

**Lornhill Academy
Alloa
Clackmannanshire Council
28 August 2007**

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1. Background

Lornhill Academy was inspected in April 2007 as part of a national sample of secondary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the school's work at all stages.

HM Inspectors evaluated how well the school was raising achievement for all pupils, taking into account the extent to which pupils' learning needs were met by the curriculum and teaching. They also analysed pupils' attainment in national examinations (see Appendix 3), the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its overall effectiveness and capacity for improvement. Inspectors focused particularly on English, mathematics, computing, and modern languages. The inspection team also evaluated aspects of the school's progress in implementing national recommendations related to improving aspects of school meals provision.

HM Inspectors observed teaching, learning and achievement in lessons and other contexts and examined pupils' work. They analysed responses to questionnaires¹ issued to a sample of parents² and pupils and to all staff. They interviewed groups of pupils, including members of the student council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chair of the School Board and representatives of the parent-staff association.

Lornhill Academy is a non-denominational school serving Sauchie, Tullibody and Clackmannan and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 1025. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was below the national average but had improved recently.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The commitment of staff to improving learning and teaching.
- The quality of learning and teaching in English and in some other subjects.
- The opportunities for pupils to achieve in a broad range of areas.
- Partnership with parents and the community.

3. How well does the school raise achievement for all?

To evaluate how well the school was raising achievement for all, HM Inspectors considered the extent to which the learning needs of all pupils were met through the curriculum and teaching. They evaluated the effectiveness of the school in promoting the learning and

¹ See Appendix 2

² Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

personal development of all pupils in lessons and in other, broader contexts. They also considered the standards attained in specific aspects of learning.

Curriculum

The school provided an adequate curriculum and was taking steps to improve it. Staff had recently introduced significant changes to the structure of the curriculum at S1 and S2 with the aim of improving coherence at S1, and pace and challenge at S2. The school had taken appropriate steps in consulting staff, parents and pupils on these changes. Particular features of the curriculum included the following.

- In S1, the successful introduction of philosophy had provided opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking and discussion skills.
- An information and communications technology (ICT) course in S1 helped pupils develop skills to support their learning in other curriculum areas.
- Pupils had no opportunity to study home economics in S1.
- The school had introduced Standard Grade and other National Qualification (NQ) courses in English, mathematics and social subjects at S2. It was not yet clear whether all pupils would be presented for national examinations at the end of S3 or what programmes they would follow in S4.
- A significant number of pupils in S3/S4 followed Skills for Work and other vocational courses at Forth Valley College. The majority progressed to full-time college courses. However, there were fewer vocational courses available for pupils in S5.
- The number of pupils choosing to take a modern language at S3/S4 was too low.
- In S1 to S4, the timetable arrangements for core physical education (PE) met national recommendations. The wide range of sporting activities included swimming, snorkelling, dance, football, rugby, hockey, basketball, and training in sports leadership.
- A small number of pupils with behavioural difficulties had a school week shorter than other pupils.
- At S5/S6, the school offered a good range of courses at Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher levels.
- Approximately one third of S5/S6 pupils were following ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) courses.
- The S5/S6 core curriculum did not include PE, personal and social education (PSE) or religious and moral education (RME).
- S6 pupils benefited from a course in psychology, taught by a visiting lecturer from Forth Valley College.

Teaching and meeting pupils' needs

Overall, the quality of teaching was adequate. Almost all teachers gave clear instructions and explanations. Through a number of helpful initiatives, the school was seeking to improve the overall quality of teaching. As a result, the majority of teachers were adopting a number of effective approaches. They made clear at the start of lessons what pupils would learn. They asked questions which required pupils to give extended answers and think about their learning. Several also provided opportunities for pupils to collaborate in groups. These practices were not yet regularly or consistently in place across the school. Overall, teachers did not make sufficient use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.

