

# Summarised inspection findings

**Edinburgh Secure Services (Howdenhall & St Katharine's Special School)**

The City of Edinburgh Council

20 December 2022

## Key contextual information

Edinburgh Secure Services (Howdenhall & St Katharine's Special School) is a secure accommodation service provided by The City of Edinburgh Council. The secure accommodation service consists of one secure house and two close support houses. Young people often transition into the school and away from the school at various points throughout the academic year. A Children's Hearing or court determine the length of time young people spend at Edinburgh Secure Services.

The school can provide education for up to 12 children and young people aged 10 years old through to 18 years old. At the time of the inspection, all young people access a reduced school timetable. Children and young people attending the school require a significant amount of additional support to meet their needs. The school is progressing through a period of significant change to meet better the needs of learners.

The local authority undertook a review of Edinburgh Secure Services in March 2022. The review identified significant areas for improvement across the school and care service.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

unsatisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The overall quality of learning, teaching and assessment in the school is unsatisfactory. Young people are not provided with a full time education and all young people have limited or no attendance at school. Young people are not motivated to engage with the learning on offer. Local authority officers and senior leaders need to urgently develop a strategic approach to improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.
- Although physical spaces for learning are attractive and well resourced, senior leaders and staff need to improve school culture as a matter of urgency. Staff must ensure their practice reflects better the school values. Teachers need to identify and develop alternatives to class based lessons to enhance young people's inclusion and participation with education. Education staff, in partnership with care staff, must consider and implement approaches to increase all young people's motivation for learning. Senior leaders and staff need to support all young people to improve their engagement with learning as an immediate priority.
- Young people are not receiving their learning entitlements. They have limited opportunities to engage in learning with minimal personalisation and choice. Most young people can identify a few activities in school they enjoy. However, they highlighted a wide range and number of learning activities they would like to be on offer. Senior leaders and staff should create programmes of learning activities that draw upon young people's interests. In doing so, they need to provide young people with a greater number and variety of learning activities. This may include ensuring continuity of learning through carefully planned, monitored and time-limited

periods of remote learning. For all young people, an increase to the time allocated to accessing learning each day is required.

- Senior leaders and teachers have established recently a digital learning improvement group. The group has produced well-judged plans to build teacher confidence in using digital technologies. It is essential that the group now move forward with its plans and demonstrate measurable improvements in using digital technologies to improve engagement and learning.
- Senior leaders are beginning to meet with teachers to discuss approaches to learning and teaching. Although not established fully, the meetings have an intended focus on improving and enhancing practice. It is important that there is no further delay in actioning plans to meet with teachers to improve practice across the school. There is a need to consistently use assessment approaches effectively to inform planning, interventions or meet young people's needs. Teachers would benefit from additional professional learning in the use of formative and summative assessments to provide reliable and valid data and information.
- Senior leaders and local authority officers should provide teachers with opportunities to explore good practice in other schools. Additionally, teachers need to be able to access planned, focused and regular moderation activity. This will support further teacher's confidence in making judgements of how well young people are progressing with their learning.
- Forward planning now needs to use experiences and outcomes more effectively. Senior leaders do not yet quality assure teacher planning. Most young people do not build upon their prior learning. It is essential that teachers ensure all young people have purposeful, progressive and meaningful learning experiences. Senior leaders, supported by local authority officers, should continue with plans to provide targeted professional learning and improve approaches to planning and tracking. Teachers would benefit from focused and meaningful opportunities to explore high-quality planning, tracking and monitoring developed in other school settings. Senior leaders need to ensure they undertake comprehensive and systematic quality assurance of planning, tracking and monitoring.
- Individual education programmes now need to inform learning and teaching approaches or develop young people's skills and capacities. Senior leaders must ensure teachers improve approaches to meet each young person's individual needs. In doing so, they should include young people and care staff as active participants in developing individual education programmes. Senior leaders and teachers need to regularly evaluate, assess and update individual education programmes. This will help improve approaches to assessing, tracking, monitoring and planning high-quality individualised supports for all young people.
- The school does not yet provide all young people with a full education timetable. A majority of young people are offered less than half of a normal school week. Senior leaders need to address this issue as an immediate priority.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- At present, the school has been unsuccessful in improving attainment. Young people in the broad general education are making limited progress. When they initially enrol at the school, young people have significant gaps in their learning with limited attainment. They have experienced considerable disruption to their learning due to adversity in life experiences, periods of exclusion, truancy or anxiety related non-attendance. At present, continued poor attendance and lack of engagement are having a negative impact on all learner's progress.
- Young people are making very limited progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. They do not have sufficient participation in literacy and numeracy activities to demonstrate improved outcomes.
- A few young people demonstrate improvements in reading and comprehension. This demonstrates young people's capacity to learn even with limited engagement. Although the English classroom has a small library area, all young people's engagement with reading for enjoyment is low. School staff should work in partnership with young people to increase interest in books and digital texts to promote better enjoyment and motivation to read.
- When motivated, young people can use writing to describe personal views and experiences. They are able to record their thoughts clearly. Young people do not access sufficient learning experiences to improve further their skills in communication. However, young people demonstrate effective communication skills when working with familiar adults who they trust.
- Positively, young people can apply their knowledge of addition to work out overall costs of items, using a calculator. They can compare costs of items from a range of retailers to determine the best value. A few young people calculate simple percentages to solve problems with confidence. These young people can apply their knowledge of percentages when working out tax from a payslip with support from teachers. They are less confident applying knowledge of percentages without support.
- Since 2016, most young people attending the school for at least six months achieve National Qualifications unit and course awards in a limited range of subjects. Almost all learners achieve course awards at National 3 in English and Application of mathematics. A few young people achieve course awards at National 4 in English and Application of mathematics. More recently, young people do not achieve National Qualifications to a level that they are capable of. Teachers should now develop the number and range of qualifications that young people achieve.

- A variety of partners support young people well to develop skills. For example, learners take part in golf, kayaking, mountain biking, football and parkour. A minority of young people are developing teamwork skills and their ability to manage risk.
- All learners achieve Prince's Trust Achieve qualifications in topics such as money management, communication, leadership, teamwork, enterprise and project-based learning. A few young people also gain qualifications through taking part in personal achievement activities, such as dog training certificates. Young people would benefit further from teachers and partners ensuring activities progress their skills and lead to accredited achievements.
- Senior leaders are beginning to have a greater focus on developing young people's skills for learning, life and work. Partnership work with a Developing the Young Workforce colleague is beginning to help school staff build valuable connections with employers and other community providers. This is starting to support young people to move on successfully into further education or training.
- Senior leaders have used Pupil Equity Funding to bring in partners to support equity of success and achievement for learners. For example, young people now benefit from opportunities to experience dance and filmmaking. Senior leaders also use the funding to support young people's wellbeing, such as therapeutic work with an animal-based charity. Senior leaders now need to be clearer about the intended outcomes of these experiences for learners. This will help teachers plan for and measure the impact of intended outcomes on individual learners better.

## Other relevant evidence

- Between March and April 2022, local authority officers undertook an evaluation of the school's performance. The subsequent report, shared with senior leaders in May 2022, identified areas requiring significant and urgent improvement. As yet, these areas requiring attention have not been addressed.
- For a minority of young people, the school provides two hours of physical education per week. Senior leaders should work with staff to ensure all young people have two hours of high-quality physical education.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.