Summarised inspection findings

Hillside School

SEED No: 5480744

21 August 2018

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	good

This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for strong leadership and robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data as essential features of effective continuous self-improvement. A key factor in this indicator is demonstrating the impact of self-evaluation in relation to outcomes for all learners. Their active participation in self-evaluation is therefore essential. The themes are:
- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements

- The head of education has made a strong start to ensuring that self-evaluation is at the heart of school improvement at Hillside. Care has been taken to ensure that the pace of change is measured and appropriate. She has introduced effective collaborative approaches to self-evaluation, involving all of the education team. Staff welcome this approach and now feel more valued and included in decision-making processes. An initial audit, based on the quality indicators of How Good Is Our School? (4th edition), highlighted clear improvement priorities for the school. These priorities are being taken forward in a new streamlined school improvement plan. Each teacher has their own action plan to ensure improvements in their curricular area linked to the overarching school priorities. Overall, this has given the school a clear sense of direction and shared ownership of taking forward improvement priorities.

- Consultation with young people takes place at regular school council meetings and the majority of young people feel that the school takes their views into account. A few changes in the school have taken place following suggestions by young people, such as lunchtimes being shortened and the purchase of a new outdoor climbing frame. Staff should now consider how to ensure that young people are more aware of the changes that are made as a result of their suggestions. The views of parents and partners are gathered by a range of formal and informal approaches throughout the year. Most parents and partners are aware of the school's improvement priorities. Building on the good start with education staff and in line with national guidance, senior leaders should now consider ways to more formally involve all stakeholders in regular, systematic self-evaluation and improvement. This will help ensure a greater sense of ownership of continuous improvement across the whole school community.

- In addition to introducing more effective self-evaluation activities with staff, the head of education has developed more rigorous quality assurance procedures. She is well informed about national priorities and current research, and is actively looking outwards by seeking out networks beyond the school to support its work. She is also building positive

relationships with other schools in order to share effective practice. The annual calendar of self-evaluation activities includes regular subject monitoring meetings as well as formal lesson observations, led effectively by the senior teacher. Examples of good practice are shared with the wider team. This is resulting in a greater focus on professional dialogue at education staff meetings and is encouraging teachers to reflect more on the quality of learning and teaching in their classes. The school now needs to build on its quality assurance procedures ensuring that valuable information which arises from these activities is used in a more systematic and structured way with a focus on improving outcomes for young people. Staff should work with other schools to support improvements in assessment and moderation activities, which will help the development of a shared understanding of standards.

- As a result of the school's focus on improving young people's engagement in their learning, attendance has improved, absconding during the school day has decreased and young people are involved more actively in key team meetings. Effective teachers' planning processes help to meet the needs of individual learners and interdisciplinary learning activities support young people to make links in their learning. With the continued focus on attainment analysis, and monitoring and tracking of young people's progress at all stages, the school is now in a good position to continue to improve the attainment and achievement of young people.

2.1: Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the Director.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Most young people are making satisfactory progress with their learning in literacy and numeracy, with the remainder making good or very good progress. Supported by the school's recent improvement focus on literacy, most children and young people perform better in developing their literacy skills notably listening and talking. Most young people are performing below the expected standards in literacy and numeracy. This is heavily influenced by young people being previously disengaged from education prior to their placement at Hillside leading to significant gaps in their learning.

- According to the school's own data, most young people in the BGE are working towards achieving third level in literacy and either second or third level in numeracy. However, in a few examples, supporting evidence of young people's progress suggests that they are working at a lower level than that recorded in the tracker. Staff need to further develop their approaches to assessment and moderation in order to build their confidence in making accurate professional judgements on young people's progress in the BGE. The school should continue with their plan to increase the use of the national benchmarks to support this. Staff are more confident in assessing and tracking young people's progress with National Qualifications at the senior phase. The school consistently receives positive feedback from the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) verification process.

Attainment over time

- According to the school's own data, in recent years, there is an improving trend in terms of young people's attainment. The school's data shows young people achieving an increasing number of National Qualification course awards and units across a wide range of subjects predominantly at National 3 and National 4. These include English, social studies, biology, religious and moral education, lifeskills mathematics, art and design, practical craft skills, and personal achievement awards. This session, young people are predicted to achieve more than in previous years including an increased number of National 5 and Higher awards. Although there is an improving trend in attainment, this is from a low starting point. The school recognises there is a need to continue to further improve pupil attainment especially the range and number of National 4, National 5 and Higher awards. Commendably, the school has a strong focus on developing the senior phase curriculum and ensuring young people have the opportunity to study at National 4 and above across an increasing range of subject areas.

- The school has introduced a SQA tracker, which provides a valuable summary of whole-school progress and trends in relation to attainment and achievement within the senior phase. They intend to use this data to offer Hillside school achievement awards to young people depending on the number of tariff points they achieve. This initiative is being piloted to see if it proves a motivating tool for young people to strive harder to achieve qualifications. Staff now need to scrutinise further this attainment data and intelligence to help to identify areas of strength and aspects for further development across the school. Further work is required to systematically track and monitor young people's progress through the BGE. Consideration should also be given to measuring young people's progress in achieving personalised targets.

- The school has been successful in maintaining high levels of attendance for most young people, many of whom have well-established patterns of non-attendance at previous educational placements. The school has also maintained zero exclusions for a number of years.

