

**Monifieth High School
Angus Council
13 March 2007**

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1. Background

Monifieth High School was inspected in November 2006 as part of a national sample of secondary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the school's work at all stages. 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. HM Inspectors focused particularly on English, mathematics, modern languages and history. 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 representatives of pupil councils, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the school board and a group of parents.

Monifieth High School is a non-denominational school serving Monifieth and the surrounding rural area to the east of Dundee. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 1071. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The promotion of pupils' personal development and wider achievement.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences, and levels of attainment, in many subjects.
- Arrangements to support the learning of vulnerable pupils in the Inclusion Resource Base.
- Pastoral care for pupils.
- The leadership of the headteacher and senior management team, and the developing leadership for learning amongst other staff with additional responsibilities.

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.

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 pupils' learning needs of all pupils were met through the curriculum and teaching. They evaluated the effectiveness of the school in promoting the learning and 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 overall quality of the curriculum was good. The school offered a broad range of subjects at all stages. This allowed nearly all pupils to progress and follow their chosen courses of study from S3 onwards. Pupils had access to high quality curricular and vocational advice to help them make their choices. The school was now in the process of planning and consulting on how to improve and broaden the curriculum further, particularly to allow better progression from S2 for the lowest attaining pupils. Particular features of the curriculum included the following.

- In some curricular areas, effective links with associated primary schools helped to ensure continuity in pupils' learning.
- The school's programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) from S1 to S5 covered an appropriate set of topics which developed pupils' skills and attitudes well. The programme for S6 needed to be set out in more detail.
- Around half of the pupils in S3 were following a creativity course which developed their self confidence and their knowledge and skills in citizenship and enterprise.
- Pupils at S1 to S4 undertook around two hours of physical education per week.
- The school had introduced alternative courses to Standard Grades at S3/S4, mainly in the sciences and modern languages. It had widened its provision at S5/S6 through introducing courses in psychology, philosophy and product design. A small number of pupils at S4 undertook courses at a nearby college of further education. The school needed to continue to develop its links with further education colleges.
- Because of staffing difficulties, there was insufficient provision for religious education in the curriculum.

Teaching and meeting pupils' needs

The quality of teaching was good overall. In almost all classes, teachers' explanations were clear. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) for teaching was developing very well. Most teachers used effective, interactive teaching approaches. In many classrooms, especially in English and science, teachers shared the aims of lessons with pupils and were skilled in questioning them so that they were fully involved in their learning. In these instances, teachers responded very well to pupils' questions, and incorporated their ideas into the lessons. Almost all teachers maintained very positive, relaxed relationships with pupils. In a few classes, teachers needed to review their practice to ensure that they

kept pupils fully engaged in their classwork, particularly lower attaining and less motivated pupils.

Pupils' learning needs were well met overall, with particular strengths in the provision for pupils with additional support needs. Across the school, most teachers made good use of resources and provided suitable tasks for pupils. In most lessons, teachers gave pupils the appropriate amount of support and challenge to allow them to build successfully on their prior learning. A number of subject departments provided additional assistance to pupils through study support at lunchtime and after school. A range of support for learning staff gave high quality and well-targeted support to those pupils who were experiencing difficulties with their learning. Support for Learning and Inclusion (SfLI) staff and subject teachers collaborated effectively in some, but not all, classes. In a few lessons, the work given did not provide a sufficient level of challenge for pupils or did not help them progress in their learning. Staff in the Inclusion Resource Base, together with a range of subject teachers, did much to raise pupils' self-esteem. They helped to ensure that pupils were very well included in school life. The School and Family Support Service employed by the local council made a significant contribution to supporting pupils and their families. A community learning and development worker supported pupils well through a range of activities. Pupils with specific needs had individualised educational programmes (IEPs) with well-planned short and long term learning targets. These helped them make suitable progress in their learning. Secondary school assistants and support for learning assistants provided pupils with very valuable support.

