
PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT – SCHOOLS (HAWICK HIGH SCHOOL)

Report by Director – Education & Lifelong Learning

Education Sub-Committee

2 March 2023

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes that the Committee considers His Majesty’s Inspector of Education (HMIE) Reports for Hawick High School and the continuous scrutiny and support provided by the Quality Improvement Team within Scottish Borders Council.**
- 1.2 Summary of the main points of the Report.
- a) Initial inspection of Hawick High School by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in February noted areas of strength and areas for improvement with particular reference to planning for continuous improvement, improving curriculum pathways and low levels of attainment and achievement for young people.
 - b) Follow-up visit by HMIE in January 2022 reported key areas of improvement under the leadership and direction of the Headteacher. The Report confirmed that HMIE would not undertake a further visit, but would ask the Local Authority to review and report on continued progress.
 - c) After a period of monitoring and support by the Quality Improvement Team, a review took place in January 2023 to validate progress made and to report back to HMIE and Education Scotland.
 - d) The team recognised significant additional progress and improvement made by the Headteacher and staff.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Committee approves the Local Authority and Education Scotland’s recommendation that Hawick High School can be fully signed off as a school of concern following intensive periods of improvement.**

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education

His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) are part of Education Scotland, a National body who carry out scrutiny activities in all schools and settings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all inspection activity ceased, so there has been a time delay in the scrutiny activities carried out. This has allowed time for the school to lead the areas of improvement identified and to ensure measurable impact of these.

3.2 Scottish Borders Council Quality Improvement Framework

- a) The Education (Scotland) Act 2016, The Standard's in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 (amended to include the National Improvement Framework) place direct responsibility on Local Authorities to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided by the schools managed by it.
- b) The Quality Improvement Team has a relentless focus on supporting and challenging continuous improvement in schools and settings to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people.

4 REPORT EVIDENCE FROM HMIE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY

4.1 Hawick High School – Initial Inspection

- a) The initial Inspection Report by HMIE was published on 31 March 2020 with a number of strengths identified and clear recommendations for improvement across all 4 quality indicators which were inspected.
- b) The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:
 - i. The Headteacher provides strong and effective leadership of change to drive improvement. She has a purposeful approach to raising expectations and standards. The priorities identified for improvement are beginning to take forward key aspects of the work of the school.
 - ii. The commitment to provide all Teachers with opportunities to be leaders of learning through collaborative working and professional learning. This is beginning to improve the learning experiences of young people.
 - iii. The highly skilled staff in the Enhanced Provision who work effectively as a team to ensure that all young people make very good progress. Very positive relationships create a strong sense of belonging, which supports young people to feel safe, cared for and valued.
- c) The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Headteacher and a representative from Scottish Borders Council:
 - i. A clear strategic overview is now needed of the range of work taking forward improvements. Staff should continue to work collaboratively to progress a more joined-up approach with clear timescales for activities and an appropriate pace of change.
 - ii. Build on existing effective practice and enthusiasm of staff to continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school.

- iii. All staff need to recognise their role in providing support for all young people. Staff should continue to develop approaches to supporting all young people, including those who are facing significant challenges in their lives, to attain and achieve. This should lead to all young people feeling welcome, valued and included in the life of the school.
- iv. Further work is needed to improve the curriculum so that young people can make better progress in their learning.
- v. Improve the attainment of young people. Work is needed to ensure that more young people leave Hawick High School with appropriate qualifications.

4.2 **Hawick High School – Follow-Up Visit**

A second visit by HMIE to Hawick High school noted significant improvements in all areas, with the second Report being published on 8 February 2022. This Report noted the very positive impact of the Headteacher's leadership and the significant progress made by the staff team. The Inspectorate asked Scottish Borders Council Officers to report progress within one year of the second visit.

4.3 **Hawick High School – Scottish Borders Council Review**

- a) In January 2023, a team of Officers from Scottish Borders Council visited the school to validate the improvements made and to quality assure the progress made over the last 12 months. The team met with staff, business partners and young people, observed lessons and reviewed all aspects of the schools progress with the initial recommendations of the HMIE Report in 2020.
- b) In February 2023, the Chief Officer, the Quality Improvement Manager and the Headteacher met with the Head of Scrutiny for HMIE to give their report. Following a lengthy professional discussion, HMIE endorsed the Local Authority's report and agreed to a final sign off from HMIE.

5 **IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

The report fully describes all the elements of risk that have been identified in relation to this project and no specific additional concerns need to be addressed.

5.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and there is no requirement for a full IIA to be completed in relation this this report.

5.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**

There is no impact/difference to sustainable development goals.

5.5 **Rural Proofing**

Not applicable.

5.6 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to the Scheme of Delegation which need to be made following the recommendations of this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Lesley Munro

Director – Education & Lifelong Learning

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Christian Robertson	Quality Improvement Manager 01835 824000

Background Papers:

SBC Follow Through Report Hawick HS January 2023

HMIE Record of Inspection 2020

HMIE Follow Up Letter 2022

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Christian Robertson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at: Christian Robertson, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA, 01835 824000, carobertson@scotborders.gov.uk.