



Hutchesons' Grammar School

Response to HMIe inspection published June 2006

Report on Main Points for Action

1 Improve the quality of the curriculum

An important action taken to improve the curriculum has been the appointment of a new Depute Rector from August 2006 who has the title 'Director of Curriculum'. His role is to oversee and manage future changes to the curriculum, and already great progress has been made.

Specific changes which have already been made include:

- A two week timetable for S5 introduced in August 2007, constructed around the norm of five Highers per pupil, with each subject receiving 270 minutes per week, an increase of 30 minutes. The full range of subjects and subject combinations are still available.
- Pupils who opt to sit six Highers in S5 are still be able to do so, by opting to take mathematics as a 'twilight' subject, in classes after school. This mirrors the popular and successful twilight classes offered in S3 and S4 in some Standard Grade subjects.
- The new S5 timetable also has the benefit of bringing PSE into the curriculum for the first time at S5, and allows the whole year group to have PE unlike the previous situation where around a third of the year group could not. S5 pupils also no longer have free study periods during the timetabled week.
- Introduction of GCE A level law as an S6 option.
- Appointment of a Primary modern languages specialist who has created a new language course for P5-7 based on context and transferable skills. The course which involves teaching elements of French, Spanish and German to all pupils replaces the previous one where all pupils learned French only.
- Better liaison between secondary heads of department and primary teachers in several other subject areas, notably art, maths, music and ICT.
- Creation of a Language liaison group to help co-ordinate approaches and content in the teaching of English in the Primary and Secondary schools. This has involved the introduction into P7 of new texts, the use of short stories, a debating and discussion unit, and the development of a new approach to Shakespeare involving secondary staff and pupils alongside P7 pupils and staff, plus the involvement of the art and music departments.
- First steps in establishing a Science Liaison group along similar lines.
- Improved integration of ICT in teaching, including a review of the Primary school ICT curriculum, plus details and timings of all elements of the S1 ICT curriculum shared with all other subject departments.
- Creation of an ICT Users Group to monitor use of ICT and share ideas.
- Review and revision of the Teaching and Learning Policy in the Secondary school.
- Introduction of an Independent Research Paper for S6, which encourages independent learning and helps pupils understand the transition in learning from school to university.
- Creation of The Journal, for publication of original academic work by pupils and staff.

Other areas of the curriculum currently under consideration are:

- A written rationale for the secondary curriculum, which helps to inform decisions about any particular proposed change.
- Possible change to the S1 and S2 modern language curriculum.

- Possible rotas in S1 and S2 science and humanities.
- Many staff are involved at various levels in the scrutiny of *A Curriculum for Excellence*, there has been whole staff INSET on it, and it has been discussed at Governor level as well. It is too early to say quite how the evolving Hutesons' curriculum will map on to the national model, but colleagues are broadly in agreement with the principles behind the scheme, and welcome the freedom given to individual schools to interpret it according to their own situation.

All of these initiatives show that the curriculum is being managed more effectively since the inspection, and the changes made have either already had a direct impact on teaching and learning, or will do so in the near future. There is much wider staff understanding of the curriculum and the process of change will continue.

2 Develop and implement more rigorous arrangements for self-evaluation and school improvement

There has been a dramatic transformation in the commitment to self-evaluation and its management, and these have contributed to many areas of school improvement.

Involvement of all stakeholders has been much increased by the introduction of:

- Weekly meetings of SMT, and of its sub-groups – academic, pastoral and primary school
- Weekly one to one meetings between Rector and each Depute Rector, the Bursar, the Development Director
- Weekly meetings between individual Depute Rectors
- Regular Year group tutor meetings and Form teacher meetings
- Monthly Head of Department meetings
- Termly Joint Consultative Committee Meetings between staff, Rector and Governors
- Termly Parents Association meetings with Rector and Bursar
- Termly Rector's Open meetings with parents

There is now better communication amongst all parts of the community, both from the aspect of gathering views of stakeholders, and of spreading information. One example of this are the new Information for Parents books for both Secondary and Primary which are reviewed and re-issued each year, but are also available online on the school website, within a section for parents which gives information on the calendar of events and school trips, and also contains the Pupil handbook. Pastoral teams are currently considering using pupil focus groups to monitor the implementation and effect of new initiatives.

One good example of this new inclusive approach has been the revision of the secondary school schedule of reports to parents, plus their content. This was a major co-operative exercise driven by ASMT, but also involving HoDs and through them all teaching staff. The new structure provides for two diets of full reports for each year group, carefully timed to articulate with parents' evenings, and with prelims and other internal exams. There is also an early diet of internal reports before half term in October which is designed to alert parents and pupils to problems. The full reports now include a grade A to E for attainment and a grade 1 to 5 for effort, and tracking of these grade will allow a degree of personal target setting at every level, as well as give a more coherent and explicit record of achievement through the years. Parental responses to the first year of this diet have been very positive. Analysis of reporting and estimate grade information has been fed back to SMT and departments. Greater use of MidYis is being explored to improve provision

for SfL, Gifted & Talented and personalised learning. Both the Rector and the Director of Curriculum continue to regularly sit in on lessons in both Secondary and Primary schools, and have follow-up discussions with the teacher. It is planned this year to introduce into our teacher PRD a compulsory swapped lesson observation outwith the subject teacher's department.

Following these changes School Improvement plan targets of increased attainment in S5 Higher results in summer 2007, both in terms of %A grade and % pass, were achieved, with figures of 59% and 94% respectively. 71 pupils (or 35% of the year group) achieved five or more A grades, the best result the school has ever achieved. The school aims to further improve these results next year.

