



Education  
Scotland  
Foghlam Alba



**Dunedin School  
Edinburgh  
15 December 2015**

Education Scotland inspect schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup> and young people know whether their school<sup>2</sup> 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 nominated teaching 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](http://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.

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

## **Contents**

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?
4. How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?
5. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?
6. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

Dunedin School is an independent, non-denominational school which is located in Edinburgh. It provides education for young people aged 12 to 18 with a range of additional support needs including autism spectrum disorders and mental health needs. The roll was 20 when the inspection was carried out in October 2015. One young person had a co-ordinated support plan. The school operates a 'flat management' structure where all teaching staff take collective responsibility for leading and managing the school.

## **2. Key strengths of the school**

- Positive, nurturing relationships across the school.
- Young people's attainment and achievement in the senior phase.
- Staff's approaches to helping young people to re-engage successfully with their education.
- The range of qualifications at the senior phase.

## **3. How well do young people learn and achieve?**

Across the school, most young people are happy, settled and enjoy positive, nurturing relationships with staff and each other. This helps young people to feel safe and secure, overcome any anxieties and seek support when they need it. In almost all classes, young people are motivated and keen to learn. They respond well to the high expectations placed upon them in terms of participation, engagement and progress with their learning. In most lessons, staff share with young people what they want them to learn and give helpful feedback on their progress. Young people are taking increasing responsibility for their learning but would benefit from more opportunities to work collaboratively with each other and to choose what they are going to learn next. This would help young people to build skills in leadership, resilience and communication.

Young people are achieving very well through a range of sporting, practical and vocational opportunities. They participate in a wide range of physical activities including football, badminton and swimming. Through well-established links with local businesses and colleges, senior pupils have opportunities to broaden their learning through a variety of flexible work experience and college placements. In recent times, young people have engaged successfully on placements including photography, childcare, agriculture and residential care. Young people contribute to aspects of school improvement through questionnaires, review meetings, and in

discussion with their tutors. Staff should continue to identify and develop ways to enable all young people to be more involved in improving the school, including the re-introduction of a pupil council.

Over the past three years, young people attending Dunedin School left school with a very good range of National Qualifications and units. A few young people have achieved an outstanding range of qualifications, including very good passes at Higher level, leading to places at university. Young people are now achieving in a wider range of courses including National Qualifications in hospitality, human biology, Scottish studies, and personal achievement awards. Most young people are making appropriate progress in mathematics. They are developing their knowledge and skills in shapes, pattern and symmetry, scale, angles and money. Young people are improving their skills in reading, writing, listening and talking. At all stages, they have good opportunities to read for personal enjoyment and have access to a well-stocked school library. Overall, young people are making very good progress with their health and wellbeing. They spoke knowledgeably about substance misuse, keeping themselves safe, and the specific skills required to develop and sustain friendships.

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

The school supports young people to develop and learn well. Staff provide a very welcoming, caring environment for young people. The school has successfully supported a number of young people who have well-established patterns of non-attendance to re-engage with their learning. Most young people and their families speak highly of the pastoral support they receive from staff at Dunedin School. Most teachers plan tasks and activities well to meet the needs of all learners. In some classes, the pace of learning is too slow and tasks are not sufficiently challenging. Staff work closely with a range of partner agencies to help identify and meet the needs of young people. Most young people are making good progress with their targets in

literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Although they are given the opportunity to contribute towards developing personal learning plans, some young people are unaware of their individual learning targets. Staff should continue to develop creative ways to ensure all young people are actively involved in setting and reviewing personalised targets.

The school has set out its vision to provide a curriculum which enables young people to progress with their learning and gain achievements. In recent times, staff have developed an extensive range of learning activities at the senior phase. Where they are unable to offer subjects within the school, staff successfully use their links with local secondary schools and community partners to allow young people to access courses elsewhere. As a result, young people are able to gain qualifications in most curriculum areas. Staff now need to focus on developing coherent and progressive programmes within the broad general education. The school has effective planning in place to support young people at crucial transition points. Young people would benefit from more opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work to support them when they move on from Dunedin School.

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

The school has a strong commitment to continuously improving the quality of its work. There is evidence of mutual support and teamwork amongst teaching staff. This has led to all staff having additional responsibility in taking forward school priorities. The school has well developed systems in place to help staff measure the quality of the school's work and identify any areas for improvement. Parents, children and partners are given a few opportunities to contribute to this process but it is not clear how their views influence school improvement. Staff need to improve the approaches they have in place to monitor and evaluate whether the school is successfully improving its work. The school would benefit from nominated staff taking on additional responsibility for providing a clear direction to self-evaluation activities. Teachers welcome feedback on their

performance from colleagues and access a range of training opportunities which are well linked to improving learning and teaching. The school now needs to develop formal processes to monitor the quality of learning and teaching across the school and provide sufficient support and challenge to teaching staff.

## **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 Board of Governors will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the Board of Governor's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the school.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and Board of Governors.

- Continue to develop the curriculum to ensure progression within the broad general education.
- Establish a clearer direction to whole school improvement including more robust approaches for self-evaluation.

Quality indicators help schools, 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 Dunedin School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

**HM Inspector:** Steven McPherson  
15 December 2015



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/DunedinSchoolEdinburghCity.asp>.

If you would like to receive this report 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 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: [enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk) or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.