

**REPORT TO:** SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 April 2023  
**REPORT ON:** EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) INSPECTION OF ST JOHN'S RC HIGH SCHOOL  
**REPORT BY:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE  
**REPORT NO:** 131-2023

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland (HMI) inspection of St John's RC High School.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i) notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) instructs the Chief Education Officer to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement outlined in the report.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

## **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

4.1 St John's Roman Catholic (RC) High School was inspected by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), Education Scotland in November 2022. Education Scotland published a report of the findings on 24 January 2023.

4.2 At the time of the inspection, St John's senior leadership team comprised of the Head Teacher, four Depute Head Teachers and a Business Manager. The Head Teacher and one of the Depute Head Teachers had been in post for just over a year. One other Depute Head Teacher is in an acting position. HMI recognised that there had been significant changes in leadership roles across the school in recent years.

4.3 At the time of the inspection 1099 young people were on the school roll. HMI noted that the young people attend the school from a large geographical area and from a wide variety of social, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds. 31.9 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals, 50.2 per cent of pupils live in the 20 per cent most deprived data zones in Scotland, 38.8 per cent of pupils have additional support needs. The school was disproportionately affected by the pandemic with higher than average isolations, pupil and staff absence during sessions 2021-22 and 2022-23.

4.4 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The leadership of the new Head Teacher, who is establishing foundations for the school's future direction and progress. He is beginning to change and improve structures and processes across the school and is promoting collegiate working.
- The ways in which the strong Marist values influence the work of the school. This is clear in the school's focus on improving young people's presence, participation and progress.
- The increasing range of valuable opportunities available to young people helping them to lead healthy and active lives.

- Young people in the senior school are positive role models and demonstrate enterprising leadership, creative teamwork and active citizenship.

4.5 The inspectors recognised the significant progress the school was making as they recovered from the pandemic and recognised that sound planning was in place to continue to improve the school. Most of the inspector’s recommendations reflected the school’s own improvement plan for 2022-23.

4.6 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Head Teacher and the Chief Education Officer:

- Senior and middle leaders should lead the development of a sustainable and manageable model for the leadership of change at all levels that leads to positive outcomes for all young people. This includes improving the thoroughness with which they identify strengths and weaknesses in the school.
- Staff at all levels should work together more effectively to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Their focus should include, as a priority, providing curriculum and learning pathways that meet the needs and aspirations of all young people.
- All staff should continue to develop and demonstrate inclusive practice, to meet the wellbeing and learning needs of young people fully. Staff should continue to improve their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion in order to improve outcomes for all young people.
- Staff should, as planned, review their approaches to equity funding to ensure they appropriately target the young people for whom the Pupil Equity Fund is designed. Staff should demonstrate, through better tracking and monitoring, how young people living at economic disadvantage attain better outcomes as a result of this additional funding.

4.7 Education Scotland (HMI) uses a six-point scale for grading the quality indicators:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

4.8 Here are Education Scotland’s (HMI) evaluations for St John’s RC High School for this inspection:

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory

4.9 Education Scotland has now asked Dundee City Council for a report on progress with the agreed areas for improvement within 12 months of the publication of the inspection letter. Taking account of the progress report, Education Scotland will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required. This may involve another inspection visit. Education Scotland will write to parents/carers of the school at that time detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action that they intend to take, as agreed with Dundee City Council.

4.10 St. John’s RC High School has reviewed its current school improvement plan and has incorporated the recommendations from the Summarised Inspection Findings into a plan from March 2023-June 2024. This will be regularly reviewed, monitored, and evaluated in line with both the school and the local authority’s quality improvement procedures. The attached appendix provides a synopsis of the Summary of Inspection Findings.

- 4.11 Planned school improvement activity building on the school's identified strengths and addressing the areas for development include:
- Reviewing leadership and management remits and structures
  - Ensuring greater consistency in learning and teaching across the school
  - Continuing our work to create an ever more inclusive school
  - Ensuring that our Pupil Equity Fund spend fully reflects the updated national guidance
- 4.12 As part of the Children and Families Service School Improvement Framework, visits are made to the school by the school's link Education Officer to monitor the school's progress towards the action points raised by the inspection. The school's reviewed School Improvement Plan clearly articulates the areas for development highlighted by HM Inspectors.
- 4.13 The Education Manager and the school's link Education Officer, reporting to the Chief Education Officer, will continue to monitor the school's progress in relation to the identified areas for improvement.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Council Leadership Team, and the school's head teacher, have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