Learning and personal development

The overall quality of pupils' learning was good. Most classrooms had a positive learning environment in which almost all pupils were motivated and fully engaged in their work. Pupils interacted confidently with teachers and asked questions to develop their own understanding. In a majority of subjects, teachers had either created tasks where pupils worked very well together, or they routinely encouraged discussion between pupils. In a few subjects, pupils successfully took responsibility for their learning, for example, through carrying out research. The librarian supported this work very effectively. Pupils were making very good use of techniques such as mind maps to support their learning in a few classes. This very good practice needed to be used more consistently across the school. A few departments used ICT well to support pupils' learning. Staff now needed to ensure that pupils were clearly aware of their strengths and weaknesses so that they could take on more responsibility for their learning and progress.

Overall, the school had very good approaches to pupils' personal development. This was very well supported by the formal PSHE programme. Most pupils were polite, articulate, confident individuals. They valued the wide range of activities available, including sports and music. A significant number of pupils had individual and team success in these areas, and some went on to achieve further success at international level. Annual enterprise events, including work experience and mock interviews, prepared pupils well for future progress into employment. Many pupils had wide ranging responsibilities around the school, culminating in the demanding prefect, house captain and school captain roles. Pupils in S6 supported those in S1 through an effective buddy scheme. Some prefects had been trained in peer mediation so that they could support any fellow pupil who had difficulty. Pupils participated in a range of charity events which effectively developed their awareness of problems arising from poverty, illness and natural disasters. Events included *Denim for*

Diabetes, the shoebox appeal, and the ‘bunathon’ for Children in Need. Pupils from S5 had raised funds to finance their trip to support development work in Uganda. A wider range of school trips included visits to World War 1 battlefields, and a soccer camp in Florida.

English

Teachers used well-planned approaches to developing pupils’ independent learning skills and worked hard to promote a calm and respectful working environment. They used a wide range of tasks to engage pupils successfully in their learning and to support them when required. Pupils collaborated well on their work in groups of varying sizes. They reflected articulately on ideas and themes in classroom texts, and broadened their reading experiences through a range of imaginative activities.

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

- At S1/S2, most pupils attained appropriate national levels in reading, listening and talking, and the majority attained these levels in writing.
- At S3/S4, the proportion of pupils attaining a Credit award was well above the national average.
- At S5/S6 the proportions of pupils attaining an award at A-C at Intermediate 2 or Higher were well above national averages.

Mathematics

Teachers’ explanations were clear, and often enhanced by their use of ICT. They questioned pupils well to check their understanding and prompted them to think about their learning. Teachers matched tasks carefully to pupils’ prior learning from S1 to S4, and had increased the pace of work at these stages. They needed to take better account of pupils’ experiences and learning targets at higher in S5/S6. Pupils were well behaved in almost all classes, and were active in their learning. They had few opportunities to work together on tasks or use ICT.

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

- At S1/S2, most pupils were attaining appropriate national levels, with almost half exceeding them. Attainment at these stages had improved significantly in recent years.
- At S3/S4, attainment was well above national averages.
- At S5/S6, attainment was around national averages at Advanced Higher and Intermediate 1, and below it at Higher. Attainment at Intermediate 2 was above the national average.

Modern languages

There were some examples of effective teaching. However, several teachers did not interact with pupils sufficiently to develop their language skills. The pace of learning was too slow in most classes. Too often, tasks did not help pupils to build well on their prior learning.

There were important weaknesses in teaching, meeting needs and learning. Overall, the quality of attainment was weak. Particular features included the following.

- At S1/S2, too few pupils were reaching the levels of proficiency and confidence in language of which they were capable.
- At S3/S4, pupils performed notably less well in French and German than in their other subjects. The attainment of pupils who studied Spanish as a second language was notably strong.
- At S5/S6, the proportion of pupils who attained A-C grades at Higher was in line with the national average in French and below it in German and Spanish.
- Pupils used their language skills effectively in projects such as the European Day of Languages and a whole-school health promoting initiative.