A few teachers organised lessons effectively to provide suitable support and challenge for all pupils. Pupils also had additional assistance through study support at lunch times and after school. Overall, however, there were important weaknesses in the school's approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs. Across the school, and particularly at S1/S2, teachers did not take enough account of pupils' differing learning needs. They did not ensure that all pupils could build effectively on prior learning and make suitable progress. From S3, pupils set targets for their achievements in national examinations. However, they did not receive enough guidance on how to work towards these targets. Supervisory assistants gave effective support to individual pupils. However, they were not always suitably deployed in classes. There was scope for them to provide support for a wider range of pupils in classes. The principal teacher of learning support had designed individualised educational programmes (IEPs) for pupils with additional learning needs. Pupils' targets in these programmes were not used effectively to promote further learning. The principal teacher for emotional and behaviour support provided effective support to individual pupils. However, she had not set formal long or short term behaviour targets for these pupils, to help them make suitable progress. The appointment of a temporary member of staff had recently improved the planning and monitoring of learning for pupils within the support base. Across the school, staff were not sufficiently aware of recent legislation and how it affected their roles and responsibilities in meeting the learning needs of all pupils.

Learning and personal development

The quality of pupils' learning was adequate. Most pupils worked well in classes and were keen to learn. They collaborated effectively in pairs and in groups when given the opportunity to do so. Where teachers were introducing new teaching and learning initiatives effectively, pupils benefited from opportunities to think for themselves. They also gained from solving problems together and evaluating their own and each other's performance and progress. In a minority of lessons across the school, the pace of learning was too slow. Overall, pupils were too passive in their learning and did not have enough opportunities to work with each other. They did not often know what they needed to do to improve.

The school made good provision for pupils' personal and social development. Most pupils were developing as confident individuals and responsible citizens. The PSE programme covered an appropriate range of topics and was enhanced by contributions from a range of visiting speakers. However, pupils' learning experiences within PSE were inconsistent. Staff who had volunteered to deliver PSE had not received enough support to enable them to provide consistently high quality learning experiences for their pupils. Senior pupils had good opportunities to develop leadership skills, for example by acting as prefects and supporting younger pupils with paired reading. Across the school, pupils took part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities which developed their social skills. The student council

provided good opportunities for pupils to discuss aspects of school life such as the quality of school meals. S2 to S6 pupils gained an appreciation of the visual arts through working with an artist to design a sculpture for a local roundabout. A visiting teacher of dance provided a significant number of pupils with opportunities to develop their fitness, agility and confidence. Pupils participated in a range of fundraising events which effectively developed their awareness of global citizenship and aspects of responsibility.

English

Recent improvements to teaching approaches had made a positive impact on the quality of pupils' experiences and had begun to raise their attainment. Teachers ensured pupils had regular opportunities to be actively involved in their learning and to think independently. They shared the aims of lessons well and engaged pupils regularly in evaluating their own and each other's work. Teachers met pupils' needs effectively through well-planned and resourced activities. Pupils collaborated very well and were highly motivated.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was very good and meeting needs was good. The overall quality of attainment was weak. Particular features included the following.

- By the end of S2, the majority of pupils had attained appropriate national levels in reading, listening and talking. Attainment in writing had improved in 2006, when the majority attained national levels.
- By the end of S4, pupils performed notably less well in Standard Grade English than in their other subjects. Performance at all levels was consistently well below the national average.
- At S5/S6, the proportion of A-C Higher grades had improved from below to in line with the national average.
- At Advanced Higher, the majority attained A-C grades.

Mathematics

Teachers gave clear explanations, made good use of questioning to develop understanding and used praise effectively. In some classes, teachers did not share or review what was to be learned with pupils. Teachers issued regular homework in most classes and often used it to identify next steps in learning. They were making increasing use of ICT to enhance lessons. Pupils responded well to a number of motivating and challenging problem-solving activities.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The quality of meeting pupils' needs was adequate. The overall quality of attainment was weak. Particular features included the following.

- In S1/S2 the majority of pupils were attaining appropriate national levels and around a quarter achieved above these levels. More than one third of S2 pupils attained an Intermediate 1 award.
- By the end of S4, the proportion of pupils attaining grades 1-2 and 1-4 at Standard Grade were below the national average.

- At S5/S6, the proportion of pupils attaining A-C grades at Higher was below the national average. At Intermediate 2, the proportion attaining A-C grades had improved from below to above the national average.
- Slightly under half of pupils presented for Advanced Higher gained A-C grades.

