



Education
Scotland
Foghlam Alba



**Skypoint School
Clydebank
3 May 2016**

Education Scotland inspect schools in order to let parents¹ and young people know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher/senior managers and staff about the strengths of the school, 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 go into classes and join other activities in which young people are involved. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. 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 education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the service is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.educationscotland.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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1. The school

Skypoint School is a non-denominational, independent school with residential provision for some young people who need it. The school moved from Glasgow to its new building in West Dunbartonshire in October 2015. The roll was 23 when the inspection was carried out in March 2016. Skypoint School provides education and care for children and young people aged from 10 to 18 years with additional support needs arising from social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autism. Almost all were non-attenders at their mainstream school, prior to starting at Skypoint. The majority are day pupils and a small number had a split placement with another school. No young person had a coordinated support plan.

2. Key strengths of the school

- Polite, confident and responsible young people.
- Improvements in young people's attendance and engagement with learning leading to better outcomes and achievements.
- The quality of resources and use of technology to support learning.
- Communication with parents and key partners.
- Strong and effective leadership from the Director of Quality Improvement and leadership of the school.

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Staff work tirelessly to motivate and engage young people in learning and almost all have made good progress and a few have made exceptional progress in their attendance, achievement, attitude and engagement in learning. Almost all young people said they felt safe and included in the school community. When engaged in relevant and practical lessons such as cook school, digital photography, technologies, and outdoor learning young people show high levels of motivation to learn. Staff make effective use of a range of technology to motivate young people and encourage them to interact in lessons. Most young people respond well to high levels of individual support to help them to listen and remain on task. Teachers are open to pupils' ideas and suggestions and young people are given opportunities to express their views on their own work and aspects of learning. The good practice in learning and teaching needs to be shared more effectively across the education team to ensure that young people have consistently high-quality learning experiences.

Young people are polite, helpful and developing responsible attitudes through Opportunities for Additional Leadership (OPAL). Young people at the senior phase have very good opportunities to develop leadership skills through membership of the pupil council and the Eco schools programme, as librarian, lunch assistants, pupil support assistants, buddy readers and football coaches. All young people achieve at least one accredited award during their senior phase. Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), John Muir Trust and Saltire Award programmes are helping young people gain recognition for their work in the community, including, for example, volunteering to coach football in a primary school and carrying out environmental work in the Loch Lomond National Park.

The school is successfully increasing the numbers of young people achieving qualifications above National 4. Commendably, most young people have significantly improved their attendance at school over the past two years. At all stages, most young people are making good progress in reading, writing and spelling through literacy support programmes linked to their individual needs. Overall in numeracy and mathematics, most young people make good progress in their learning. They apply their learning accurately in a range of real life contexts such as costing materials for products they make and sell at the annual open day. Through an extensive range of physical activities, young people are building their physical fitness, developing their confidence to participate in new leisure activities and understanding how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. All young people are learning important first aid and skills such as treating injuries, applying bandages, using cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in an emergency, recognising signs when someone is in danger and knowing what to do.

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

The school provides a curriculum that is enabling all young people to develop their skills for life and work, and knowledge and understanding

through a positive and nurturing environment. Personalisation and choice feature increasingly within programmes and courses. The school is developing opportunities for young people to learn skills for life and work through building effective links with local schools and making use of the on-site community facilities including the café, cooking area, gym facilities and a music studio. Staff should continue to develop curriculum courses and programmes, particularly at the broad general education, to ensure a breadth of experiences. In addition, we asked the school to continue to develop approaches to assessment and moderation and ensure consistency in tracking learners' progress across the curriculum.

The school has a caring, nurturing and enabling ethos. Young people feel valued and benefit from highly positive relationships with staff. In most lessons tasks and activities are well-planned and meet the needs of most young people. Staff use their knowledge of young people very well to intervene sensitively when they need support to focus on their learning. The school works closely with a range of partners through regular multiagency reviews and communicates very effectively with placing authorities to secure better outcomes for young people. Staff take account of their knowledge of young people and use this information very well to personalise learning.

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

Senior leaders and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the school. They are successfully improving and sustaining young people's attendance and progress in learning and helping them to develop positive attitudes and aspirations. The school regularly seeks the views of a range of stakeholders and asks parents and young people about the quality of their learning experiences and support. Senior leaders give a high priority to the quality of learning and teaching. Senior managers rigorously monitor initial assessments and progress, the quality of individualised educational programmes, teachers' planning and assessment. They make regular and meaningful checks on the progress of learners. The school should

further improve professional development opportunities for staff through links with local authority learning networks and building partnerships to further develop life and work experience opportunities for young people.

6. What happens next?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The Directors will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the Directors' arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the school.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and Directors.

- Continue to review and further develop the curriculum, particularly at the broad general education stage, in line with advice and best practice.
- Continue to improve the quality and consistency of learners' experiences through professional development for staff to further improve their understanding of the curriculum and assessment.
- Increase links with local authorities to join learning networks, build partnerships and further develop life and work experience opportunities for young people.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities/board of governors 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 school?*.

Here are the evaluations for Skypoint School.

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	very good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Dr Kate Hannah
3 May 2016

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/skypointschoolwestdunbartonshire.asp>.

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