History

Staff gave pupils good opportunities to carry out research and work in groups. Recent staffing difficulties had disrupted the continuity of learning for a significant number of pupils. Most pupils responded well in lessons. The level of pace and challenge for more able learners was too limited in some classes, particularly at S1/S2. There was insufficient use of ICT to enhance learning and teaching.

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

- At S1 and S2, the majority of pupils were making good progress in appropriately challenging coursework.
- At S3/S4, the proportion of pupils who attained a Credit award was consistently above the national average.
- At S5/S6, the proportion of pupils attaining A-C grades at Higher was in line with the national average. Entries and Grade A awards at Advanced Higher were well above national averages. The proportion of pupils attaining A-C grades at Intermediate 2 was below the national average.

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 good. Particular features included the following.

- Staff were increasingly taking account of pupils' prior learning and ensuring that they made good progress. However, the school did not systematically record and analyse pupils' progress from P7 to the end of S2. This prevented staff from identifying clearly enough weaknesses in attainment at S1/S2.
- Most pupils attained appropriate national levels of attainment in reading, listening and talking and mathematics, and almost half exceeded them in reading and mathematics. The majority attained these levels in writing. Attainment in mathematics had been steadily increasing.

By the end of S4 attainment was very good. Particular features included the following.

- The proportions of pupils attaining five or more awards at SCQF levels 4 or 5 were consistently well above national averages. Performance at SCQF level 5 was below that of similar schools. Only a very small number of pupils failed to attain five or more awards at SCQF level 3 or better because of additional needs or particular circumstances.
- The performance of pupils undertaking courses in the sciences at Intermediate 1 and 2, and Access 3, was very good. Pupils who needed significant additional support in their learning were making very good progress.
- The proportions of pupils who gained a Credit award in biology, chemistry, graphic communication and physics were well above national averages. In over half of subjects, Standard Grade performance was above or well above national averages at grades 1-2. In most subjects performance was above or well above national averages at grades 1-4.

By the end of S6 attainment was good. Particular features included the following.

- The proportions of pupils achieving five or more awards at SCQF levels 4, 5 or 6 were well above national averages in most years. Performance varied from year to year, and was below that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining three or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better was also well above the national average, and in line with the performance of similar schools.
- The proportion of pupils attaining one or more awards at SCQF level 7 had been improving steadily, and was now well above the national average and in line with performance in similar schools.

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

- There were weaknesses in the way some subjects built on S4 attainment through to S5/S6, especially mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils attaining Intermediate 2 awards in art and design was well above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils attaining Higher awards in chemistry and music were well above national averages.

4. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	<p>Across the school, staff demonstrated a strong commitment to pupils' welfare and provided them with very good pastoral care. Staff knew individual pupils very well and were skilful and sensitive in meeting their emotional, physical and social needs. Effective procedures were in place for child protection. Pupils felt safe, knew how to raise concerns and were confident that issues raised would be dealt with well by staff. Pupils found pastoral care and support (PC&S) staff, SfLI staff, and most subject teachers, approachable and highly supportive. The school had implemented a system of form tutors to increase further its capacity to monitor and support pupils' progress and wellbeing. This had not yet had a significant impact. The school had appropriate and well-implemented procedures for pupils who required special assistance, including those with medical needs or who were experiencing bullying. Some positive changes had been made to introduce a range of healthy choices to school lunch menus. Most pupils were pleased about the steps being taken to increase the promotion of healthy eating.</p>