Computing

Teachers explained new work clearly, often using a digital projector to enhance their explanations. They shared the content of lessons but did not always summarise learning at the end of lessons. Teachers checked pupils' recall of knowledge through questioning. They regularly set homework and on occasion adjusted it well to suit individual needs. In S1, tasks did not consistently meet the wide range of learning needs. The courses at S5/S6 met most pupils' needs. In most classes pupils were well behaved. Often they were passive and were not sufficiently challenged.

Overall, the quality of teaching and meeting pupils' needs was adequate. The quality of learning and of attainment was weak. Particular features included the following.

- At S1/S2, pupils were developing a wide range of ICT skills.
- At S3/S4, the proportions of pupils gaining grades 1-2 and 1-4 at Standard Grade were consistently well below the national average and very few attained grade 1.
- At S5/S6, the majority of pupils attained A-C grades at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher.
- Most of the small number of pupils entered for Advanced Higher gained an A-C grade.

Modern languages

Teachers gave clear explanations and had positive relationships with their pupils. They varied their approaches in some lessons by providing opportunities for pupils to work in pairs. Overall, however, lessons were too teacher-led and did not allow pupils to be sufficiently active and independent in their learning. In S1/S2, they did not take enough account of pupils' varying learning needs. Teachers prepared pupils well for Standard Grade and Higher examinations. Study visits to Brittany and Alsace had developed a significant number of pupils' language skills and their knowledge of European culture.

Overall, the quality of teaching, pupils' learning experiences and the extent to which pupils' needs were met was adequate. The overall quality of attainment was adequate. Particular features included the following.

- Pupils in S1/S2 were not achieving the levels of confidence and skill of which they were capable.
- In S3/S4, pupils performed notably better in Standard Grade French than in their other subjects.

- In S5/S6, almost all of the small number of pupils presented for Intermediate 2, Higher or Advanced Higher French over the last three years had gained success.

Attainment

Information about the subjects inspected has been given earlier in the report. Across the school, particular features of pupils' progress, results in examinations and other qualifications, including those awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)³ for the three year period 2004-2006, are included below.

By the end of S2, attainment was weak. Particular features included the following.

- In mathematics, listening, talking and reading, the majority of pupils were attaining national levels. Attainment in writing had improved in 2006, when the majority attained national levels. Overall, the school was not meeting pupils' learning needs well in the majority of subjects.

By the end of S4, attainment was weak. Particular features included the following.

- By the end of S4, the proportions of pupils gaining five or more SCQF awards at levels 3, 4 and 5 were below the national average. Boys performed less well than girls at each level. The school's results at each of these levels were not as good as similar schools. There were signs of improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more awards at level 3.
- Pupils performed better in administration, business management and modern studies but not as well in craft and design and graphical communication in comparison with their other subjects.
- Pupils attending college courses had variable success and overall gained few unit awards in 2006.

By the end of S5 and by the end of S6 attainment was weak. Particular features included the following.

- By the end of S5, the proportions of pupils gaining one or more, three or more or five or more awards at SCQF level 6 were below the national average. These results were not as good as similar schools.
- The majority of pupils at S5 presented for NQ awards at Higher and Intermediate 2 gained A-C grades and approximately one quarter did not attain any awards at these levels. Fewer than half of those entered at Intermediate 1 gained A-C grades.

³ Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C

6: Higher at A-C

5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2

4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4

3: Access 3 cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

- By the end of S6, the proportions of pupils attaining one or more, three or more or five or more awards at SCQF level 6 were well below the national average. These results were not as good as similar schools.
- In 2006, 12 S6 pupils attained ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness awards at level 3 and 36 gained an ASDAN Community Involvement Award.
- The proportion of pupils gaining one or more awards at SCQF level 7 was below the national average. This performance was notably weaker than similar schools.
- Pupils performed better in Intermediate 2 biology and chemistry but not as well in Higher modern studies and technological studies than in their other subjects.

4. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	Staff showed care and concern for pupils. Pupil support and additional support needs staff knew individual pupils very well. They were approachable and alert to pupils' emotional, physical and social needs. Pupils were confident that staff would deal with any concerns that they raised. Pupils were very positive about the support they had received from both school staff and other agencies. The school had sound procedures to prevent bullying and had developed a helpful anti-bullying leaflet for pupils. Some key staff required training in child protection procedures. The attendance officer provided effective support across the school. The school did not have accurate data on attendance. The school had very good pastoral arrangements to assist the transition of all pupils from associated primary schools. The school promoted a healthy lifestyle and school lunches had improved with the provision of a wider range of healthier options, although many pupils chose to use catering vans outside the school premises. Pupils who attended the smoking cessation classes spoke very positively about them.