Another example of change which increases self-evaluation for both pupils and teachers are the changes made to the pastoral system for S6. From August 2007 S6 pupils are organised into small tutorial groups of two to four, with a Tutor who is responsible for monitoring their progress and supporting them through the transition to university. Registration is done by the individual pupil, using a fingerprint recognition system at the entrances to the school. Tutor time is organised by each of the 40 teachers who volunteered to be S6 tutors, including many Heads of Department. Their role involves helping the pupil to complete their UCAS application, and compiling the school reference. There is a big emphasis on independent learning, with the extra incentive of an S6 research project (the IRP mentioned above), and self-evaluation by the pupil. It is hoped that this new approach to S6 will enrich the pupil experience, by encouraging them to be involved in more co-curricular activities, teaching them to manage their time, and that the changes will lead to better external exam results at the end of the year. It is already having the benefit for teachers of involving them much more closely with the development of individual pupils, and having exposure to a wider range of pastoral and academic issues than many of them have had before.

Whole school improvement is managed through a yearly improvement/development plan. For 2006-7 the structure of the plan was changed to mirror the structure of HGIOS 2, there was full consultation with staff and approval by governors. A version of the plan, plus a more detailed explanation document was put on the school website, as was an earlier (January 2007) version of this document which took the form of an action plan in response to the main points recommended by the HMIe inspection. The creation and use of the improvement plan is now a well-established part of management, and the document is referred to regularly at meetings throughout the year. In subject departments, a new sort of mentoring/link scheme with SMT is currently being investigated and discussed which will hopefully bring further benefits for pupils and staff. Many important policies have been reviewed since inspection, all are discussed with staff before being finalised, and all can be viewed in the sharepoint section of our network.

Throughout, the main emphasis remains on improving teaching and learning.

3 Improve the corporate effectiveness of staff with additional responsibilities

Much of the progress here has been in the intangible matter of team-building, and of clarifying roles and responsibilities. See previous section for a list of scheduled meetings between promoted staff. There is a very positive and co-operative atmosphere within SMT and much good work has been achieved since the inspection. In August 2007 an extra Depute Rector was appointed with responsibility for a wide range of whole-school issues concerning ethos and communication. Another sub-group of SMT has been created which deals with ethos and co-curricular activities (ESMT) and this consists of both promoted and unpromoted teaching staff and a member of the support staff.

- There will be a number of other changes to the SMT for next academic session, as a result of three retrials, and this gives an opportunity for further development of individual roles and responsibilities.
- The pastoral and academic senior management teams (PSMT and ASMT) are now functioning extremely well and producing proposals on all the key areas they have been investigating. Both teams have undergone their first rotation of Year Tutors and HoDs, thereby allowing more colleagues to participate.
- There have been regular HoDs meetings all year, with a variety of purposes, and after a long hiatus this group is beginning to function as a collective whole and be an important forum for discussion.
- The increase in Assistant Year Tutors to two per year group has allowed individuals to have specific job responsibilities, and resulted in better support for pupils. Having three staff at each level has also led to more of a team approach to the role, which has not only made staff more effective, but also helped them to develop new skills.
- There remains a small number of staff who have additional responsibilities but who are not part of senior management teams. The size and nature of the school makes such farming out of certain responsibilities inevitable, and indeed desirable. It is one way in which managerial roles can be spread out to involve and motivate more people.
- Clearly staff review and development has an important role to play here, and a recent revision of our 'professional review and development' processes and paperwork has certainly helped this.
- Increasing use of our internet sharepoint environment, particularly by staff with pastoral responsibilities, is helping to link staff together in a positive way and make them more effective in their roles. All staff can now log on to these sites from home if they wish.

4 Improve learning support in the secondary school

An important action has been the promotion of Jean Matthews, Learning Support co-ordinator at the time of the inspection, to the post of Head of Learning Support from January 2007. Much progress has been achieved in recent months, both in terms of the clarification of what Learning Support means within the school and how it should develop, and in the communication of information about pupils with specific learning difficulties. There has also been more information about specific learning difficulties available to teaching staff, and more co-operation and consultation with primary school staff, whose work in this area was praised in the inspection report. Jean Matthews and another colleague from the primary are currently taking the diploma course in Special Needs at Jordanhill, in order to improve their professional knowledge in this field.

Specific changes which have already been made include:

- Co-ordination of meetings and sharing of information between Secondary and Primary school Learning Support staff.
- Further review and revision of Learning Support policy document.

- Targeted CPD for teaching staff
- Proactive co-ordination of meetings with parents and relevant teachers.
- Regular communication with teachers over information about individual pupils, and about specific learning difficulties and classroom strategies for dealing with them.
- Developing use of intranet sharepoint site to manage pupil needs and share information.
- Review of the school's policy on accessibility includes material directly linked to learning support.
- Regular meetings between Head of Learning Support and Director of Curriculum.
- Head of Learning Support visiting departmental meetings.

Learning Support provision is now almost unrecognisable from the position during inspection, and will continue to improve as more staff training is implemented. The number of pupils in the secondary school who are on our Learning Support list has increased slightly since inspection, possibly as increased staff knowledge has led to more referrals. Of the 77 pupils on our current list (7% of 1095 pupils), 35 (3% of 1095 pupils) have diagnosed and named conditions. In the current year 20 pupils will require special arrangements in external exams.

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