Aspect	Comment
<p>Quality of accommodation and facilities</p>	<p>The overall quality of accommodation was adequate. Some areas had been refurbished and this was continuing. Good provision for physical education included a swimming pool and fitness room. Provision for ICT had many strengths and was being further developed. The new main entrance to the school was welcoming to visitors.</p> <p>Weaknesses in accommodation included the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School security needed to be reviewed. • Heating and ventilation were difficult to control in many classrooms, resulting in poor learning environments. • Many toilets, particularly those for girls, were in poor condition. • Pupils did not have enough access to social areas or lockers for storage. The dining hall did not provide an attractive social environment for pupils. • There were too few confidential interview rooms for staff to meet vulnerable pupils. Lack of sufficient telephone lines often restricted communication between support staff and parents.
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality</p>	<p>Relationships between pupils and staff, and amongst pupils, were almost always very positive. Morale was very high. Staff throughout the school had very high expectations for pupils' attainment, achievement and behaviour. These expectations were shared by almost all pupils. Pupils' personal and team successes were widely celebrated at assemblies, prizegivings and the awards ceremony, and by recognition such as the wearing of special ties. The school had good approaches to ensuring and promoting equality and fairness, including racial equality. Pupils developed positive attitudes to other world religions and aspects of human rights. This work was further developed through the school's fundraising to build a school in Tanzania. Staff treated pupils fairly, and gave additional support to those who needed it. The school needed to give greater emphasis to the promotion of pupils' awareness of issues relating to cultural diversity. Weaknesses in accommodation, and in some minor inconsistencies in the way staff dealt with discipline issues, led some pupils to feel unfairly treated. There were appropriate opportunities for religious observance and these were being further developed.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	The school had very good partnerships overall with parents, the community and other agencies. It had taken effective steps to involve parents in their children's learning through frequent newsletters and a range of meetings and information evenings. Parents were regularly consulted and the school took action to deal with any issues arising. Reports to parents were regular and informative. The school gave effective early information and support to families of children who had additional support needs. Staff were in the early stages of using pupils' planners to give parents ongoing information about their children's strengths and weaknesses. This had raised parents' expectations which were not yet being fully met. Links with primary schools were developing very well. The school had developed effective links with Angus College to widen its curricular provision. The school board was well involved in the life of the school, and had been active in seeking to improve the quality of the accommodation. Overall, staff from other agencies gave effective support to the school when working with children who had additional support needs.

5. Leading and improving the school

Monifieth High School was a successful school which delivered high levels of attainment and wider achievement within a caring, supportive and positive learning environment. In most classrooms, teachers were giving a high quality learning experience which was valued by pupils. All staff, led by the diligent and dedicated headteacher and his effective senior management team, demonstrated a commitment to improving pupils' attainment and the quality of learning even further. They were working hard to achieve this through developing approaches to teaching across the school, including the use of ICT, and improving the way they monitored pupils' progress. The school was very well placed to meet the challenging improvement targets it had set itself.

The headteacher provided very good leadership. He had established a clear vision for further improvement within a school that had been consistently achieving well. He had maintained that vision in response to the challenges posed by management restructuring, and had successfully engaged almost all staff with the process of improvement. Staff believed that his leadership was taking the school in the right direction, and were keen to play their part. Pupils were also significantly involved in moving the school forward through the work of the pupil councils and other groups. Senior managers, including the support services manager, worked very well as a team with the headteacher and carried out their individual remits very effectively. With support from the Principal Teacher Raising Achievement, they were working to strengthen teachers' classroom practice. They were improving the way in which they monitored pupils' progress. Pupil care and support staff, and support for learning staff, gave very good pastoral support to pupils. The former were in the early stages of managing the new form tutor system. Many Principal Teachers Curriculum were demonstrating very good leadership for learning. For a few, their new role continued to pose challenges. Subject principal teachers were acting well as subject leaders. A feature of the school's

leadership was the involvement of all staff in working groups, and a shared expectation that they all had responsibility for improving pupils' learning experiences.

Approaches to self-evaluation were good. Senior managers and principal teachers monitored classroom practice and discussed their findings with staff. There was a well-established system for teachers to visit each other's classrooms and share good practice. Senior managers discussed annual attainment in SQA examinations rigorously with education authority staff and with principal teachers. There was regular ongoing discussion between principal teachers and link SMT members on aspects of learning and teaching, and on attainment. The school now needed to raise attainment through monitoring pupils' progress more carefully, especially at S1/S2 and after preliminary examinations in S3 to S6. Discussion arising from classroom visits needed to lead more directly to the identification of areas for improvement. Procedures for consulting with parents, pupils and staff were sound. The school needed to build on this strong base and ensure that the results of consultation were communicated to stakeholders.

