

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 18 AUGUST 2010

REPORT ON: HMle INSPECTION OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY SURROUNDING
BALDRAGON ACADEMY

REPORT BY: HEAD OF COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT, LEISURE
AND COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT

REPORT NO: 323-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to report the findings of the HMle Inspection of the learning community surrounding Baldragon Academy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

2.1 notes the contents of this report.

2.2 instructs the Head of Community Learning and Development to monitor progress towards meeting the areas of improvement contained in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The learning community surrounding Baldragon Academy, including the areas of St Mary's, Ardler, Kirkton, Downfield, the Dales and Brackens was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMle) in March 2010. They published a report on their findings on 1 June 2010.

4.2 HMle identified the following key strengths of the learning community:

- Skilled, active and influential community groups
- Effective partnership working
- The commitment and skills of local volunteers
- Effective use of national and local awards for groups

4.3 The following areas for improvement were agreed with the education authority and partners:

- Further develop accreditation to recognise achievements for young people and adults.
- Involve young people in local decision-making and community organisations.
- Develop individual learning plans for young people involved in appropriate aspects of youth work.
- Draw on the skills and knowledge of existing volunteers to develop the involvement of others.

4.4 Quality Indicators

4.4.1 HMle reports use a six point scale for reporting performance:

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

4.4.2 The following quality indicators from "How Good is our Community Learning and Development 2" were evaluated:

Improvements in Performance	Good
Impact on Young People	Good
Impact on Adults	Very Good
Impact of Capacity Building on Communities	Very Good
Improving Services	Good

4.5 The Community Learning and Development Service Improvement Plan 2010-2012 includes a focus on the areas for improvement. These will be regularly reviewed, monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

4.6 HMLE have indicated that CLD providers have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement and that communities are achieving very well. As a result there will be no follow up by the HMLE and the inspection process has ended at this stage.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environment assessment, anti-poverty and equality impact assessment and risk management.

There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Director of Finance.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

**NEIL GUNN
HEAD OF COMMUNITY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT
LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
DATE**

**Learning Community Inspection
Inspection of the Learning Community Surrounding Baldragon Academy**

Dundee City Council

1 June 2010

A report by HM Inspectorate of Education

We inspect learning communities in order to let those who use services and the local community know whether learning communities provide appropriate learning opportunities and help learners in their development. We are also interested in how community and voluntary groups are helped to contribute to making communities better places to live and work. At the end of inspections, we agree ways in which staff and volunteers can improve the quality of learning for young people and adults and how the impact of community and voluntary groups can be further developed.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask managers and staff about the strengths of the learning community, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we join other activities which young people, adults and community groups are involved in. We also gather the views of learners, active community members and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of provision locally.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of learning and development provided. We describe how well learners are doing and how good the learning community is at helping them to learn. We comment on how well staff, learners and groups work together and the difference they are making in the learning community. Finally, we focus on how well the learning community is led and how leaders help the learning community achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the learning community, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk.

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1. The learning community

The learning community surrounding Baldragon Academy includes the areas of St. Mary's, Ardler, Kirkton, Downfield, The Dales and Brackens. The areas of St. Mary's, Ardler and Kirkton are designated community regeneration areas. The area has a population of 18,641, with the number of workless people higher than the Scottish average but marginally lower than that for Dundee City.

2. Particular strengths of the learning community

- Skilled, active and influential community groups.
- Effective partnership working.
- The commitment and skills of local volunteers.
- Effective use of national and local awards for local groups.

3. How well do participants learn and achieve?

The quality of provision is high and almost all learners benefit. Externally funded projects have accreditation opportunities built into programmes with high numbers of young people having received accreditation through Youth Achievement Awards and Dynamic Youth Awards. Young people are involved in achievement awards in local settings but these opportunities need to be extended. Local community groups have been successful in gaining national and local awards including Scotland in Bloom and volunteering awards. The community learning and development (CLD) service, and partners in community planning, are collating a range of performance information and are using it to inform and drive improvement. The number of adult learners is exceeding targets set in most services. The CLD service is increasingly making use of data to systematically identify and address need. They are establishing baseline information to measure improvement and inform future planning. Community Planning Partnerships access a range of performance information including the Community Intelligence Gathering system which is demonstrating trends over time for their work.

Young people

Young people benefit from a good range of learning opportunities and facilities in the learning community including sports, arts, intensive support and drop-in. Effective communication between partners enables early identification and targeting of young people to access services. Externally funded youth work provision supports vulnerable and disengaged young people to set goals and achieve, maintaining their participation in education or accessing skills for work. As a result, young people successfully remain in school, maintain relationships with peers, parents and partner agencies and modify their behaviour choices.

High numbers of young people are learning and achieving through Youth Achievement Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards, and Millennium Volunteer Awards. They are particularly effective in *Xplore* and the Peer Mentoring Training. Young people are better able to communicate with teachers and parents, and to identify their needs and feelings as a result of this experience. The use of accreditation needs to be promoted more consistently within community based youth work. Access to locally based youth literacies provision and the use of individual learning plans also needs to be improved.

Youth information is effectively promoted and distributed through partnership working, themed drop-ins and consultation with young people. *The Corner* and outreach work are raising young peoples' awareness of sensitive issues to inform choices and support healthy lifestyles. Web-based information on projects and events are available in almost all youth settings, improving access to information for young people.

The voice of young people is listened to well through consultations. The Local Community Planning Partnership (LCPP) regularly consults young people on local issues including the St Mary's Play Park, the site of the Cox Street benches and the Youth Alcohol Consultation.

