

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25 SEPTEMBER 2013

REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND CONTINUED INSPECTION OF ST PAUL'S RC ACADEMY

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 384-2013

ITEM No ...2.....

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland Continued Inspection Visit of St Paul's Academy

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 St Paul's RC Academy was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in September 2011. They published a report on their findings on 1 November 2011. HMIE noted in the report that they would make a further visit to the school within the next 18 months and report back to parents on the progress made since the original inspection. This visit was carried out in May 2013 and Education Scotland published a report of this visit on 20 August.
- 4.2 The following areas for action were agreed with the school and education authority at the time of the original inspection:
- raise expectations and improve the consistency of young people's learning experiences and achievements;
 - improve arrangements to meet the learning needs of young people, including those requiring additional support;
 - improve the curriculum to meet the needs and entitlements of all young people; and
 - develop consistent and rigorous approaches to self-evaluation.
- 4.3 Education Scotland have indicated in the report that the school has made good progress in each of the areas identified. Some of the important areas of progress are listed below:
- Most young people enjoy learning at school and benefit from positive relationships with staff
 - In an increasing number of classes young people show greater independence and are able to evaluate their own learning
 - Attainment in national examinations shows positive signs of improvement
 - Young people respond well to a range of opportunities to achieve

- Curriculum for Excellence is now far more fully developed and the school has a clear plan for providing the breadth of courses required to meet young peoples needs
- Literacy and Numeracy are better embedded in the overall curriculum
- Staff have improved significantly the arrangements for meeting the learning needs of young people
- There are many improvements in the school's approaches to monitoring young peoples learning and progress

4.4 Education Scotland as well as indicating in the report that good progress has been made since their last visit, identified a number of areas where work needs to continue. Some of the important areas for continued development are listed below:

- Continue to improve the consistency of young people's learning
- Raise the aspirations of young people to achieve
- The school should continue to develop opportunities for young people to link together the different areas of the curriculum
- Continue to increase the pace of learning and the level of challenge for all young people
- Continue to improve the rigour of the school's approaches to self evaluation

4.5 St Paul's RC Academy formed part of an authority extended review in October 2012 and the school and authority have worked closely together to progress the action points identified by HMIE. This partnered approach for improvement has been commended by Education Scotland in this recent visit.

4.6 Overall this is a very positive report that indicates the positive progress that has been made by the school in the last 2 years since the original inspection. Education Scotland have asked the authority to provide them with a report on the progress of the school in 12 months time and will decide if any further visits are required based on the authority report.

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, the Director of Corporate Services, the 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



20 August 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

St Paul's RC Academy

Dundee City Council

In November 2011, HM Inspectors published a report on your child's school.

Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff how the school has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in November 2011 and at aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out how well young people are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

The quality of young people's learning and achievements has improved since the initial inspection. Most young people enjoy learning at school and benefit from positive relationships with their teachers. In most classes, young people are now clearer about what they have to learn. When they are given the opportunity, young people work well together and show greater independence. In an increasing number of classes, young people have good opportunities to evaluate their own progress. There is scope to give young people more opportunities to discuss their learning and to become more involved in making improvements across the school. The behaviour of a small minority of young people sometimes detracts from others' learning experiences. We have asked teachers to continue to improve the consistency and quality of young people's learning. We have also asked them to raise their expectations of what young people can achieve, and to encourage young people themselves to have higher aspirations.

Young people respond well to a range of opportunities to achieve. Many young people experience success individually and in groups by taking part in a wide range of sports activities and in school shows and other events. Young people contribute well to the work of local, national and international charities. An increasing number of young people learn new skills and benefit from their participation in the Caritas Award and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Young people's attainment in national examinations shows promising signs of improvement. For example, the proportion of young people gaining Highers at S5/S6 has improved steadily over recent years.

How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

Staff are now making positive progress in developing the curriculum, taking

appropriate account of Curriculum for Excellence guidance. The school has a clear plan for providing young people with a suitably broad range of courses and learning experiences from S1 to S6. There are now better arrangements in place to ensure that all young people develop important skills in literacy and numeracy. Staff have worked well together to develop a range of strategies to promote health and wellbeing across the school. The school should continue to develop opportunities for young people to build links in their learning across different areas of the curriculum.

Staff have recognised that they should improve the arrangements for ensuring that young people's earlier learning at primary school is built upon successfully on entering S1.

Staff have improved arrangements for meeting the learning needs of young people. Significant progress has been made to ensure that all young people who require additional support in their learning are identified at an early stage. Support staff now work more closely with class teachers and, as a result, young people receive stronger support where it is needed. Across the school, staff are taking increasing account of the range of young people's learning needs. Overall though, there remains scope to improve the pace of learning and the level of challenge provided for young people.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

There are many improvements in the school's approaches to monitoring young people's learning and progress. All staff are now involved in annual reviews of young people's attainment in examinations. An increasing number of staff visit each other's lessons in *Learning Rounds* and this helps staff to share good practice around the school. There is scope to improve the rigour of the school's approaches to self-evaluation to ensure greater consistency of young people's learning experiences and progress across the school.

What happens next?

Staff, with strong support from Dundee City Council, are beginning to implement a number of important improvements across the school. Young people's attainment shows some encouraging signs of improvement and arrangements for meeting young people's learning needs are stronger. The developing curriculum provides young people with a broad range of learning experiences. All staff now need to work together to raise expectations further and to improve the consistency of young people's learning. Our Area Lead Officer along with the local authority will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We have asked Dundee City Council to provide us with a progress report on the school within one year of the date of this letter. We will then decide whether to make a further inspection visit to the school.

If you would like to receive this report in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.