

9 June 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Hutchesons' Grammar School, Glasgow**

HM Inspectors recently visited **Hutchesons' Grammar School**. The visit was part of our quality improvement and professional engagement visits with independent schools which complement the general programme of inspections. The approach allows us to maintain our knowledge of schools in the independent sector throughout Scotland, and provides assurance to parents on the school's capacity for evaluating its own work and making improvements which have a direct impact on the quality of experiences for its young people. Our visit was based on the school's self-evaluation and priorities identified for school improvement. During our visit inspectors talked to staff, children and young people and worked together with the Rector and senior staff about the planned developments to ensure outcomes for children and young people continue to improve.

#### **How well does the school ensure outcomes for children / young people continue to improve?**

There is strong leadership of change and improvement at Hutchesons' Grammar School with a clear focus on helping children and young people to achieve highly. Key to this is how the Rector and his staff use self-evaluation to take forward and deliver on projects in the school improvement plan. The Depute Rectors at the primary stages have worked particularly well with their staff to develop some very strong practice, for example in the teaching of literacy and English. Across the school there is a rigorous system for reviewing children's and young people's attainment in key assessments at the primary stages and in national qualifications at the secondary stages. From this, clear expectations are set for staff in how they should support children and young people to achieve highly. Staff are reflective and put to good effect professional learning opportunities to help them to continue to improve the school. They are well-placed to be more involved in setting whole-school priorities. Senior leaders should continue to increase their range of approaches to self-evaluation. At the secondary stages, this needs to include observing lessons to help achieve consistency in learners' experiences. Almost all parents told us that they are happy with the school and the way that it is led. We have asked the school to now be more proactive in seeking parents' views and in sharing with them how staff are acting on these views.

In the lessons we observed as part of our visit, almost all children and young people were benefitting from high-quality learning at both the primary and secondary stages. Children and young people are attentive, very motivated and eager to learn. Their relationships with teachers are respectful. Children and young people show a high

level of responsibility in group tasks and practical work. In discussions, they debate each other's ideas to extend their thinking. We have advised staff that they need to continue to strive to make this high standard of learning a consistent feature for all at Hutchesons' Grammar School. Children's and young people's knowledge and skills are developed further by an extensive range of activities outwith the class, for which staff have responsibility for leading. Some activities lead to national awards such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Staff at the primary stages have designed an innovative programme, the 'Mini and Junior Duke' for those in P2-P7. In this, children engage in very interesting challenges that develop a wide range of skills. These are recognised with six levels of awards which are celebrated at assemblies. A next step across the school would be for staff to help children and young people focus more on the specific skills for learning, life and work that they develop as a result of taking part in opportunities for achievement. In some cases, this needs to focus on helping young people to build further their confidence.

Staff have been successfully improving the curriculum to ensure very high attainment. At the primary stages there has been an emphasis on literacy and language. As a result, we noted that children's writing is of a very high standard. In a few cases, it is exceptional. We were also impressed by the 'Talk Homework' which encourages children to talk to their parents to form ideas which they then use when composing pieces of writing at school. At the secondary stages, staff have been successfully planning new courses and qualifications. They have met the school's target to help most young people in S5 achieve Highers at A-grade across subjects. Staff have been improving the quality of careers advice that young people receive. The school demonstrates strong performance in ensuring positive destinations for young people on leaving the school such as to university, college or employment.

During our visit we also discussed with the school their procedures to ensure that children and young people are well-cared for and safe. We agreed with senior managers that a small number of staff would benefit from immediate training in safeguarding and that such training should be more regular. The school has agreed to ensure that all staff are confident with their policy and procedures for safeguarding.

### **What happens next?**

We are confident the school has the necessary arrangements and procedures in place to ensure continued improvement in the quality of education provided. The school and Board of Governors will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the progress of the school. During the visit, we identified an aspect of innovative practice which we would like to explore further. We shall work with the school and Board of Governors to record the innovative practice and share it more widely.

**Joan C. Esson**  
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

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

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: [complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.