

**Inspection of the learning community
surrounding Madras College
Fife Council
4 November 2014**

1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within the area of Madras College were inspected by Education Scotland during September 2014. During the visit Education Scotland staff talked to children, young people and adults. We worked closely with local CLD managers, CLD providers, partners, paid staff and volunteers. We wanted to find out how well partners are improving the life chances of people living in the community through learning, building stronger more resilient communities and improving the quality of services and provision. We also looked at how well paid staff and volunteers are developing their own practices and how well partners, including schools are working together.

We looked at some particular aspects of recent work which were identified by partners including the need for better targeting of services and learning opportunities to those who need them most. This requires a focus on engagement with key partners including the school and voluntary organisations to look at the sharing of information and to develop shared outcomes. This was within the context of the Fife Community Plan which has three high level outcomes. These are reducing inequalities, increasing employment and tackling climate change. The CLD partners also look to meet seventeen long term outcomes derived from these three high level outcomes.

One of the key features of the CLD partnership in the Madras Learning Community identified in the self- evaluation document prepared by partners was the process of organisational change in this area. This process was also noted by HM Inspectors in their fieldwork. There was a considerable process of change in the organisational context in a number of key partners such as the Police, the local College, Health Services, Madras College and the Fife Council CLD service. All of these partners were still adapting to new operating environments. While most of the partners had maintained their commitment to joint work, but for a few partners there was now a lack of consistency in their partnership working at this point in time

2. How well are partners improving learning, increasing life chances, promoting and securing wellbeing?

The learning community around, and including Madras College, addresses some of the learning needs of its locality through partnership working. It utilises the collective strengths, intelligence and resources of some local institutions. The voluntary services and community groups are strong and vibrant. There is a particularly strong culture of volunteering across all age groups. Almost all volunteers are involved in active delivery of services such as after school clubs and sports groups to local residents. Many of the volunteers are young people who attend Madras College or St Andrews University. Young people and adults gain valuable skills and increase their confidence as a result of their voluntary activity. However, this is not yet effectively tracked by the CLD partners. Partners now need to develop a joint systematic approach to record and recognise the considerable achievements of young people and adults in the Madras College learning community.

Young people and adults demonstrate many individual examples of considerable success and achievement. Most young people and adult learners actively participate in a wide range of accessible, creative and effective learning programmes delivered by the CLD partners. These programmes are helpfully delivered in local facilities such as the Cosmos community centre, the Rio Centre and Forgan Arts. However, partners recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that the impacts of their work further reduce the inequalities within the communities in this part of Fife. Attainment and positive destinations from Madras College are broadly strong and improving. For a few young people of school age from the most disadvantaged parts of the communities there is a need for further improvement in their learning opportunities and attainment within the school. There is a need for all the CLD partners to further develop joint planning arrangements using shared performance data to improve the impact on the most disadvantaged learners within the Madras Learning community. Partners do not yet make a full contribution towards the achievement of the three high level outcomes of the Fife Community Plan.

Young people in the Madras College learning community perform well in a range of sports both as individuals and as team members at national, regional and local levels. There is an extensive programme of sports and cultural opportunities that enable a few young people to achieve at high levels. There are emerging links between St Andrews University sports department and also the music department. These enable some young people from across the school to perform at very high levels in their chosen fields. Young people act as peer tutors in a variety of areas within the secondary school and this means that in many cases young people lead learning with younger learners. This provides young people with valuable role models. All young people (including St Andrews students) involved in the Floodlit Football gain valuable skills in organising, leading and passing on their knowledge to younger, more vulnerable participants. This is a unique partnership between the CLD Service and St Andrews University Sports Department This provides valuable diversionary activities for at risk young people and promotes better relationships between students and local young people.

Outside school, young people who attend the Tayport Skate Park group and the Newport Skatepark Collective work very well with their peers, parents and an elected member develop their skills in relation to committee procedures, fund raising and working with others. Young people working in partnership with Tayport Play Park and the Newport Skatepark Collective receive helpful support and guidance from their adult peers. This results in a more sustainable group. The young people make good use of social networking to promote and publicise their group. Young people and adults attending The Community Dance School based at Madras College obtain clear health and wellbeing benefits they also build their confidence and sense of being part of a team in public performances. This project attracts and retains large numbers of participants. Clear progression routes are accessed with examples where beginner dancers have moved to become peer supporters, volunteer tutors and paid staff. Some students have moved into Higher Dance programmes and achieved accreditation.

Adult learners who attend the Cosmos Learning Centre are progressing well. They are supported by extremely motivated and supportive staff from Fife College and CLD teams. This has resulted in effective engagement with learners who participate

in a range of programmes including the Goals course, Step into Employment, Adult literacy and numeracy units and computing and employability programmes. Learners with complex issues relating to mental health, loss of employment and low educational attainment now access these programmes successfully. Learners have seen a significant improvement in these areas as a result of participation in the learning programmes. Adult Learners in The Job Club gain welcome access to computers and the practical support required to meet the changes as a result of Welfare Reform. The club also helps adults build skills in relation to job searches and preparation for interviews. As a result, many of the Job Club members have now secured part time employment or volunteering placements as a result of attending the club. Adults involved in the Digital Fife programme gain valuable new skills in web page design to enable them to design, develop and maintain their own or their local groups' websites. Adults who attend English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision have well designed individual learning plans to ensure that learning is tailored to their individual needs and progression is monitored. Learners now make use of a wide variety of accredited pathways, including Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accreditation and Cambridge Exam preparation. Learners effectively progress to the local college or other community based learning classes and to services offered by key partners.

