 levels.
- ❁ There are good progression routes to courses in S5.
- ❁ In S5/S6 students receive a wide choice of subjects. Good progress has been made with the implementation of Higher Still

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courses at intermediate 1, intermediate 2, higher and advanced higher.

- ❁ A limited number of group awards are available to students.
- ❁ The quality of pastoral care is very good.
- ❁ Procedures for giving students and parents information and advice at times of course choice are thorough. Student support staff interviewed all students at times of subject reports and intervened when students progress gave cause for concern.
- ❁ The procedures for reporting to parents are substantially developed and are now more effective. Interim reports are issued to all students. These reports were highly commended by parents.
- ❁ The arrangements for monitoring students' progress and achievements are good.
- ❁ The quality of learning and teaching in PSE is good. The regular contact with student

support staff helps ensure each student develops good relationships with their student support teacher.

- ❁ The provision of support for learning is very good, particularly the identification of students' needs. IEPs for a number of students are shared with departments. Students with a Record of Needs receive good support.
- ❁ An acting PT of behaviour support was appointed to help provide support for certain students. This good support includes in-class support, withdrawing students from class, alternative curricular activities and a breakfast club.
- ❁ The library, which also received additional funding, is used to good effect by many students and teachers. Most subject departments use the library as a teaching resource.

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- ✿ There are good arrangements for involving outside agencies.

Overall, the continuity and progression in pupils' learning was good.

### **Strengths in continuity and progression in learning including transitions**

The school had established strong links with its associated primary schools. The schools worked cooperatively as a cluster to plan joint development and implement agreed arrangements to support the transition of pupils from the primary to the secondary school. Overall, these arrangements worked well to provide a positive experience for pupils.

A member of SMT chaired meetings of the cluster HTs. She prepared an annual cluster development plan and produced minutes of

meetings. Through this group, a strong ethos of cooperation had been established.

However, there was a need to ensure a greater sense of involvement among members of the group to widen and increase ownership of decisions and actions. In particular, there was scope to focus the group's work more tightly through a more rigorous evaluation of progress with agreed development priorities and an increased emphasis on outcomes.

Pupils were supported in the transition to secondary through a well-planned annual programme of activities. Student support staff worked with the primary schools to ensure that pupils' particular learning needs were taken account of and that personal and social education was continuous and progressive.

In most subjects, information from primary schools was used to determine future provision.

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For example, computing and business education staff had visited primary schools and worked with ICT coordinators to inform the development of the S1/S2 ICT programme. Similarly, subject staff in all departments had undertaken liaison work with their colleagues in primary to help ensure that full account was taken of pupils' prior learning. However, further work at departmental level was needed to continue to improve progression in the curriculum for all pupils.

In S1/S2, good provision was made overall for pupils with a range of abilities using the 5–14 guidelines. Courses were in line with school aims and all departments were involved in regular internal discussion of content and progression. Subject departments tracked the progress of individual pupils and parents received clear reports about their children's progress. Features of effective practice included:

- ❁ joint delivery of the personal and social education programme in S1 by guidance staff and group tutors working together;
- ❁ provision of an outdoor education residential experience for all S1 pupils;
- ❁ a 'buddying' system where senior pupils worked alongside S1 pupils; and
- ❁ programmes of sports and choral activities which linked to opportunities provided in primary school.

At S3 to S6, several subject departments had made impressive use of new national qualifications courses to reflect more closely the needs of their pupils.

The school should continue with its efforts to explore the flexibility afforded by national qualifications courses with a view to further enhancing its provision. In particular,

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consideration should be given to extending provision at access levels for pupils with ASN.

The school had well developed approaches to support pupils' course choice from S2 to S3, from S4 to S5 and from S5 to S6 and to training, further and higher education and employment. Pupils and parents received clear information about available courses of study and advice from subject departments relating to choice. Parents had very good opportunities to consult with subject and other teachers to help inform the choices made. A wide range of well targeted approaches was used at different stages including:

- ❁ pupil self assessment of abilities and interests;
- ❁ very good information about courses and careers;
- ❁ tracking of pupils' progress;
- ❁ good access to information through a well resourced careers library;

- ❁ interviews with careers advisers; and
- ❁ very good course handbooks produced by staff for pupils and parents.

The school had brought together guidance and support for learning staff to form a student support team in the school. This had enabled the staff concerned to make decisions and plan together on all aspects of pupils' care and welfare. As a result, coherence in the support to pupils had been strengthened.

The school made strong efforts to be inclusive in all aspects of its work. Through this commitment to inclusion, it was involved in a pilot project which provided for a further small group of pupils with special educational needs. In so doing, the school was building expertise in this area and developing its provision to reflect pupils' needs.

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Guidance, LSSN and subject staff worked well together to support pupils and parents at transition stages. The school's personal and social education programme had been revised from S1 to S6. This comprised a wide range of topics, was well presented and resourced and linked well between the different stages. At S4, the work experience programme was well planned and organised. At S5 and S6, pupils were encouraged to undertake further vocational experiences, largely through their own efforts. The school should, however, take further steps to extend the availability of vocational provision for more pupils.

