

**Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba**

Learning community inspection



A report by Education Scotland

**Inspection of the learning community
surrounding Lenzie Academy
East Dunbartonshire Council
13 December 2011**

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.educationscotland.gov.uk.

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1. The learning community

The learning community surrounding Lenzie Academy comprises Lenzie (North and South) and Kirkintilloch (South and West). The total population is around 15,849 accounting for 15% of the total population in East Dunbartonshire. There is a rising older population, a falling work population and a rise in the child population in some areas. Kirkintilloch has higher levels of disability living allowance, smoking, alcohol abuse and emergency admissions for over 65s, some vandalism, minor assaults and drug offences.

2. Particular strengths of the learning community

- Strong vibrant community groups, individuals and a culture of volunteering embedded in the community.
- Commitment to inclusion and promoting learner and community voice in decision making.
- Very effective partnership working including a strong voluntary sector.
- Extensive range of high quality learning programmes.
- East Dunbartonshire Higher and Further Education Campus.
- Life changing outcomes for young people and adults involved in learning activities.

3. How well do participants learn and achieve?

Young people and adults have access to an extensive range of learning opportunities in the learning community. Community learning and development (CLD) staff and partners work very effectively with vulnerable learners. Young people and adults experience very successful learning programmes that make a difference and provide them with skills for life and future learning. Almost all learners progress to further learning and employment. There has been significant growth in the number of young people reaching positive and sustained destinations through the development of well-targeted programmes including Positive Alternatives. Attendance by learners in learning provision and community organisations is very high, with very active and motivated participants. CLD staff now record performance information and compare their performance against the strategic objectives of the Council. They set performance targets and many of these have been achieved and exceeded. Staff increasingly use performance information to identify both strengths and areas for improvement. CLD staff need to further develop identification and analysis of trends and share this information

with partner agencies to assist planning, particularly with local schools. Further development in monitoring and tracking learners' progress with partners would also support information gathering on learner achievements and destinations.

Young people

High numbers of young people participate in a very good range of high quality programmes and activities. More vulnerable young people increase their confidence and develop skills for life, learning and work through well-targeted provision. The Prince's Trust college programme helps young people re-engage in learning and supports their health and wellbeing very effectively. In almost all activities, young people are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and develop leadership skills as a result. The health drop-in *Ourspace* enables young people to take responsibility for seeking the views of other young people, programme development and develop skills in peer mentoring. Many young people act as volunteers and make a highly effective contribution to their community. The Volunteer Centre is rolling out the *Volunteer Champions* programme to create increased opportunities for volunteering. The Youth Senate provides opportunities for its senators to actively represent the views of young people and influence decision making including the Council's grant advisory committee. Young people's achievements are recognised and celebrated effectively through a range of accreditation opportunities including The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, youth achievement awards and a variety of awards for volunteers. These could be further developed for children of primary age. Young people feel valued and respected as a result of very positive relationships with staff and volunteers. Further development in the use of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and partnership planning in relation to a broad general education and senior phase is now needed.

Adults

Adults benefit from an excellent range of well-planned and appropriately targeted activities. Effective Essential Skills provision is improving the life skills and the quality of life of many learners. All learners are meeting their learning goals and learning new skills. As a result, learner satisfaction rates are high. Very good use is being made of accreditation. Learners now feel more confident, less isolated and more able to cope with life in modern society. East Dunbartonshire Campus for Further and Higher Education provides a highly effective learning hub where partners are working well together to meet the needs of all learners. Good peer support further enhances the very good learning environment for learners. Staff are confident in their ability and make good use of self-evaluation to improve outcomes for learners. Learning opportunities targeted at the most vulnerable adults are very effective, with learners becoming more confident and more able to communicate and participate in further learning and in their communities. Vulnerable learners are experiencing life changes as a result of putting their learning into practice. For example, they have progressed from Information and Communications Technology (ICT) learning into developing self help for other learners. As a result of parenting support programmes, parents feel more able to manage their children's behaviour and support their school learning. They are enjoying more stable family lives and have significantly raised their expectations

and aspirations. Good links with local employers ensure that learners have the opportunity to progress into employment. Some ICT learners progress into college courses. The East Dunbartonshire Food Co-operatives are developing good volunteer support programmes, volunteering opportunities and providing a valuable community service in healthy eating and healthy cooking on a budget.

4. How well are communities developing and achieving?

The community is vibrant with high numbers of volunteers who have a depth of skills, experiences and knowledge. Volunteers are delivering services effectively. They enable local people, including those facing additional challenges, to be less isolated, access services and achieve positive outcomes. Local people, including adults with disabilities and young people, are active in the large number of community groups in the area and are gaining confidence, skills and self-esteem. Most volunteer lead groups are working well both with each other and with agencies to develop local services in response to identified needs. They are effectively supported by partner organisations including the local authority, the Volunteer Centre and Community and Voluntary Service. The Grant Advisory Committee and the Sports Council provide good opportunities for networking and involving local groups in decision making. There is a strong commitment to include community members in service planning. Community groups are respected, included and influential on local partnership structures, improving services' capacity to target resources. Some voluntary organisations and community groups are taking action to increase awareness and knowledge of issues in the wider community. Successful action is being taken to support more young people to participate fully in local groups and decision making. Young volunteers have increased capacity to contribute to society. Some youth-focused community groups have identified the potential for developing more practice sharing and coordination. The achievements of volunteer lead groups are celebrated and widely valued. Further steps to recognise and celebrate the achievements and contributions of adult volunteers would help them feel more valued.

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

CLD staff make very effective and innovative use of a variety of methods, such as social media to report to stakeholders. All CLD staff now use a common approach to very effectively evaluate their practice, including observation of sessions. Staff development of the Project Planning and Evaluation management information and evaluation system has allowed them to significantly improve their approaches to self-evaluation and reporting. As a result, professional dialogue between staff about learning and its impacts has improved. CLD staff now make very effective use of focus groups with learners to gain insights and make improvements. Staff use well-targeted training and professional development to improve their practice. Staff now need to develop further joint self-evaluation with partners, including schools. This would significantly support planning and development of learning in the Lenzie community.

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

CLD partners demonstrate a strong commitment to continuing to work together to provide high quality services. Very good account is taken of the views of young people, adults and community groups in service improvement. Planning is highly effective and well-aligned to local and national priorities. Highly effective strategic leadership has been sustained through a significant period of change. Partners are in a strong position to continue to develop a shared vision and priorities through locality planning.

7. What happens next?

The inspection team was able to rely on the high quality self-evaluation provided by the learning community. 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 local authority and its partners.

- Further use of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and development of broad general education and senior phase planning with schools and other partners.
- Continue to develop approaches to tracking and monitoring learner progress and achievements with partners.
- Development of joint planning and self-evaluation with schools and partners.

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

Education Scotland evaluates five important quality indicators to help monitor the quality of learning communities across Scotland. Here are the results for the learning community surrounding Lenzie Academy.

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Improvements in performance | very good |
| Impact on young people | very good |
| Impact on adults | excellent |
| Impact of capacity building on communities | very good |
| Improving services | very good |

Managing Inspector: Anne Gibson
13 December 2011

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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