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**Cedarbank School  
HMI Progress Report  
February 2018**

## Contents

### 1. The Inspection

HMI published a report on the inspection of Cedarbank School on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015. The Record of Inspection Findings outlined a number of areas for improvement. This progress report aims to detail the progress which has been undertaken since the inspection, using evidence from classroom observations, pupil and staff focus groups, parent forum and a questionnaire to partner agencies.

### 2. Background Information

Since the inspection in December 2015 there have been a number of changes to the leadership team. A new Head Teacher was appointed in December 2017 supported by two acting Depute Head Teachers who have been in post for one year. Since August 2017 the school now operates across three sites. S1 – S3 pupils (44) are at the main Cedarbank School building, S4/5 pupils (39) are at an annex at Deans Community High School and S6 pupils (11) are based in Armadale Academy. Three teachers and seven Pupil Support Workers are based at Deans Community High School. Two teachers and four Pupil Support Workers are based at Armadale Academy.

### 3. Progress towards the agreed areas for improvement

#### **Area for Development 1;**

#### **Ensure all young people achieve and attain at an appropriate level**

Young people in the school continue to be confident and engage well in their learning and the life of the school. Staff remain committed and enthusiastic and provide a positive and stimulating environment for learning. Staff have made changes to the curriculum to ensure imaginative use of space, including outdoor learning opportunities and extended opportunities at Armadale and Deans.

Wider achievement is now part of the timetable for S1-S3 pupils with the result that young people's wider achievements are now more fully integrated into planning for personalisation and choice. An ASDAN qualification has been introduced to allow pupils to extend their skills and gain accreditation. ASDAN programmes and qualifications are widely recognised by educators for providing an engaging curriculum that empowers students through personalised learning and choice. Courses motivate and enhance learners' confidence, self-esteem and resilience. In addition, learners develop core skills in teamwork, communication, problem solving, research and self-management.

Good progress has been made to further develop work with partners to support access to wider achievement opportunities. These include “The Larder” and the Cyrenians farm project which young people value. Links with West Lothian College have improved the senior phase curriculum and provided enhanced opportunities for access to the world of work. The employment of a Transition Pupil Support Worker has allowed for a more focused post-school transition process to take place leading to more appropriate work experience placements and to an increase of avenues for positive destinations.

Some young people now benefit from more targeted interventions to support their participation and engagement in a range of activities for personal growth and development. The school now plans to further develop effective systems to plan, track and monitor the impact of planned interventions.

Young people continue to gain a range of national qualifications. A good start has been made to present young people for full course awards rather than units only. The number of national qualifications on offer to young people has increased, for example Media Studies, Skills for Work courses, Drama and Physics.

The profile of literacy across learning has improved throughout the school. The literacy co-ordinator is raising the profile of language in real life contexts through use of developments such as ‘word of the week’. Specific barriers to learning are being addressed through the introduction of good quality individualised interventions and digital interventions such as IVONA reader. This technology supports young people with literacy and helps them to easily access texts.

Further work is required to raise the expectations of staff and pupils with regard to achievement in numeracy and mathematics. More young people require to leave Cedarbank School with a qualification in numeracy. The school has made a good start to more systematically collect, analyse and evaluate data in order to track and target the support that is required to allow better progress in numeracy and mathematics.

## **Area for Development 2;**

### **Continue to develop the curriculum in line with national guidance**

The school has continued to develop the curriculum and progress has been made with regard to entitlements to a Broad General Education through further development of interdisciplinary learning, Life Skills and Wider Achievement. Feedback from pupils in S4 – 6 and staff indicates that the pupils would like to have access to more choice options in the Senior Phase and the school continues to work with partner schools to increase the offer. Current changes to the Senior Phase, such as the introduction of Skills for Work at Armadale Academy, are leading to more appropriate accreditation and a wider variety of positive post school destinations. S6 pupils experience well-planned opportunities to develop an awareness of the world of work.

The recent appointment of a permanent Head Teacher provides the opportunity to develop, along with the whole school community, a set of principles, vision, values and aims for curriculum change. This will provide a clear rationale that reflects the unique context of Cedarbank School.

There is evidence amongst some teaching staff of National Benchmarks being used effectively to plan and track pupil progress. West Lothian progression pathways for literacy and numeracy have been updated to reflect recent national advice. The school plans to use the progression pathways to inform its curriculum design to meet the needs of all young people.

There have been improvements in planned curriculum transitions. An example of this is the pupil profile transfer information from BGE to Senior Phase shared with Cedarbank, Deans and Armadale staff as appropriate. This has improved continuity and progression for young people in the Senior Phase.

Good progress has been made in developing further approaches to planning health and wellbeing across the curriculum. For example, the introduction of Life Skill programmes to all year groups. All pupil support workers are now trained in "Boardmaker" to assist with learner conversations. There is evidence of it being used throughout the school to help young people communicate effectively. The school has employed a Speech and Language Therapist to work with pupils who experience difficulties with regard to communicating with others.

The school is making more effective use of partner agencies to develop and deliver a more targeted curriculum to meet the varied needs of our young people. For example, the contribution of Autism Initiative and The Dogs Trust add value to the young people's experiences and their wellbeing.

At Armadale Academy, all eleven learners are accessing mainstream classes, some independently. This has had a very positive impact on the motivation and aspirations of pupils. The school will further explore opportunities for inclusion in mainstream classes, where appropriate, for all pupils in the Senior Phase.

### **Area for Development 3;**

#### **Continue to develop approaches to tracking and assessment to make sure young people progress in their learning**

The school has reviewed its approaches to profiling and there is now evidence of improved learner engagement to inform next steps in learning. The school now plans to further develop the use of Learner Conversations to support pupils' ability to talk about their progress and what they will do to improve. The school has recently introduced the use of Learning Packs in S1-S3 and will evaluate the effectiveness of this resource to engage learners. S4/5 pupils now take responsibility for the equipment they need to help them learn and, at Armadale Academy; staff have commented that there have been improvements in pupils taking responsibility for their resources in S6.

Across the school there are now more consistent approaches for sharing learning intentions, success criteria and providing feedback to young people. Staff are becoming familiar with the recently published Benchmarks. The school now plans to embed the Benchmarks in the planning process to ensure there is greater understanding by young people and staff on what achievement of a level means to maximise pupil learning and achievement.

## **Conclusion**

Cedarbank School is well placed to continue to improve. Young people trust staff and have developed very positive relationships with them. The school has a strong nurturing and inclusive environment and staff know the pupils very well. Young people are developing their social skills and are actively encouraged to use the language of respect in their dealings with each other. The school has developed and improved pupils' understanding of how they learn and now plans to fully embed skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the curriculum.

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