Literacy

- Literacy has been an improvement focus of the school in recent years and there is evidence of literacy being developed across all areas of the curriculum. For example young people demonstrate listening and talking skills well by creating texts to make presentations on topics of their choice, such as the history of watches and fastest cars. Overall young people are making better progress in listening and talking than in reading and writing. They are developing the tools for listening and talking at an appropriate level and are supported well by staff to do this. A few young people are able to talk about their enjoyment of reading and preference for particular authors. The majority are able to read with a degree of fluency and understanding. The school should continue to support and encourage young people to read more widely, both in school and in the residences. The school correctly identifies that writing is the area where most young people are not performing as well as they should be, as a result of significant gaps arising from long periods of interrupted learning. The majority of young people have opportunities to write for a range of purposes. All young people now need to be supported to improve their handwriting, and to write more extensively with correct spelling and punctuation.

Numeracy

- Young people are making progress in catching up with any gaps in their mathematical knowledge. They are confidently developing their knowledge and skills in a range of ways including: recognising, naming and distinguishing between a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects; using lines of symmetry and creating symmetrical shapes; revising 12-hour time using a.m. and p.m. and using money in real life contexts.

- Young people are beginning to develop an understanding of the concepts and processes of numeracy and mathematics and are learning to apply these across the curriculum. They show an increasing understanding that they use numeracy skills in other subjects, for example organising information from tables and graphs in social studies and using measurement and shape in art and design and craft and design technology. Staff now need to plan more coherently to ensure that such learning activities build on prior learning and provide appropriate challenge.

Achievements

- Young people understand the importance of keeping fit and healthy through participating in an extensive range of sporting and physical activity including mountain biking, fishing, rugby, football and cross country running.

- Young people are increasing their awareness of local community issues and global citizenship through raising money for a number of charities. In recent times, young people have raised money for Sport Relief through organising and participating in a football match with staff and a whole school cross country event. They also organised a MacMillan coffee morning and raised a large sum for Children in Need through a highly successful 'Feel Good Friday' event.

- Young people achieve success through participating in a number of competitions that complement their work across the curriculum. They achieve particularly well in art and design. For example three young people won a prize in the Museum of the University of St Andrews Young Artist Award 2017, which resulted in their work being exhibited in the Byre Theatre, St Andrews.

- Overall, young people rarely achieve any accreditation for their wider achievements. As planned, the school should explore means for young people to gain awards for their achievements such as John Muir Trust Awards and Dynamic Youth Awards alongside SQA accreditation linked to, for example work placements.

- The school should further develop young people's record of achievements to enable them to recognise, reflect and build on the skills and capacities they are developing through wider achievement experiences. The identification and tracking of skills would help the school to plan progressive development of key skills such as resilience, teamwork and leadership.

Equity

- The school is effective at supporting young people to move onto positive destinations. They have built positive relationships with partners from local authorities and Skills Development Scotland to help ensure young people are aware of the opportunities available within their local communities. In recent years, 70% of school leavers moved onto sustained positive destinations including college placements, training and full-time employment.

- The school places great emphasis on supporting and raising the attainment of disadvantaged and disengaged young people. Staff have a strong understanding of the individual needs of young people. However, the school week lacks flexibility and has few opportunities for personalisation and choice. Where appropriate, the school should creatively plan more bespoke learning programmes for young people that includes learning activities outwith their generic timetabled activities.

2.4 Personalised Support: theme 2 Targeted Support

- All staff have a shared understanding of wellbeing, with young people's care plans and social progress reports based on the wellbeing indicators. Key teachers use the wellbeing indicators with their key child to prepare for review meetings. This helps to identify areas of strength and development in health and wellbeing, which are included in each young person's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Most young people make improvements in their wellbeing after coming to Hillside. We have asked staff to simplify targets in IEPs so that all young people and staff are fully aware of individual targets, and to involve young people more actively in devising and reviewing their targets.

- Staff across education and care, have a good knowledge of young people's needs. They use this knowledge well to plan support for each child and intervene appropriately if a young person disengages from learning or becomes distressed. There is a need to develop further how teachers assess, identify, and plan for each child's learning needs. Targets identified in IEPs and other plans could be more specific and linked more closely to individual needs rather than curricular outcomes. The school should develop further their tracking and monitoring processes to capture more robust assessment evidence of progression in young people's learning and the achievement of their personalised targets.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion: theme 2 Wellbeing

- Positive relationships between staff and young people are evident across the school community. Staff model positive behaviour well and are calm and patient in their interactions with young people. Most young people feel staff treat them with respect and feel comfortable approaching them for support. However, a few young people report they do not feel safe in school and a minority feel that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. The school should follow this up to ensure that all young people feel safe and treated with respect by their peers.

- The school has provided a range of professional development opportunities for staff over the course of the last year, including wellbeing, training on attachment, trauma and resilience. This has resulted in staff having a greater understanding of their responsibilities in relation to young people's health and wellbeing and their behaviour. Staff should build on this and continue to reduce the number of safe holds that happen in school. The recently re-introduced personal and social education (PSE) curriculum is raising young people's awareness of Children's Rights. As part of the planned review of the school's vision, values and aims, consideration should also be given to updating the school's policies and procedures for managing behaviour and relationships. This should reflect most up to date national guidance.

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.

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