The school had strong and productive links with a number of relevant agencies including Careers Scotland, Stevenson College and other educational establishments. School-college partnership included a behavioural transition

group. The school maintained effective links with statutory agencies including educational psychologists, medical services, social work and the Working Together partnership.

Support for learning staff provided well planned tutorial sessions, gave effective advice to the SMT and class teachers about IEPs and strategies to meet pupils' needs. Support for learning staff also provided high quality professional development to staff on speech and language, dyslexia in the classroom and social inclusion.

Support for learning staff provided support to ensure that pupils' learning needs were clearly identified and barriers to learning systematically addressed. Carefully judged provision was made for individual pupils with ASN. However, further work should be done to identify and support gifted and talented pupils, in line with education authority policy.

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For pupils with ASN which related to challenging behaviours, the PT behaviour support coordinated approaches which addressed their difficulties, encouraged progress and prevented them from disrupting other pupils' learning and welfare. The PT behaviour support liaised with a range of external agencies to ensure a varied and motivating programme was delivered for identified pupils. This resulted in effective support for vulnerable pupils at the transitions.

IEPs were well established and coordinated by the PT LSSN. Pupils were involved in setting long and short term targets. IEPs were kept under review and up-to-date. Procedures for managing Records of Needs were in line with local and national guidelines and staff conducted effective review meetings.

The school was successful in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs were able to

achieve high standards. Alternative assessment arrangements were very well managed by the PT LSSN and learning assistants were skilled readers and scribes. Staff monitored the appropriateness and effectiveness of alternative assessment arrangements for individual pupils. Support for learning staff tracked individual pupils' progress and pupils were encouraged to evaluate their own progress. Achievements outwith school and the formal curriculum were also celebrated.

Further features of effective practice were identified. These included:

- ✿ the use of tutorial support gave pupils optimum opportunities for learning;
- ✿ barriers to learning were identified well and staff worked flexibly to ensure that these were overcome or circumvented;
- ✿ pupils with dyslexia were encouraged to use ICT, dictating written work to a scribe;

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- ❁ pupils were encouraged to contribute to the target setting process;
- ❁ pupils were actively involved in their own learning;
- ❁ a high emphasis was present on pupils being as independent as possible; and
- ❁ learning assistants were particularly skilful in ensuring pupils took this responsibility.

### **Areas for development in continuity and progression in learning including transitions**

The cluster management group should strengthen the cluster development plan, obtain regular feedback on progress with agreed development priorities and increase the emphasis on planned outcomes.

Work should continue to further strengthen curricular progression from primary to secondary school.

The school should continue with its efforts to explore the flexibility afforded by national qualifications courses to further enhance its curriculum provision to reflect pupils' needs.

The school should do more to further identify and support gifted and talented pupils in line with education authority policy.

The tracking of pupils' progress should be developed further on a whole school basis, building on practice at S5/S6 and the good work already undertaken by departments.

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### **Commendable features**

- ❁ The school had made good progress in raising pupils' attainment.
- ❁ Overall, the quality of learning and teaching in the school was good and often very good.

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- ❁ The annual departmental review involving the head of department with the SMT link person and the HT was a particular strength.
- ❁ The school was very well led. The HT provided clear direction, possessed a range of positive personal qualities and was effective in motivating others.
- ❁ The school made strong efforts to be inclusive in all aspects of its work.
- ❁ The formation of the student support team had strengthened the support provided to pupils.
- ❁ Several subject departments had made impressive use of new national qualifications courses to reflect more closely the needs of their pupils.

**Areas for development by the school**

- ❁ The school should continue to strengthen learning and teaching, particularly at S1/S2,

to ensure that pupils are challenged in line with their abilities.

- ❁ The school had planned intentions to further extend the use of ICT in classrooms. In so doing, steps should be taken to invest further in contemporary hardware.
- ❁ More attention should be given to the evaluation of pupils' learning experiences through the systematic monitoring of classroom practice.
- ❁ Staff involvement in the preparation of the development plan and S&Q report should be strengthened and extended to all staff.
- ❁ The school should continue with its efforts to explore the flexibility afforded by national qualifications courses to further enhance its curriculum provision.
- ❁ Further work should be done to identify and support gifted and talented pupils in line with education authority policy.

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The school's self-evaluation, as represented in its S&Q report, was considered to be mostly well judged. Overall, the S&Q report was a good reflection of the school's current development position.

### Areas for development by the authority

- ❁ The school should be supported to prepare an action plan to meet the main recommendations in this report.
- ❁ Examples of good practice should be entered in the database of good practice to enable their wider dissemination to other schools.

Very good:	Major Strengths
Good:	Strengths outweigh weaknesses
Fair:	Some important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory:	Major weaknesses
Almost all:	90% plus
Most:	75% plus
Majority:	50% plus
Some:	15% plus
Few:	Less than 15%