Audrey May  
Executive Director

Paul Fleming  
Chief Education Officer

March 2023

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## Dundee City Council

### Children and Families Service

### Scrutiny Committee Report Summary Notes

#### Inspection and Reporting

Inspection Agency	HMI
Report Publication Date	January 2023
Name of Establishment	St John's RC High School
Sector	Secondary
Name of Head Teacher	Mr Seán P Hagney
Roll	1099 secondary young people

#### Inspection Outcomes 2023

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory

The report uses the following word scale:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Key Strengths
The leadership of the new headteacher, who is establishing foundations for the school's future direction and progress. He is beginning to change and improve structures and processes across the school and is promoting collegiate working.
The ways in which the strong Marist values influence the work of the school. This is clear in the school's focus on improving young people's presence, participation and progress.
The increasing range of valuable opportunities available to young people helping them to lead healthy and active lives.
Young people in the senior school are positive role models and demonstrate enterprising leadership, creative teamwork and active citizenship.

Areas for Improvement
Senior and middle leaders should lead the development of a sustainable and manageable model for the leadership of change at all levels that leads to positive outcomes for all young people. This includes improving the thoroughness with which they identify strengths and weaknesses in the school.
Staff at all levels should work together more effectively to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Their focus should include, as a priority, providing curriculum and learning pathways that meet the needs and aspirations of all young people.
All staff should continue to develop and demonstrate inclusive practice, to meet the wellbeing and learning needs of young people fully. Staff should continue to improve their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion in order to improve outcomes for all young people.
Staff should, as planned, review their approaches to equity funding to ensure they appropriately target the young people for whom the Pupil Equity Fund is designed. Staff should demonstrate, through better tracking and monitoring, how young people living at economic disadvantage attain better outcomes as a result of this additional funding.

## **Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings**

Following publication of the inspection report and Summarised Inspection Findings, the School's Improvement Plan 2022-23 was amended to reflect the areas for improvement identified by HMI and provide a clear strategic focus for related school improvement.

The Summarised Inspection Findings highlighted the following strengths and areas for improvement within each of the quality indicators.

### **1.3 Leadership of change**

#### **Strengths**

- Vision and values of the school
- The developing culture of care and collaboration, led by the Head Teacher
- Staff's knowledge of the social, cultural and economic context of the school
- Planning processes have been improving, including the annual analysis of a wide range of data and a thorough quality improvement calendar
- Investment in middle leaders is empowering them and helping them to align department priorities with the whole school
- The wide range of professional learning opportunities
- Staff's positive engagement with SQA as appointees
- Young people's pride in the school and the leadership opportunities across S1-6
- The operational leadership during the pandemic

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Review and align the number of improvement groups in place
- Ensure the impact of Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is measured against criteria that will accelerate progress for young people most in need
- Ensure that the communication of planned changes allows staff and pupils to understand the purpose of change
- Senior Leadership Team should review their strategic responsibilities
- Improve the work of all middle leaders to work collaboratively and contribute positively to whole school improvement
- Better align Career Long Professional Learning with school improvement priorities
- Better develop a few teachers' understanding of the GTCS Standards, especially in relation to the UNCRC
- Ensure that all pupils', parents' and partners' views are taken into account when planning improvement
- Ensure that partners are involved in the strategic development of Developing the Young Workforce and the incorporation of national expectations linked to Career Education Standards

### **Learning, teaching and assessment**

#### **Strengths**

- Calm learning environments across the school, and engagement with learning
- Positive relationships between peers and between pupils and staff
- Independent learning
- Enhanced learning experiences in the senior phase, which are motivating and rewarding
- The majority of staff share the purpose of learning well, provide guidance on what success will look like, provide clear explanations, instructions and demonstrations, use questioning well, and make effective use of digital resources
- The majority of staff observe and assess young people's response to tasks skilfully, interacting with young people as they work, offer praise, encouragement or extra support as appropriate
- Pupil support assistants provide important roles in providing additional support to pupils across the school
- Teachers' planning of learning from S1-6
- Teachers' understanding of the importance of moderation

### **Areas for Improvement**

- Improve the engagement of all learners, and ensure the quality of learning and teaching improves consistently across the school
- Staff at all levels need to recognise their individual roles and responsibilities in ensuring productive relationships and consistent support for all young people, including those who require additional support for their learning
- Reduce the time lost to learning and teaching; improve attendance; reduce latecoming; reduce young people being out of class; improve pace
- Further develop approaches to effective feedback, including through peer assessment approaches, to ensure young people know what they need to do to make progress, particularly in S1-3
- Improve the quality of assessment data and the effectiveness of tracking and monitoring approaches
- Continue to ensure that planned activities meet the needs of all learners
- Continue to develop moderation as an effective tool to monitor the progress of all young people

