

## Learning community inspection



**A report by HM Inspectorate of Education**

**Inspection of the learning community  
surrounding  
Wester Hailes Education Centre  
The City of Edinburgh Council  
27 April 2010**

We inspect learning communities in order to let those who use services and the local community know whether learning communities provide appropriate learning opportunities and help learners in their development. We are also interested in how community and voluntary groups are helped to contribute to making communities better places to live and work. At the end of inspections, we agree ways in which staff and volunteers can improve the quality of learning for young people and adults and how the impact of community and voluntary groups can be further developed.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask managers and staff about the strengths of the learning community, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we join other activities which young people, adults and community groups are involved in. We also gather the views of learners, active community members and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of provision locally.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of learning and development provided. We describe how well learners are doing and how good the learning community is at helping them to learn. We comment on how well staff, learners and groups work together and the difference they are making in the learning community. Finally, we focus on how well the learning community is led and how leaders help the learning community achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the learning community, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

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## **1. The learning community**

The learning community around Wester Hailes Education Centre (WHEC) includes the Wester Hailes, Calders, Sighthill, Dumbryden and Clovenstone areas. The greater part of the learning community is located in the South West Neighbourhood Partnership area. Clovenstone is part of Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership. The Edinburgh Deprivation Index indicates that there are considerable levels of deprivation across the learning community. The proportion of jobless people of working age at 20% is considerably higher than the Scottish average of 12% and higher than the rest of Edinburgh which is 9%. The percentage of the population who are income deprived at 41% is considerably higher than the national average of 17% and that of Edinburgh which is 14%. The percentage of young mothers is 24.9%. This is higher than the Scottish average of 13.7%.

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

- Very responsive and highly effective local partnerships.
- Excellent range of inclusive, well-planned and appropriately targeted activities for young people.
- Very effective youth work practice.
- Range and quality of learning programmes on offer.
- Highly effective family learning.

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

A good range of quality learning programmes are on offer for young people and adults. Participant numbers in Youth Work, Literacies, Family Learning and Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL) have increased. Authority wide adult learning targets have been met. Community learning and development (CLD) partners are making positive use of youth accreditation focusing on broader achievement. CLD service staff use of data to inform local planning and resource allocation is improving. They regularly collect participant and participation figures and this informs local decision-making. CLD service staff contribute well to local neighbourhood planning. CLD partners regularly share information and practice. There are some good examples of CLD partners responding to identified trends. CLD service staff's knowledge of outcome focused planning is improving. The South West Neighbourhood Partnership Action Plan does not reflect locally identified needs.

## **Young people**

Young people benefit from an excellent range of well-planned and appropriately targeted activities. Highly skilled and committed staff impact very positively on young people through very effective youth work practice. Youth work partners and young people enjoy supportive and mutually respectful relationships. Young people are successfully achieving a range of accredited awards. Joint working and sharing of practice between providers is very good. Projects such as the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) support group effectively engage young people in activities that are safe, stimulating and inclusive. Partners support high quality youth work delivery within the Wester Hailes Education Centre curriculum. Participants in the Attendance Group have successfully re-engaged in school. Progression opportunities for young people are very good. South West and Pentland Youth Forums provide opportunities for young people to engage in decision-making. Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) are well supported and carry out their duties effectively.

## **Adults**

Individual learners, including vulnerable adults, receive good support. Learners are more confident and are respected and valued. Provision has a significant impact on some learners including improved health and reduced social isolation. Nearly all are successful learners. Family learning and parenting programmes provide effective, relevant learning for families across the learning community. Learners at *Write from the Start*, *Raising Children with Confidence* and *Speak Easy* parenting classes have increased capacity to support their children's learning and cope with challenges in family life. Literacies' learners at Platform Adult Learning Centre and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes are addressing their specific learning needs through effective individual learning plans. Nearly all learners are achieving and some are progressing into employment, further study or training. Strong partnership working provides a wide and effective range of adult learning opportunities across the area. The Family Drop-in at Clovenstone Community Centre is creating opportunities for families across the community to come together and support each other. Guidance and progression routes are good for some individuals but are not systematic across all provision. Progression routes, particularly into community activism and volunteering, are not clear for all learners. More regular opportunities to celebrate achievement would increase learners' awareness of their progress and support further attainment.

## **4. How well are communities developing and achieving?**

Wester Hailes has a number of well established community and voluntary organisations who work effectively to deliver services to the local area. These organisations focus on arts, the environment, health work, anti-racism and the local economy. They provide an effective range of learning opportunities and some successfully encourage local people to become involved in running the organisations. These organisations make effective use of volunteers. The volunteers in Platform Adult Learning Centre contribute significantly to support for

learners and some act as role models. The Voluntary Sector Forum with partners in the learning community have developed a Time-Bank to recognise and further build and share the skills of volunteers in the local community. While this is valuable, this is at an early stage of development and has yet to link to schools and youth organisations. Young people have increasing opportunities to contribute to local decision-making and beginning to have an impact but this work is still developing. The CLD service provides effective training to support new community councillors in their work in the new community council. There is a considerable skills base amongst local people that could be further developed to foster local leadership skills and self-reliance. The links between learning activity and opportunities for involvement in the local community are not sufficiently well-developed. The celebration of community achievement is not fully systematic and there is a need to raise expectations of what communities can achieve. There is room to further develop engagement between the new community council and local residents. There are presently insufficient opportunities for communities to express their voice and influence planning and decision-making.

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

CLD service staff and partners make increasingly effective use of learners' views in evaluating their work and planning for improvement. Service staff engage in good quality professional discussion and regularly reflect on their practice. They plan effective improvements to services which results in new programmes for learners in the area. CLD service and partners focus on impacts of learning with young people and adults. They can show impacts with increasing numbers of learners. The CLD service staff review system, team and individual work plans encourage evaluation. CLD service and partners make good use of learners' fairs to engage with learners and report on progress. However, service staff now need to use a wider range of methods to report on progress. Joint self-evaluation with partners from both the education and voluntary sectors requires further development.

#### **6. Does the learning community have a clear sense of direction?**

A broad range of statutory and voluntary agencies engage in highly effective local partnership working. They are united around a shared vision and clear sense of direction and purpose. Groups like the Youth Providers Group offer effective local planning and networking opportunities. Improved partnership working and sharing of resources is benefiting learners. However, partners need to have higher aspirations for community achievement and foster a stronger culture of self-reliance and independent activity.

#### **7. What happens next?**

CLD providers have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement and communities are achieving very well. As a result we have ended the inspection process at this stage.

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

- Establish baseline figures and set more measurable targets within the CLD service.
- Improve outcome-focused planning and recording of impact.
- Develop more formal joint self-evaluation.
- Develop effective mechanisms for local people and agencies to contribute to setting of priorities within local community planning.

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

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 Wester Hailes Education Centre.

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

**Managing Inspector:** Stewart Maxwell  
27 April 2010

This 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

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