Aspect	Comment
<p>Quality of accommodation and facilities</p>	<p>Overall the quality of accommodation and facilities was weak. The swimming pool and sports facilities were of good quality. Important weaknesses included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor security arrangements; • insufficient disabled access to most teaching areas; • unattractive learning environments; and • worn fixtures and fittings, including graffiti on furniture. <p>The education authority had started to build a new school on a neighbouring site.</p>
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality</p>	<p>Pupils were proud to belong to the school and most wore school uniform. Most behaved well. Almost all staff and pupils were friendly and courteous to visitors. Staff-pupil relationships were positive. However, communication and teamwork amongst staff were not always effective. The school had good arrangements for celebrating pupils' academic and wider achievements. Most pupils did not have high enough aspirations for their own achievement. Teachers did not use praise effectively enough to motivate pupils and raise their aspirations. Staff did not use the school's policy on positive behaviour consistently and pupils felt this was unfair. The school was following the local authority policy on racial discrimination but staff had not yet received training. Cultural diversity was celebrated effectively within the programme for dance. Although a number of subjects were contributing to pupils' understanding of race, gender and disability issues, aspects of equality and fairness were not being promoted sufficiently throughout the school. Religious observance was delivered appropriately through the house system and whole school events.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	The school had very good partnerships with parents and the wider community. Parents expressed positive views about the school. They regularly received news about the school through its newsletter and from articles in the local press. Staff responded effectively when parents raised matters which concerned them. The school had a supportive School Board and parent-staff association. They provided helpful local meetings for the three principal communities served by the school. The school had developed effective pastoral links with primary schools. Good relationships had been established with Careers Central, Forth Valley Health Board and other agencies. Local chaplains linked regularly with separate houses.

5. Leading and improving the school

Overall, the school was not yet raising attainment sufficiently for all pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils were positive and pupils were generally well behaved. The quality of teaching and meeting needs were not of a consistently high quality across the school. Attainment was weak at each stage. The school had started to improve the curriculum and teaching to address these shortcomings. The new teaching practices had not been consistently adopted across the school. There were some early signs of improvement in learning and teaching, and in pupils' attainment.

The school's corporate leadership had important weaknesses, with too little impact on the quality of pupils' attainment. The headteacher's contribution had important strengths and these were beginning to impact on improving the work of the school. He had good relationships with parents and pupils and his consultative approach had won the support of most staff. He sought to improve the quality of learning and teaching and the rigour of the school's approach to self-evaluation. However, progress had been inconsistent and there remained important weaknesses in meeting pupils' learning needs. Each of the deputy headteachers made effective individual contributions to the school. However, teamwork in the relatively new senior management team required further development. A minority of the faculty heads provided a strong lead for teachers in their departments. Principal teachers of learning support, behaviour support and pastoral care did not provide effective leadership and support for class teachers.

Self-evaluation was adequate. Approaches were not yet having sufficient impact on improving learning and raising pupils' attainment. Senior managers analysed departmental performance in SQA examinations and discussed this with faculty heads. They also evaluated lessons and were having a positive impact by helping teachers of most subjects to reflect on their own practice. However, the school needed to have a more focussed approach to evaluating PSE lessons and the work of additional support needs staff. Department improvement plans took account of senior managers' evaluations but as yet there had been little improvement in attainment across the school. Stakeholder surveys had been carried out and together with the other evaluation processes they helped to inform the school improvement plan and provide evidence for the standards and quality report.

The school was improving and had the capacity for further improvement. Teachers showed a commitment to improving the quality of learning and teaching. Senior managers should ensure that there is a consistent and continuing emphasis placed upon improving the quality of pupils' learning experiences and their attainment.

As well as building on the strengths and addressing the issues raised throughout this report to raise pupils' achievement, the school and the education authority should address the following main points for action.

Main points for action

- Make learning and teaching and meeting pupils' learning needs more consistently effective.
- Improve attainment for all pupils at each stage.
- Implement training in child protection and racial equality for all staff.
- Improve leadership of learning at all levels in the school.