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

Main points for action

- Improve attainment and the quality of learning in the modern languages department.
- Develop further the procedures for monitoring pupils' progress.
- Continue to broaden curricular provision, especially vocational opportunities.
- Address the accommodation issues identified in this report.

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. Within two years of the publication of this report parents and carers will be informed about the progress made by the school. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and education authority to monitor progress in the modern languages department.

Brian Stewart
HM Inspector

13 March 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	good
The teaching process	good
Meeting pupils' needs	good
Pupils' learning experiences	good
Personal and social development	very good
Overall quality of attainment: S1/S2	good
Overall quality of attainment: S3/S4	very good
Overall quality of attainment: S5/S6	good

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

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

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 thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school had a good reputation in the community; • teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment; • the school made it clear to parents the standard of work it expected from pupils; • the school explained how they could help their children with homework; and • the school showed care and concern for their children. 	<p>Around a quarter of parents thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers did not explain clearly their children's strengths and weaknesses; • they did not have a clear idea for the school's priorities for improvement; and • the school did not consult them well on decisions.
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"> • at least one teacher knew them well; • teachers helped them when they had difficulties; • teachers expected them to work to the best of their abilities; • teachers checked their homework; • they got on well with other pupils; and • the school helped them stay safe and healthy. 	<p>A third of pupils felt that behaviour in the school was not good, and that not all pupils were treated fairly.</p> <p>Over a quarter of pupils felt that staff in the school did not deal well with bullying, and that the school would not sort out any difficulties they had.</p>

What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<p>Almost all staff thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they gave constructive feedback to pupils on their work; • they set high standards for pupils' attainment; • pupil success was regularly celebrated; • they showed concern for pupils' care and welfare; • they liked working in the school; and • they were aware of school's procedures for child protection. 	<p>Over a quarter of staff felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication amongst staff was not effective; and • standards for behaviour were not consistently upheld. <p>Over a third of non-teaching staff said that they were not effectively involved in making decisions about the school.</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 ⁴
English and Mathematics @ Level 3	Monifieth High School	96	96	96
	Comparator schools ⁵	97	96	96
	National	91	90	91
5+ @ Level 3 or Better	Monifieth High School	95	96	95
	Comparator schools	97	96	96
	National	91	90	91
5+ @ Level 4 or Better	Monifieth High School	89	89	90
	Comparator schools	91	88	90
	National	77	76	76
5+ @ Level 5 or Better	Monifieth High School	48	49	49
	Comparator schools	54	55	52
	National	35	34	34

Percentage of relevant S4 roll attaining by end of S5

		2004	2005	2006 ⁴
5+ @ Level 4 or better	Monifieth High School	90	89	89
	Comparator schools ⁵	90	94	91
	National	78	78	78
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Monifieth High School	65	60	63
	Comparator schools	68	67	68
	National	45	45	45
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Monifieth High School	56	52	50
	Comparator schools	59	57	59
	National	39	39	38
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Monifieth High School	43	36	30
	Comparator schools	44	41	40
	National	23	23	21
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Monifieth High School	15	17	17
	Comparator schools	20	21	21
	National	9	10	9

Percentage of relevant S4 roll attaining by end of S6

		2004	2005	2006⁴
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Monifieth High School	60	67	60
	Comparator schools⁵	69	69	69
	National	47	47	48
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Monifieth High School	57	61	56
	Comparator schools	66	65	62
	National	44	43	43
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Monifieth High School	39	55	48
	Comparator schools	50	52	48
	National	31	30	30
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Monifieth High School	26	37	33
	Comparator schools	37	39	37
	National	20	19	19
1+ @ Level 7 or better	Monifieth High School	19	27	25
	Comparator schools	27	27	25
	National	12	12	12

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⁴ Pre Appeal

⁵ 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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