However, young people have few opportunities for active participation locally in youth forums or youth action groups. Young people who have gained skills through projects, including leadership skills and peer mentoring have limited opportunities to further develop or share their knowledge locally. CLD staff and partners now need to work with young people to support them to effectively contribute to their local community.

Adults

A broad adult learning programme supports adults to achieve a range of goals and is expanding their interests and skills. Adult literacy and numeracy (ALN) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) are offered through a one door service provided by *The Adult Learning Gateway*. *Job Choices* is supporting adults in the learning community to pursue positive routes to employment and programmes including *Speak Easy*, offered through the *Community Family Support Project*. Parents are gaining the information and confidence to discuss sexual health issues with their children. Participants in Dundee's *Healthy Living Initiative* Ardler Ladies Jogging Group are improving their physical and mental wellbeing. They are learning skills that support employment and community activity. Ten participants have completed training to become jog leaders and are actively expanding participation in the group.

Learners value the support of staff and appreciate the opportunities provided. Participants across programmes are demonstrating the improvements being made in their personal, family and working lives. A growth in confidence, reduction in social isolation and increase in skills development is experienced by learners across all programmes. Guidance is available to all participants and effective partnership working provides a range of entry points and progression routes. A few learners have progressed to college, university or employment. Learners are successfully involved in the planning of provision and can see the difference their views have made across most programmes.

A quarterly adult learning newsletter 'Discover Learning in the Community', reports learner achievements and other news. Learners report that this helps them to get involved in learning. It is increasing the range of programmes available and the involvement of learners referred by other agencies. Learners are becoming more active in their community and there is scope to strengthen the links between adult learning and capacity building. There is a need to better target provision to increase the range and take up of learning opportunities.

4. How well are communities developing and achieving?

Community members are active, informed and influential within their learning community. Confident, knowledgeable local people are effectively engaged in decision making at local and city level. The Regeneration Forum has 15 local representatives participating in the allocation and monitoring of devolved funding for the environment, young people and a small projects fund. On the LCPP, community representation has doubled as a result of the first year review. Representatives are informed, enthusiastic and clear about the impacts of their work. These include the site of waste recycling bins, regular housing walkabouts with local people. The LCPP accesses a wide range of information from partners, including police and housing, to support decision making. Although the LCPP regularly consults local young people there are insufficient local structures in place to enable them to contribute well and actively participate. Partners, including young people, now need to enhance their skills and knowledge to ensure effective involvement.

Skilled, confident and very active community group members are well supported by community learning partners to deliver a variety of services through community managed groups. St Mary's Community Facility Management Group successfully campaigned for a local community facility which was opened in November 2008. The centre is managed and run by volunteers who are confident in their roles and clear about their responsibilities. All volunteers have completed training including food hygiene and child protection. The group recently won a Volunteer Friendly Award. The centre provides local people with access to a range of services within their community. The programme, delivered through a range of partners includes adult learning, health focused activities and anti-poverty services including money and legal advice. The Credit Union also has a base in the centre. Ardler Environmental Group was established by local people to improve the environment beyond their gardens. All members have gained important skills, including team working, and extended their knowledge of environmental issues. The group was part of *Demonstrating the Links* in 2006 looking at the quality of green space in Ardler. They regularly report progress to the LCPP. They share expertise within the group and regularly meet with similar groups in the city and across Scotland. They have received awards including Beautiful Scotland in Bloom silver award 2009 and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Award for voluntary service.

5. How effective are providers in improving the quality of services?

The CLD service has planning processes in place with clear outcomes linked to the Dundee City Plan and the local community planning framework. Through the LCPP, partners plan and regularly monitor the progress and impact of their work. Partners in the area are committed to providing high quality services. They use a wide range of evaluative tools, some of which focus on outcomes and impact of services. The use of tools like 'Catching Confidence' and 'Light Bulb Moments' are supporting learners' to recognise their progression in creative ways. External research such as the evaluation of the *Peer Education Project* is used well to establish impact.

The CLD service undertakes self-evaluation across all provision, but there is a need to ensure that understanding and implementation is consistent with all staff. Partners need to continue to work together to further develop their capacity to evaluate their combined impact.

Partners make use of a range of effective reporting mechanisms to report progress and community projects and groups regularly report on progress through newsletters.

6. Does the learning community have a clear sense of direction?

Partners are purposeful, committed and work effectively together. Across the learning community, there is a shared vision. Confident, knowledgeable local people effectively engage in decision making at local and city level. There is a commitment locally to share knowledge and intelligence more effectively in order to improve services. CLD and local schools recognise the need to work more closely together to ensure the highest impacts for young people and communities. Consideration needs to be given to the creative, collective use of community resources, such as the radio studio, to continue to meet the needs of the learning community.

7. What happens next?

The inspection team was able to rely on the high quality self-evaluation provided in the learning community. As a result, inspectors were able to change their focus during the inspection to support further improvements within the learning community.

CLD providers have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement and communities are achieving very well. As a result we have ended the inspection process at this stage.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the education authority and its partners.

- Further develop accreditation to recognise achievements for young people and adults.
- Involve young people in local decision making and community organisations.
- Develop Individual Learning Plans for young people involved in appropriate aspects of youth work.
- Draw on the skills and knowledge of existing volunteers to develop involvement of others.

Quality indicators help CLD providers and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the learning community. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication "*How good is our community learning and development? 2*".

HMIE checks five important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish CLD provision is doing. Here are the results for the learning community surrounding Baldrigon Academy.

Improvements in performance	good
Impact on young people	good
Impact on adults	very good
Impact of capacity building on communities	very good
Improving services	good

Managing Inspector: Ros Sutherland
1 June 2010

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

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

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