Kyle Academy, South Ayrshire Council

Kyle Academy was inspected in April 2013. Inspectors noted the following features of *Improvement through self-evaluation* which contributed to the school receiving an evaluation of "excellent" for Q.I. 5.9 as updated in the Inspection Advice Note 2012-13. Evaluations take account of the context of the school and these features are just part of the overall approach the school takes to improving young people's learning experiences and achievements.

Features of Improvement through self-evaluation

Self-evaluation underpins every aspect of the work of the school, has a very high profile and is clearly having an impact in all aspects of the life of the school. The culture of self-evaluation is embedded very well across the school community and staff demonstrate a very strong commitment to self-evaluation for school improvement. Almost all staff participate in a range of working groups. Working in these groups provides staff at all levels with very good opportunities to take responsibility and leadership for improving key aspects of school life. Young people are becoming increasingly involved and skilled in self-evaluation and play a key role in this area of school life. They have a strong voice in the school and feel that their views are taken on board giving them a sense of ownership.

The school has recently undertaken a major review of its vision, values and aims in consultation with pupils, staff and parents. The revised values are prominent across the school and permeate the work of the school. Young people are clear that their voice has been important in agreeing these values and see them as being important to the life and work of the school.

Self-evaluation arrangements are consistently implemented. A comprehensive quality assurance calendar of self-evaluation activities is in place and is kept under annual review. Staff find this calendar helpful to plan self-evaluation activities in their respective departments without it being overly rigid or prescriptive.

The school is data rich and it makes very effective use of information to identify areas for improvement and plan next steps to secure improvement. This information is regularly shared with the school community. The school uses a range of evidence and approaches to evaluate and inform the work of the school.

Where new initiatives, courses or learning experiences have been introduced these are evaluated with tools developed in school as well as those available locally and nationally.
The school involves a range of partners such as the Parent Council, all parents at the annual meeting of the Parent Forum, staff from the Children and Community Department of the local authority, the educational psychologist, the school nurse and the campus police officer in evaluating the work of the school. It takes very good account of stakeholder views.

A key feature of improvement is the very regular dialogue about the quality of learning and teaching across the school. SMT link regularly with departmental staff, attend and support departmental meetings and all members of the SMT meet with each department team at least three times per session. The first meeting takes place in September to conduct a rigorous analysis of attainment in relation to targets and to agree priorities for improvement.

The second meeting takes place with individual departments later in the session to discuss the SMT's evaluations of learning and teaching resulting from classroom observations. The department's self-evaluation using quality indicators is discussed, targets reviewed and agreed and progress assessed. A third departmental Standards and Quality Meeting with each department takes place in the summer term. Departmental teams now work together to give a two-hour Standards and Quality presentation to the Senior Management Team, providing formal evaluations of Quality Indicators which are based on tabled evidence. Evaluations and targets for improvements are agreed. Staff feel that this had played a key role in developing their skills in self-evaluation, their understanding of the principles and importance of self-evaluation and developed further the sense of responsibility and accountability. Members of staff from other departments can be invited to join SMT at these presentations. Staff have found this useful in becoming more outward-thinking in their approaches. The above in particular have helped staff accept and develop collective responsibility for ensuring a positive school experience for all young people.

Where departments are experiencing difficulties in achieving improvement targets, the SMT provide additional support and challenge. Senior managers conduct a more intensive series of classroom observations and analyse other self-evaluation data to help inform further strategies for improvement. In these cases, evaluative reports relating to Quality Indicators are generated by the SMT and agreed with the department. A range of CPD strategies and other supports are then agreed to help the department to achieve their targets. These include observation of good practice both within and beyond the school, discussions with the SMT in agreeing strategies for improvement, the support of SQA staff where relevant, the provision of additional time and resources and more intensive support from line managers during the session. The progress of these departments is kept under review during the session and formally evaluated on receipt of attainment data in August. There is evidence that all departments receiving this extra support have secured improvements.

The school has developed and continues to develop further a monitoring and tracking system to track individual and group (such as LAC, MCMC, lower achieving, gender differences) progress and performance across the school. Teachers regularly input tracking information which is analysed at whole school level and used in a proactive way to avoid underachievement and celebrate success. Teachers can compare the performance of young people in their department to that in other departments across the school and across a session. Young people agree targets and next steps with teachers. Targets are set taking account of prior learning and achievement and predictions using benchmarking tools such as CEM tests. The progress towards targets is reviewed continuously. Young people who could underachieve are identified at an early stage and support strategies such as

mentoring or family clinics are initiated to address this. The school has well-developed approaches to tracking progress in terms of individual achievements and collective achievement awards that young people and the school is participating in. This enables the senior staff and partners to have a high level of awareness with regard to wider achievement.

Staff have increasing opportunities to share good practice across the school which they value. Professional dialogue about learning and teaching features consistently at staff meetings. Teachers have organised and led activities to share good practice in raising attainment, developing literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and improving pedagogy. A significant number of staff engaged in peer observation in cluster nursery and primary schools to share practice in formative and summative assessment strategies, to agree a consistent approach across the cluster and to explore approached to improving the learning environment. All staff also have opportunities to share good practice through collegiate sessions and a range of working groups: for example the Literacy Across Learning Group, the Numeracy Across Learning Group, the Rights Respecting School group, the Assessment and Moderation group and the Support for Learners group.

The school is actively developing its approaches to joint planning on specific projects with partners and is moving towards joint self-evaluation with a range of partners. Young people are increasingly active in contributing their voice to school improvement and the development of the curriculum, through engagement with school staff and partner agencies.

There have been recent improvements in the attainment and achievement of most learners. With robust tracking data there is evidence that there should be further significant improvement in attainment in the next session. The achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the other 80% of learners has commendably been reduced. The programme of observations, together with further focused support strategies, has led to improvement in pedagogy and learning experiences across subject areas. There have been improvements to school ethos (i.e. standards of behaviour, dress, learning environment and a reduction in exclusions). Young people are increasingly feeling safe, included, nurtured, achieving, respected and active.