## **2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways**

### **Strengths**

- The curriculum provides young people with appropriate experiences to learn across the eight curriculum areas in the Broad General Education, and pathways into the Senior Phase, and includes additional time for literacy and numeracy
- High quality library service
- Approaches to improving reading for all, and approaches to literacy
- Work with partners to offer volunteering and leadership opportunities, including the Marist Leaders programme, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, Saltire, Caritas and the Dynamic Youth Awards
- The comprehensive work experience programme for S4
- The wide range of vocational pathways, including through the Dundee & Angus College partnership

### **Areas for improvement**

- Ensure that all stakeholders are effectively engaged regarding the planned changes to the curriculum
- Further develop numeracy as a responsibility across learning
- Improve the explicit links between subjects and the work of work and skills for learning, life and work
- Improve young people's understanding of the Career Education Standard (CES), Work Placement Standard and career management skills
- Further develop tracking and monitoring in the Broad General Education (BGE), and thereafter the learning pathways of young people

## **2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement**

### **Strengths**

- Most parents feel that their child is making good progress at school
- Recent improvements to the school website and social media channels to aid parental communication
- Consultations with parents on issues such as uniform, mobile phones and lateness
- The supportive role of the Parent Council

### **Areas for improvement**

- Increase the involvement of the Parent Council in developing the school improvement plan, identifying priorities and supporting PEF initiatives

## **3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

### **Strengths**

- Staff and young people enjoy strong relationships and a sense of belonging to the faith community, directly influenced by the school values
- Young people have a range of staff they can contact for support to address any wellbeing issue

- Courteous young people who are proud of their school
- Peer support (Buddies and Peacemakers) help to develop a safe environment for all
- Young people feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect
- Wide range of opportunities for learners to be active and achieve beyond the classroom
- Pastoral staff identify and respond to pupils' wellbeing concerns, and seek advice and support from a wide range of partners
- Most young people feel included in school
- Care experienced young people are supported well, particularly by the pupil support team
- Staff increasingly provide opportunities for young people to learn about equalities and inclusion and respond well to these issues when they arise

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Continue to develop the relationships policy, taking greater account of whole school approaches to nurture, restorative approaches, developing positive relationships and children's rights
- Further develop the effective use of the wellbeing indicators across the school
- Continue to review pastoral systems and procedures to ensure all young people are appropriately supported
- Better assess the impact of interventions on improving outcomes for young people
- Ensure full compliance with statutory duties and ensure all staff are aware of the updated guidance for Additional Support for Learning (ASL)
- Ensure that all teachers effectively use information that is provided on learners with additional needs to provide tasks and activities matched to their needs
- Support for learning staff to continue to support and develop learning and teaching across the school to meet the needs of all
- Review and update the school's anti-bullying policy promptly
- Continue to develop approaches to inclusion, including for those not attending on a regular basis
- Staff need to review current systems to ensure that planning approaches and plans to address barriers to learning (ABLE plans) fully reflect the provisions of the 'Additional support for learning: statutory guidance 2017'
- The staff should do more to promote equality and diversity across the school

### **3.2 Raising attainment and achievement**

#### **Strengths**

- In literacy, work on reading and vocabulary is having a positive impact
- In numeracy, the introduction of the National Qualification in applications of mathematics has increased the pathways on offer
- Staff continue to develop the reliability of their professional judgements
- Clear approaches to moderation, both within school and with a partner school, are supporting staff's understanding of national standards in literacy
- Whole school tracking system is enabling staff to capture how young people are attaining across curricular areas in the BGE
- Young people achieve important skills such as communication, leadership and self-esteem by participating in activities in the school and community
- Young people are developing as global citizens through the school's ethos and values
- Young people exercise responsibility and contribute to their school and community through peer support and volunteering
- The range of programmes where young people gain accreditation, as well as opportunities to develop skills through non-accredited opportunities, e.g. buddying
- Young people's communication and relationship building skills are developing well
- Young people experience success at a local and national level through sport and dance
- Almost all young people move on to a positive destination on leaving school

#### **Areas for improvement**

- In numeracy, staff should develop their approaches to moderation further
- Staff across curricular areas need to develop a greater understanding of national standards, particularly at fourth level



