

Woodbank

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Your Ref:

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WEST\DEHS\LET001-GB\EB\RL

2 June 2017

To:

**All Parents and Carers of Pupils at  
Douglas Ewart High School**

Any enquiries please contact

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Dear Parent / Carer

## **REPORT ON PROGRESS OF DOUGLAS EWART HIGH SCHOOL SINCE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT OF 7 JUNE 2016**

Douglas Ewart High School was inspected by Education Scotland in March 2016. The inspection focused on aspects of leadership and management across the school, the quality of learning, teaching and assessment and how well the school is supporting all young people to make progress and achieve as highly as possible.

As part of the quality reporting arrangements of Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning, Dumfries and Galloway Council, I am writing to inform you of the progress made by Douglas Ewart High School since the publication of the Education Scotland report in June 2016. The report highlighted three main aspects for development. This letter sets out actions taken by the school in addressing these recommendations.

### **Continue to raise young people's attainment, particularly in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.**

There has been a whole school focus to raise attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing throughout this session. This work has involved a refocusing of policy and procedures for whole school ownership of literacy and numeracy across all curricular areas as well as building staff capacity to ensure a shared understanding of the standard across the school. Staff have been involved in moderation at all levels building on an improved literacy and numeracy interface with the cluster primary schools through joint working including the release of secondary staff to work with primary staff in their settings. Dialogue is ongoing between the English Department and P7 teachers to build on the shared literacy focus. The school is also looking at the success of the reciprocal reading scheme across the cluster and is considering how it might be continued and developed to ensure progression in reading in S1 and 2. Performance in national examination continues to show year on year improvement in literacy and numeracy.

The development of 'Growth Mindset' which encourages pupils to push themselves positively to respond to new challenges will be a key feature of the use of the school's pupil equity funding to sustain continued improvement particularly in Health and Wellbeing. This work will build on increased focus on pupil voice and the consistent promotion and recognition of wider achievement. This will be further enhanced by the developing the young work force strategy being established in the junior phase to support the current focus in the senior phase. A group of core staff have been identified to take this forward. A focus on digital literacy through improved use of and access to digital technologies will further enhance this work next session.

The school continues to improve its analysis of statistical performance data from a range of sources and makes appropriate reflection and observations at individual, subject, whole school and cluster level in the context of authority and national data to support the culture of raising attainment.

Actions identified by Education Scotland in the relation to the need for further development of the PSE curriculum to strengthen young people's experience in health and wellbeing have been addressed through revisiting and further developing this curricular area to meet entitlements. From session 2017-18, PSE and RE for all S1-S3 will be a core part of the curriculum enhanced by the delivery of themed days by the school and external agencies in response to community concerns.

### **Develop a more effective strategy to support young people's learning across the school, particularly for those supported in the educational resource base.**

In this area, the school has worked in direct partnership with Education Scotland. The development of new policy and procedures provides a more definitive and structured pathway with flexibility to suit individual needs and the time plan for full implementation by end of session 2017-18 is on track. A key target was to ensure access to literacy and numeracy qualifications at the appropriate level for all those supported in the educational resource base with an additional option to extend for all to English and Maths qualifications in senior phase where progress allows. The young people's development of skills in literacy is benefitting from a taking forward of the cluster approach to reading building on prior learning through the adoption of the sound reading system and future plans to roll out Reciprocal Reading across all areas of the broad general education.

The pathways for youngsters involved in the educational resource base and their portfolio of attainment and achievement is being enhanced by maximising inclusion within the senior phase option choice through planned mainstreaming in the senior phase with a planned transition year from the final year of the broad general education.

In the senior phase, the aspiration is to give all supported pupils a continuum of focused, individualised, tailored support for literacy, numeracy, skills for life and work and digital learning. A S4/5 mainstream option choice will also provide a more focused pathway to developing the young workforce. The school continues to build on the exemplary work with community partners and community learning and development, highlighted in Scottish Education Award Finals 2016, and therefore increasingly enhance the life chances of those requiring additional support.

Young people across the school continue to demonstrate exemplary behaviour and engagement with learning as a result of positive relationships and learning conversations

with peers and staff. This is supporting their progress evidenced by young people consistently raising higher standards of attainment in SQA examinations over the last two sessions.

In this the second year of a new structure the Principal Teacher Curriculum – Additional Support Needs (PTC ASN) has overtaken the action plan for ASN (Additional Support Needs) which was already in the planning stage at the time of the inspection but had not had sufficient time to impact consistently. The focus on the curricular nature of this new post has provided the opportunity to ensure that the pathways for supported pupils are broadened and more relevant. This continues to involve a positive interface between the PTC ASN, the Pastoral Support staff and a variety of external agencies. These actions are helping to develop a more inclusive and progressive curriculum for all.

**Ensure greater consistency across the school in self-evaluation to increase the impact on young people's learning and achievement.**

The school now has a revised learning and teaching policy reflecting both the changing curriculum and the delivery dynamic across the school. This has been developed in harmony with the revisiting of the school self-evaluation policy and procedures to provide a consistent foundation for self-evaluation at all levels. This work is continuing to give staff the sense of empowerment to make suggestions and take decisions to improve young people's achievements and experiences. It has also led to appropriate staff ownership with regard to the sharing of whole school moderation of the broad general education through the principal teacher curriculum (PTC) forum. The revised self-evaluation policy and procedures incorporating directed tools for self-evaluation has a clear on shared ownership through clearly identified and measureable targets. The impact of this is that targets are better informed through the junior profile which can be interrogated to ensure self-evaluation includes the pupils through the recorded learning conversations which are both diagnostic and formative.

Pupils have recently been involved in evaluating where the school is and where it needs to be through the eyes of S1, S2 and S3. This is making the school improvement plan for session 2017 – 18 more pupil-centred and directed to allow the school to better meet their needs. This has involved awareness raising of not only the recently allocated pupil equity funding but also the socio-economic dynamic of the school. Parental views are always listened to and acted upon through the parent council, feedback sheets issued with every school report and the authority parental survey.

The school has made very good progress in implementing recommendations from Education Scotland and is in a strong position to improve further. I wish to congratulate all within the school community on the progress made over the last year.

Yours sincerely



Gillian Brydson  
Head of Education