

Midlothian Council – Education, Communities and Economy

Standards and Quality Report

Dalkeith High School

Summary Report for parents/carers

September 2017

Introduction

Dalkeith High School is an ambitious school with a clear focus on continual improvement for all of our young people. Evaluation of our work takes place throughout the session with the annual publication of the Standards and Quality Report which captures our findings and identifies next steps. This document provides a summary for parents/carers with the full version being available by emailing the school.

At the heart of our self-evaluation are the three questions

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Our self-evaluation has looked in-depth at the following the Quality Indicators (QI) in 'How good is our school? (4th edition)':

How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?

- Leadership of change (QI 1.3)

How good is the quality of care and education we offer?

- Learning, teaching and assessment (QI 2.3)

How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?

- Improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion (QI 3.1)
- Raising attainment and achievement (QI 3.2)

Our evaluations are based on evidence gathered from a variety of sources representing all stakeholders in our school community. Earlier in the year, the school participated in a Validated Self Evaluation exercise involving senior officers from Midlothian Council. They validated the school's evaluations of QI 1.3 Leadership of change and QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment.

How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?

Leadership of change (QI 1.3)

How are we doing?

The overall quality of leadership of change is **very good**.

How do we know?

Following a period of extensive consultation with all stakeholders during last session, our shared vision was agreed. Our shared vision underpins all that we do in our school community.

Dalkeith High School: Enabling all young people to succeed in an inclusive, respectful and stimulating environment

Our school values of **respect, fairness, honesty, success and confidence** are enshrined in our stained glass window. The window, made by a local artist based on designs created by our pupils, was a gift to the school from the Parent Council to mark the school's centenary in 2014.

The school motto throughout the years has been **LABOR VINCIT 'Hard work prevails'** and is true today as it was when Dalkeith High School first opened its doors to pupils in 1914.

Dalkeith High School is an improving school with good self-evaluation systems in place and a strongly focused improvement plan. Senior Leaders in Dalkeith High School provide strong leadership which has enabled our school to continue to improve; all members of staff are committed to ensuring that we achieve the highest possible standards and success for all of our learners. Our Extended Leadership Team drives forward improvements in the school. There is a strong culture of collaborative leadership at all levels in the school and we always strive to do better than our previous best.

Strategic planning for improvement is based on a sound knowledge of education policy and a good understanding of the school's current position; this is guided effectively by senior leaders. We have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of our catchment area.

A positive ethos in school is reflected in excellent relationships between staff and young people and peer relationships. Teachers' caring and practical support of young people helps them to achieve positive outcomes.

Pupil Voice is strong at all levels in the school with whole-school input led by senior pupils.

What are we going to do now?

The school will develop systems to ensure that data is shared more efficiently and effectively with staff. Staff will continue to build on their knowledge and use of data to ensure that there are no poverty-related attainment patterns. We will hold true to our vision of being an inclusive school where all are able to succeed, irrespective of background. We will continue to provide additional support to those who need it to allow them to succeed, particularly through the use of Pupil Equity Funding.

We will provide further opportunities for staff to learn from each other within the school and beyond, and will develop a 'practitioner enquiry' approach to taking forward aspects of school improvement.

Consideration will be given to how we can improve the participation of our school community partners during the improvement planning process.

How good is the quality of care and education we offer?

Learning, teaching and assessment (QI 2.3)

How are we doing?

The overall quality of learning, teaching and assessment is **good with aspects of very good practice**.

How do we know?

The learning environment in the school is based on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high-quality learning outcomes. Our learners' achievements both in and out of school are recognised and rewarded.

Planning of learning is proportionate and manageable, and clearly identifies what is to be learned and assessed. Good use is made of assessment procedures to inform pupils of where they are in their learning to help them to identify their next steps. Tracking and monitoring systems are well understood and are used effectively for improvements in learning. High quality feedback is given by staff to learners to help them to improve and also by learners to their peers.

Learners take an active role in the school and the wider community and take on leadership roles including leading learning.

Staff access and apply relevant findings from educational research to improve outcomes for learners.

What are we going to do now?

We will continue to work towards consistency across the school in terms of the pace, challenge and differentiation of learning. There will be a focus on collaborative and active learning across all areas.

We will continue on our Visible Learning journey by embedding the learner qualities across with school and will introduce a practitioner enquiry approach to further improvements in learning and teaching.

How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?

Improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion (QI 3.1)

How are we doing?

The overall quality of improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion is **good**.

How do we know?

We fully comply and actively engage with statutory requirements and codes of practice, with regular professional learning to ensure that we are fully up-to-date with any changes. All staff have a shared understanding of wellbeing and children's rights and promote a climate where our young people feel safe and secure. Inclusion is at the heart of our practice.

What are we going to do now?

Further improvements in health and wellbeing will be a key priority for us as a school, with a focus on 'active' and 'included'. The introduction of the Wellbeing Award will allow us to measure progress in this respect.

We will fully embed restorative practices based on the positive, supportive ethos that currently exists in the school. The establishment of a Nurture Space will be a key priority this session.

Raising attainment and achievement (QI 3.2)

How are we doing?

The overall quality of raising attainment and achievement is **good**.

How do we know?

Attainment continues to improve in Dalkeith High School with real strengths across many measures. Analysis of data on 'Insight' published in September 2017 shows the following patterns:

- Increasing literacy and numeracy levels at both SCQF levels 4 and 5
- Attainment is good for pupils from a range of different backgrounds
- The needs of learners are being met by the range of options on offer in the Senior Phase

We have in place a robust tracking system with effective interventions to allow for continuous progress for learners. Almost all of our young people move on to positive destinations when they leave school.

A key strength of our school is the range of wider achievement opportunities on offer to our pupils and the encouragement that they receive from staff to participate in them. Our school website, app and Twitter account give regular updates on the achievement of our pupils, with Newsletters published each term to capture all that has been achieved. This leads to our young people growing in confidence as they develop new skills and forge new friendships. This is only made possible by the enthusiasm of staff for providing such opportunities on top of their contractual duties.

What are we going to do now?

We have identified areas where we can make further improvements and have clear strategies in place to start to close them. There will be a continued focus on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Through the use of our tracking systems we will identify young people who have not as yet engaged with opportunities for wider achievement. Any barriers to being included will be identified and support given as appropriate.

What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

Dalkeith High School provides a good quality of education for the young people in its care, with many aspects of practice evaluated as being good or very good.

We are in a strong position to improve further as a school with all stakeholders committed to this. Our School Improvement Plan details the priorities for the session ahead and is available on request by contacting the school office.