What happens next?

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents and carers. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress, and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in a report to parents and carers, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

Terry Carr
HM Inspector

28 August 2007

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The following quality indicators have been used in the inspection process to contribute to the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the school in promoting learning and achievement for all pupils.

Section 3. How well does the school raise achievement for all?	
Structure of the curriculum	adequate
The teaching process	adequate
Meeting pupils' needs	weak
Pupils' learning experiences	adequate
Personal and social development	good
Overall quality of attainment: S1/S2	weak
Overall quality of attainment: S3/S4	weak
Overall quality of attainment: S5/S6	weak

Section 4. How good is the environment for learning?	
Pastoral care	adequate
Accommodation and facilities	weak
Climate and relationships	good
Expectations and promoting achievement	adequate
Equality and fairness	weak
Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community	very good

Section 5. Leading and improving the school	
Leadership of the headteacher	good
Leadership across the school	weak
Self-evaluation	adequate

This report uses the following word scale to make clear the judgements made by inspectors:

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

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

The following provides a summary of questionnaire responses. Key issues from the questionnaires have been considered in the inspection and comments are included as appropriate throughout the report.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<p>Almost all parents felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school was well led; parents' evenings were helpful and informative; staff made them feel welcome and showed concern for the care and welfare of their child; and the school would respond to matters of concern raised by them. 	<p>A minority of parents thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school buildings were kept in good order; and they had a clear idea of the school's priorities for improving the education of pupils.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<p>Almost all pupils thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers expected them to work to the best of their ability; they got on well with other pupils; at least one teacher knew them well; and the school helped them to keep themselves safe and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of pupils thought that the behaviour of other pupils was not good. A significant minority thought that not all pupils were treated fairly.

What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff thought that they showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils. <p>Almost all teachers felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they set high standards for pupils' attainment; and • they worked hard for good relations with the local community. <p>Almost all ancillary staff and most teachers felt that the school was well led.</p>	<p>The majority of teachers thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils were not enthusiastic about learning; and • standards set for pupils' behaviour were not consistently upheld in the school. <p>A significant minority of staff thought that there was not effective communication amongst staff.</p>

Appendix 3 Attainment in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Qualifications

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C

6: Higher at A-C

5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2

4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4

3: Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

Percentage of relevant S4 roll attaining by end of S4

		2004	2005	2006
English and Mathematics @ Level 3	Lornhill Academy	86	88	87
	Comparator schools ⁴	90	89	89
	National	91	90	91
5+ @ Level 3 or Better	Lornhill Academy	82	83	89
	Comparator schools	89	91	89
	National	91	90	91
5+ @ Level 4 or Better	Lornhill Academy	67	66	65
	Comparator schools	72	72	74
	National	77	76	77
5+ @ Level 5 or Better	Lornhill Academy	20	26	23
	Comparator schools	26	29	27
	National	35	34	35

Percentage of relevant S4 roll attaining by end of S5

		2004	2005	2006
5+ @ Level 4 or better	Lornhill Academy	71	70	68
	Comparator schools ⁴	73	74	76
	National	78	78	78
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Lornhill Academy	31	32	37
	Comparator schools	35	36	39
	National	45	45	45
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Lornhill Academy	28	22	33
	Comparator schools	31	32	31
	National	39	39	38
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Lornhill Academy	12	11	16
	Comparator schools	17	14	17
	National	23	23	22
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Lornhill Academy	1	4	5
	Comparator schools	6	7	7
	National	9	10	10

Percentage of relevant S4 roll attaining by end of S6

		2004	2005	2006
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Lornshill Academy	28	35	34
	Comparator schools⁴	40	37	39
	National	47	47	48
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Lornshill Academy	23	33	28
	Comparator schools	38	35	36
	National	44	43	43
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Lornshill Academy	15	20	17
	Comparator schools	23	22	24
	National	31	30	30
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Lornshill Academy	9	9	10
	Comparator schools	14	13	15
	National	20	19	20
1+ @ Level 7 or better	Lornshill Academy	3	5	6
	Comparator schools	9	8	9
	National	12	12	13

⁴ Comparator schools are the 20 schools statistically closest to the school being inspected in terms of the key characteristics of the school population.

How can you contact us?

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