

## Inspection of the learning community



Inspection of the learning community surrounding Forrester High School  
Edinburgh City Council  
5 May 2009

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## **1. About the report**

This report tells you about community learning and development (CLD) activities in the communities surrounding Forrester High School. It complements a separate report on the school. We explain how well people involved in community learning activities do in a wide range of experiences, and the quality of learning activities on offer to them. We describe how communities can influence decision making and how they can respond positively to their own issues. We also talk about how organisations work together and how they improve lives in local communities. Finally, our report looks at the vision for the area, and how well all organisations and the community are working together to achieve it.

## **2. The learning community**

The learning community around Forrester High School lies in the South West of the city of Edinburgh and includes the neighbourhoods of Sighthill, Broomhouse, Carrick Knowe, Murrayburn and Gylemuir.

The proportion of jobless people in the area is in line with the Scottish average but higher than the rest of Edinburgh. The proportion of teenage mothers in the area is higher than the Scottish average and substantially higher than the rest of Edinburgh.

## **3. Particular strengths of the learning community**

- The commitment of staff and volunteers to meeting learners' needs.
- Participants value CLD services.
- Wider impact of aspects of CLD on family life and community well-being.

#### **4. Examples of good practice**

- Wester Hailes Youth Agency's contribution to young people's wider achievement in Forrester High School.
- Broomhouse Café Training Project – an effective hub linking literacies, progression and social enterprise.
- BIG Project – positive impact on young people and families.

By visiting [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) you can find out more about these examples of good practice.

#### **5. How well do participants learn and achieve?**

There are good examples of high quality learning opportunities in aspects of provision in the area including adult literacy and numeracy work. Numbers of learners engaged in English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) provision have exceeded targets set. Levels of reported youth crime have shown improvement. Those taking part in programmes report wider improvements in the quality of community life but analysis of this is limited. Service providers are collecting basic information on participation levels but there is a need to extend the collection of data to measure progress against outcomes. Staff need to be clearer about what they are trying to achieve and how this will be measured and reported.

#### **Young people**

Young people are benefiting from a range of provision in the area. Wester Hailes Youth Agency is making a strong contribution to extending young people's opportunities for achievement in Forrester High School. Some are gaining John Muir Trust awards through involvement in environmental projects in the community. Peer education programmes are helping young people to support each other and to raise awareness of health issues. Through involvement in the Big Project, Young Peoples Support and the Broomhouse Centre, young people are developing confidence and skills. Young people in need of support are developing emotional resilience and overcoming problems. The Young Carers Group is helping young people to deal with difficult situations and remain involved in learning. A good range of accessible programmes for younger age groups is being delivered. There is scope to extend the use of achievement awards and accredited learning programmes. Involving young people more fully in assessing their progress and considering next steps would help participants to get more from their involvement. Young people's participation in planning service provision needs to be developed.

## **Adults**

Adult learners are gaining confidence and skills across a range of provision in the area. Many are positive about the wider benefits learning has had on their lives. These include improvements to health, being more confident as parents and in the workplace and becoming more involved in their communities. Learners have very good opportunities to improve literacy and numeracy skills. Most are making good progress in reaching their stated goals through individual learning plans. Some learners are progressing to further education opportunities and gaining qualifications. Parents and families receive effective support in the Broomhouse centre, through a café project and a befrienders initiative. This is helping to reduce isolation, build confidence and create opportunities for volunteering. Learners with additional support needs are being helped to overcome barriers to participation. The Saturday Morning Programme has been effective in engaging new learners and raising awareness of lifelong learning opportunities. Learners whose first language is not English are being helped to get involved and make good progress. There is a need to improve guidance and extend accredited learning opportunities to ensure that learners get the most from their participation. Partner organisations need to improve information on, and provision of, progression routes for learners. A stronger approach to celebrating achievement in the area could help learners share progress made.

### **6. How well does CLD help the community to develop?**

Several locally managed voluntary organisations have a positive impact in the area. Local groups work well together at the Broomhouse Centre. The Café Training Project is helping to improve health and well-being. Those taking part are improving literacy skills and taking up volunteering opportunities. Community representatives are gaining experience of managing local services. This is helping people to make progress in other aspects of their lives. Advice and information services provided in the area are well targeted on vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion. Community representatives on local management committees are involved in planning aspects of CLD provision. The Council and its partners are working to develop neighbourhood planning and recognise the need to improve the involvement of local residents in these plans. There is a need to review the function and purpose of some local voluntary organisations to ensure their relevance to current community need. Better information sharing, coordination and communication amongst local groups and organisations could improve their ability to meet needs.

### **7. How effective are providers in improving the quality of services?**

Staff in the area are committed to providing high quality services. There are some good examples of effective self-evaluation and review to improve services provided by local voluntary organisations. Adult learners' views are used to inform planning and priorities. Local authority CLD staff are evaluating progress within service plans, team plans and individual work-plans. There is a need for a stronger and more consistent focus on outcomes so that stakeholders can

evaluate the impact of services more clearly. Good quality information on numbers of participants is gathered but information on what is being achieved is more limited. Recent restructuring of services is intended to improve joint planning and evaluation by partner organisations at local level. Youth work providers have started to improve information sharing. Progress in evaluating the full impact of services provided by partners requires a more systematic and consistent approach.

## **8. Do CLD providers have a clear sense of direction?**

Partners operating in the area have begun to focus their work on agreed outcomes. Local planning forums are starting to meet to develop shared priorities. Reorganisation of council services, resource constraints and changes to area boundaries have required staff to revise plans. There is a need to strengthen the collective vision of stakeholders in the area and focus planned activity on clear outcomes. A more consistent and systematic approach to planning is needed. Structures to enable partners to work more effectively together at local level need to be clearer and made more effective.

## **9. What happens next?**

There are some important improvements needed, but because CLD providers have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, and communities are achieving well, we have ended the inspection process at this stage. We will monitor progress through our regular contact with the education authority.

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

- Improve focus on outcomes and analysis of performance.
- Extend accreditation and progression opportunities for learners.
- Strengthen the involvement of stakeholders in planning and evaluation.
- Review local community organisations to ensure relevance to current community need.

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

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

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

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 Forrester High School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	satisfactory
<b>Impact on young people</b>	good
<b>Impact on adults</b>	good
<b>Impact of capacity building on communities</b>	good
<b>Improving services</b>	satisfactory

**Managing Inspector:** Peter Hamilton  
5 May 2009

## **How can you contact us?**

HMIE has responsibilities to evaluate the quality of pre-school education, all schools, teacher education, community learning and development, colleges and local authorities. We also publish reports of interest to the public and professionals about services for children and evaluate child protection services. From this extensive evidence we are able to give the professional advice needed to support the development of educational policy.

For more information about the work of HMIE, including examples of good practice and links to Journey to Excellence, please visit our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

To find out more about inspections go to [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Please contact the Business Management and Communications Team if you require any of our information available in translated or other appropriate versions.

If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at [HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk) or alternatively you should write to Business Management and Communications Team, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from Rona Littleproud, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA or phone 01506 600258 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise a complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or email [ask@sps.org.uk](mailto:ask@sps.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website [www.sps.org.uk](http://www.sps.org.uk).

## **Want to join us?**

In addition to HMI, inspection teams often include people who are not HMI but are involved directly in education. They are called Associate Assessors and most work in community learning and development. Most inspection teams also include a member of the public called a Lay Member. More information about how you can become an Associate Assessor or Lay Member is available at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

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