

**REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 24 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF CONNECT 5 AND BALERNO OFFSITE CENTRES**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**REPORT NO: 351-2012**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland inspection of Connect 5 and Balerno Offsite Centres

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1** It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

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

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**3.1** None

## **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

**4.1** Connect5/Balerno were inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in June 2012. They published a report on their findings on 21 August 2012.

**4.2** HMIE identified the following key strengths of the service:

- Most young people are motivated and engaged in their learning.
- High quality relationships among young people and staff.
- Successful promotion of health and wellbeing.
- Effective approaches to self-evaluation to improve learning.

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

- Improve the curriculum.
- Streamline planning approaches to ensure that young people's needs are being addressed more effectively.
- Continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the centres.
- Continue to improve outcomes for young people.

#### 4.4 Quality Indicators

4.4.1 HMIE 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 School 3" (HGIOS 3) were evaluated:

| Quality Indicator                   |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Improvements in performance         | satisfactory |
| Learners' experiences               | good         |
| Meeting learning needs              | good         |
| The curriculum                      | satisfactory |
| Improvement through self-evaluation | good         |

4.5 The HMIE visit provided a very positive picture of the progress the service is making in many important areas including importantly the key areas of learning and teaching and pupil achievement. Inspectors were also very complimentary about the high quality relationships that exist between staff and pupils. HMIE advised that the planning process be streamlined to ensure there is no duplication in individualised planning and that greater clarity was given to individual targets for pupils. HMIE indicated that they were very satisfied with the educational provision in the school and were confident in the service's self evaluation processes and would be making no further visits in connection with the inspection.

4.6 The service prior to, during and after the inspection has been supported by the authority through the link QIO and along with the Head of Service is currently finalising an action plan to respond to the main recommendations. The main points for action raised by HMIE are already incorporated in the Offsite Education Service Improvement Plan which commenced in June 2012.

#### 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, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services and the school's Head Teacher.

#### 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Michael Wood  
Director of Education

PC/MM

September 2012

21 August 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

## **Balerno Offsite and Connect 5 Offsite Centres Dundee City Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's centre. During our visit, we talked to parents and young people and we worked closely with the head of service and staff. We wanted to find out how well young people are learning and achieving and how well the centres support young people to do their best. The head of service shared with us the centres' successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the centres' recent work, including improvements to teaching and learning, ways of recording how well young people are progressing and approaches to promoting health and wellbeing. As a result, we were able to find out how good the centres are at improving young people's education.

### **How well do young people learn and achieve?**

Across the two centres, almost all young people are positive about the support they receive to help them make progress with aspects of their behaviour. Almost all benefit from positive relationships with staff and feel they get help when they need it. Young people enjoy the opportunities to be actively involved in their lessons and for making choices about their learning. They particularly enjoy learning in practical activities and when participating in outdoor education. Young people do not work in groups enough. They could take on more responsibility for aspects of their learning, for instance, thinking about and judging how well they are progressing in looking after their health and wellbeing. Young people are making good progress from their previous levels of achievement. They make strong progress with their number skills. Some young people are progressing well in reading and writing. Some young people attain very well and gain five awards in line with national levels, while almost all attain three or four awards at SCQF level 3. Most young people are successful in improving their attendance. However, some only have education on a part-time basis.

### **How well do the centres support young people to develop and learn?**

Young people are well supported by the high levels of staffing in Balerno and Connect 5. Most tasks and activities are set at the right level to motivate and encourage young people to achieve. Teachers and support assistants work well to remove barriers in young people's learning. They select helpful resources for young people with difficulties in literacy. A few young people are not fully challenged by the pace in some lessons and lose their motivation to take part in learning activities. All young people have individualised educational programmes (IEPs). The IEPs have a clear focus on young people making progress with their social, emotional and mental wellbeing. Such progress is measured and reviewed well. Young people often have too many different plans in place to support their needs. Some plans do not always have other broader educational targets for young people. Staff offer young people programmes to improve their behaviour and their health and wellbeing successfully. Each centre provides young people with well-planned activities in literacy and numeracy. Young people have good opportunities to make progress with their numeracy skills in practical projects such as bike maintenance. Young people have good opportunities to learn through activities with partners which promote health and wellbeing through programmes on healthy relationships and drugs education. Some young people have a wide range of opportunities for personal achievements, including residential experiences. However, not all young people experience these activities. Young people can gain recognition for their personal achievements through an appropriate range of awards such as Personal Development Awards, ASDAN and Youth Achievement. Both centres have good approaches to support young people transferring in and out of the different centres within the authority's Offsite Education Services such as the Castlepark Centre,

college and training providers.

### **How well do the centres improve the quality of their work?**

Overall, the centres have good arrangements for evaluating how well they are doing in improving most of the key outcomes for young people. Staff in the centres are committed to continuing to improve their practice and the provision. They work well with the education authority in annual reviews to look at strengths and areas for development for the centres. Staff know the successes of each centre well and are identifying next steps for improving their work effectively. Staff track young people's progress well and are developing this approach further. The centres now need to use greater focus on improving some key outcomes such as, full-time attendance and broad areas of achievement. Young people and their families do not yet have a strong enough say on how the work of the centres can improve further. The head of service has played a strong role in bringing together staff from across the two centres to work together regularly to bring about improvements. The depute head of service has played a strong role in supporting improvement through developing good processes to help the centres know their strengths.

This inspection of your centres found the following key strengths.

- Most young people are motivated and engaged in their learning.
- High quality relationships among young people and staff.
- Successful promotion of health and wellbeing.
- Effective approaches to self-evaluation to improve learning.

We discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the centres. This is what we agreed with them.

- Improve the curriculum.
- Streamline planning approaches to ensure that young people's needs are being addressed more effectively.
- Continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the centres.
- Continue to improve outcomes for young people.

### **What happens at the end of the inspection?**

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the centres' self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The local authority will inform parents about the centres' progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

David Watt