The Madras Learning Community has a range of very effective local community centres. These centres provide a wide and very inclusive range of services in St Andrews and Newport. These include well-attended after-school and holiday groups for primary age young people, classes for people with learning disabilities and learning programmes for 60+ age group. These programmes are all very well attended and the centres play an important role in community cohesion. Management groups are representative and contain a good mix of the local population, including volunteers. The management committees have developed an extensive range of skills including learning programming timetabling, fund raising, volunteer management and developing social enterprises. The management committees also bring in local business representatives to provide appropriate additional skills. The Cosmos Centre is a unique development that involves a partnership between the University of St Andrews (as landlord), Fife College and Fife Council with the local community. The well attended facilities on offer include learning programmes and social/leisure programmes. The Rio Centre is actively developing its services to meet community need. This includes hosting food banks to address the local impacts of welfare reform. Taken together these community centres meet local needs very effectively and make a strong contribution to the high level outcomes of the Fife Community Plan.

A few partners are able to track and monitor progress. When this is the case, the trends over the last year are positive. Learner numbers in adult provision are above targets and all three community centres in the area have increased their attendance levels and numbers of volunteers in the last three years. Family learning programmes are limited and require further development at this time. CLD staff and a few partners make increasing use of well-designed project files and a common management information system. Some CLD partners are not sharing data at this point in time. Young people attain well in external examinations by the time they leave school. Around a fifth of young people perform strongly at Higher and at Advanced Higher, in some cases significantly better than those with similar needs

and backgrounds in other schools. Young people's skills in literacy and numeracy have been increasing in recent years. Their capabilities in literacy are in line with those of other young people with similar needs and backgrounds, but weaker in numeracy. Almost all young people progress to positive destinations when they leave the school and this is a positive trend, although it is less than other young people with similar needs and backgrounds from across Scotland. Partners are making some use of award programmes such as The Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Saltire Award to recognise achievement. The numbers of young people who achieve Award programmes is not yet being systematically monitored in Madras College. Partners now need to link awards and youth achievement within their approaches to implement Curriculum for Excellence in the Madras College learning community, particularly in the Senior Phase.

Staff and volunteers in the Madras College Learning Community have strong and purposeful professional relationships. The CLD service provides effective support to enable local community centres and organisations to develop and design the services they offer. Almost all community organisations provide regular reports to stakeholders through well-designed leaflets, newsletters, websites and annual reports

3. How well are partners working together and improving the quality of services and provision?

There is a comprehensive quality assurance framework in place for partners who are active in local strategic planning groups, for example in adult learning. These partners make effective use of outcome focussed planning to improve direct delivery. The North East Fife Adult planning group effectively co-ordinates the community based Adult Learning course proposals. This group have undertaken well focused self-evaluation activities as part of the Fife Quality Improvement review. Learning programmes at the Cosmos Learning centre all incorporate learner evaluations. Staff use learner stories to effectively capture the learner journey and can demonstrate the distance travelled. All learners at the centre have individual learning plans with short term and long term learner goals. Communication between partners in the School Liaison Group and the Locality Youth Work partnership use available information to target Young people at risk. While school staff and CLD partners have engaged in joint self-evaluation on this project, there is room to extend this approach to other self-evaluation activities with the secondary school. Detached youth work is used well as a means to engage young people in identifying issues in Leuchars. The role and quality of the Fife Council CLD Training Programme is valued by local authority and partners organisations. Programmes are accessed by a range of partner paid staff and volunteers.

The process of change at organisational level in many of the CLD partners means there is further work to do in a number of areas. Partners, including the secondary school now need to further develop their approach to joint self -evaluation. Sharing and analysing data will help partners measure the impact that their interventions is having on the learning community. This is not happening at present and is a missed opportunity. Existing partnerships would be strengthened by extending the membership to include Madras College, Health Services, St Andrews University and

the Police. These are significant omissions in terms of the involvement key local community planning partners.

This inspection of learning and development in the learning community surrounding Madras College found the following key strengths.

- A strong local volunteer culture that demonstrates high levels of citizenship
- Vibrant community organisations that effectively deliver local services for both youth and adults
- Committed staff and volunteers in all partner organisations
- Strong and purposeful relationships between staff and learners in well judged learning programmes

We discussed with partners how they might continue to improve their work. This is what we agreed with them.

- Ensure that their approaches to record volunteer activity are consistently applied across the learning community
- Engage with all partners, including the school, to develop shared agreed outcomes through joint self-evaluation
- Continue to strengthen and further develop family learning activities and learning programmes to engage the most disadvantaged
- Continue to develop partners use of Management Information Systems to develop shared and agreed priorities

4. What happens at the end of the inspection?

There are some improvements needed, but because partners have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, and communities are achieving well, we have ended the inspection process at this stage. We will monitor progress through our regular contact with the local authority. Our Area Lead Officer along with the education authority will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress.

Phil Denning
HM Inspector
4 November 2014

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for this learning community can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/othersectors/communitylearninganddevelopment/MadrasCollegeLC.asp>

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