- Continue to consider the factors that impact attainment in the senior phase: absence; presentation rates; the quality and range of the curriculum offer; the high number of young people leaving in S4; the availability of Advanced Highers; and the impact of COVID-19
- Review the uptake of sciences and expressive arts and ensure that appropriate pathways are in place
- Staff should improve the use of achievement data to identify gaps or target those who would benefit most
- Ensure that evidence of impact of PEF interventions are gathered to support the use of this funding
- Improve the tracking and monitoring of groups of young people, including young carers or young people living in poverty
- Improve attendance

### **Quality of provision of Special Unit**

#### **Context**

The Enhanced Support Area (ESA) known as the Hub was inspected alongside the full school inspection. The improvement plan for the Hub has been incorporated into the revised whole school improvement plan.

**The report is available as part of the Summary of Inspection Findings at: <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=4581>**

### **Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007:**

#### **Context**

A Health and Nutrition inspection took place alongside the full school inspection. We agreed areas for improvement and these have been incorporated into the revised whole school improvement plan.

### **Key activity to date has included the following:**

Following the publication of the report in January 2023, the school has:

- Updated its school improvement plan for this session, and extended it to June 2024. This closely reflects the actions required by the report. In the main, this also reflects the plan that was in place since the start of session 2022-23.
- Reorganised Inquiry Groups to better align with its priorities
- Reviewed its S3-4 curriculum with partners and others and will implement these changes in session 2023-24
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and other staff have visited other schools to learn more about key areas for development
- Worked closely with the Local Authority to address accommodation issues, toilet facilities and social areas
- Launched the first round of participatory budgeting with learners, with the winning idea being for equipment to enhance the playground
- Continued to develop its planned improvements to how it tracks and monitors all learners, including groups of learners, in both the BGE and Senior Phase
- Provided training, and have further training planned, on trauma informed practices, restorative practice and relational behaviour policies, supported by Education Scotland and Dundee Educational Psychology Service
- Been working with the local authority to appoint a new Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) coordinator and are working on creating a DYW strategy
- Taken steps for teachers to re-engage with the GTCS Standards and ensure there is awareness of their statutory duties, including in relation to ASL legislation
- Reviewed the strategic approach to the links between SLT and departments, to promote more effective working and accountability
- Allocated PEF funding for the creation of a numeracy Principal Teacher post for session 2023-24 to take forward a numeracy strategy
- Been reviewing PEF spend, gathering data of impact and taking a more targeted approach to spending. This has been supported by the Attainment Advisor (Education Scotland)

- Held consultations with pupil groups regarding our anti-bullying policy and the creation of safe spaces.

Full details of the summarised inspection findings are available at:

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=4581>

Signed



**Audrey May, Executive Director of Children and Families Service**



**Paul Fleming, Head of Service (Chief Education Officer)**

**Seán P Hagney, St. John's RC High School**

24 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2022, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited St John's RC High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The leadership of the new headteacher, who is establishing foundations for the school's future direction and progress. He is beginning to change and improve structures and processes across the school and is promoting collegiate working.
- The ways in which the strong Marist values influence the work of the school. This is clear in the school's focus on improving young people's presence, participation and progress.
- The increasing range of valuable opportunities available to young people helping them to lead healthy and active lives.
- Young people in the senior school are positive role models and demonstrate enterprising leadership, creative teamwork and active citizenship.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Dundee City Council.

- Senior and middle leaders should lead the development of a sustainable and manageable model for the leadership of change at all levels that leads to positive outcomes for all young people. This includes improving the thoroughness with which they identify strengths and weaknesses in the school.
  - Staff at all levels should work together more effectively to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Their focus should include, as a priority, providing curriculum and learning pathways that meet the needs and aspirations of all young people.
  - All staff should continue to develop and demonstrate inclusive practice, to meet the wellbeing and learning needs of young people fully. Staff should continue to improve their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion in order to improve outcomes for all young people.
  - Staff should, as planned, review their approaches to equity funding to ensure they appropriately target the young people for whom the Pupil Equity Fund is designed. Staff should demonstrate, through better tracking and monitoring, how young people living at economic disadvantage attain better outcomes as a result of this additional funding.
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We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

## Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for St John's RC High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=4581>

### What happens next?

We will ask Dundee City Council for a report on progress with the agreed areas for improvement within 12 months of the publication of this letter. Taking account of the progress report, we will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required. This may involve another inspection visit. Education Scotland will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action that we intend to take, as agreed with Dundee City Council.

Frances E. Graham  
HM Inspector