

# Elgin High School

## Standards & Quality Report – March 2016

Elgin High School serves the community of Elgin south of the railway line and the surrounding rural areas. It has strong links with Greenwards, Mosstowie and New Elgin Primary schools, The roll of Elgin High School in September 2015 was 576 pupils. There were 72 pupils in S.6. During the next four years it is anticipated that the roll will rise to over 800 pupils. The school was fully staffed. The school motto is "Working Together for Success". This phrase captures both the vision and core values of the school. Elgin High School prides itself in providing an environment where each person is known, valued,



*EHS, Greenwards & New Elgin Primary pupils taking part in a joint remembrance day event.*

supported and challenged to achieve success. Since opening in 1978, Elgin High School has successfully met the needs of its pupils who have a broad range of abilities, backgrounds and aspirations. Many former pupils have moved on to a wide variety of University and Higher



*Mosstowie pupils visiting the Home Economics department for a cooking lesson*

Education opportunities. Others have established themselves in a variety of employment pathways both locally in Moray and throughout the country. In Elgin, former pupils play a key role in many community activities. By delivering a comprehensive range of courses at all levels Elgin High School aims to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils including those, some of whom are based in Kestrel House, the enhanced

facilities for pupils with profound additional support needs, who will move into a supported future.

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

Elgin High School has actively implemented the national Curriculum for Excellence. The curriculum is designed to allow pupils in S.1-3 access to the Broad General Education and so to receive their entitlements as well as allowing them to develop the four capacities. S.1-2 classes follow a common course with the opportunity for choice both



*Senior pupils as independent learners studying Open University courses*

within individual subject areas and in the electives. Pupils recognize the opportunities that these give for specialization and enrichment of their experiences. They report their enjoyment of the approaches to learning and teaching offered by these classes. Examples of these



**A Co-ordinated approach to the delivery of the curriculum allows pupils from other Moray schools to study AH History in EHS**

include geo caching, Social Enterprise and involvement in national and local Science and Art competitions. S.3 pupils are provided with a wide choice of courses. While still permitting a broad curriculum, pupils can start to

specialize. This allows them to build on their skills as well as begin preparing for National courses.

Classes in the Senior Phase are timetabled together. This provides pupils access to a greater range of Level 4 and 5 courses. Pupils in these years sat a mixture of Nationals, Higher and Advanced Higher courses. Elgin High School also participated in the Moray co-ordinated delivery of courses. Pupils from other schools studied Higher German and Advanced Higher History in EHS while Advanced Higher Biology and Chemistry were accessed at Moray College. The needs of pupils was met by providing access to a broader curriculum through the use of the Prince's Trust, youth workers from the Engagement Team and Skillforce. The range of options available in the senior phase was further enhanced by courses available through Moray College, the Open University and AQA. The "Make A Difference" programme has been introduced into the S.5/6 curriculum to allow pupils to develop a wider range of responsibilities and skills. Groups of pupils have delivered master classes to primary classes, organized major events such as the Freshers Fayre, and supported the partnership with Mukonchi Secondary School in Zambia. Pupils also



***EHS pupils in Zambia working in classes as part of Connecting Classrooms partnership***

took part in the Career ready scheme with some pupils gaining jobs as a direct result of their successful participation.

Key successes of EHS pupils included:

- In the SQA qualifications, EHS pupils achieved better results overall than in its "Virtual Comparator" (this is statistically calculated on a national basis to show the school's performance against schools in comparable situations)
- Performance in literacy and numeracy at SCQF Levels 4 and 5 (i.e. National 4 and 5) was much greater than the Virtual Comparator. At Level 5 it was better than the Moray and National figures.
- The percentage of leavers in a positive destination was 92% - almost identical to the Virtual Comparator. However, EHS figures include pupils who have been based in Kestrel House who will not, by the current definition, be in a positive destination despite moving to appropriate places such as Cedarwood.
- Performance for pupils in decile 5 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is in line with national figures. In other deciles it is lower. However, for girls, it is only in deciles 6 and 8 that the performance

was lower than nationally. The performance of boys was regularly lower than that of girls

- Progression by S.6 pupils to Higher Education was greater than the Virtual Comparator. This figure has shown a significant increase in recent years.

In addition to attainment results captured in national measures, EHS pupils also gained awards through other providers. These included: Open University modules; A Level and AS Level Polish; ECDL; Advanced ECDL; REHIS; National 1 and National 2 courses.



***Author Cathy MacPhail with competition award winners***

EHS actively encourages pupils to develop the widest range of skills. These were recognized in a number of ways, including:

- SciKu – Andrew McIntyre (S.1) was a national winner
- Maths Challenge – the EHS team represented Moray at the national final in Glasgow
- Youth and Philanthropy Initiative – as well as a very successful local competition, Jasmin Ewen was asked to read a poem she had written at the national presentations – organized by the Wood Foundation
- Inspire Aspire – Rebecca Watt won a national bronze award. Pupils who visited Zambia also delivered the



***Pupils based in Kestrel House performing at a Christmas concert***

scheme and were featured on the Inspire Aspire national website and

- Duke of Edinburgh Awards – increasing numbers taking part in the scheme
- Moray Young Citizens Awards - Ross Dethick and Sandra Zakrzewska achieved commended awards and Siobhan Duncan was highly commended. The

STV Appeal group was highly commended in the group award and the Zambia Crew won the international group award.

- Diana Awards – Siobhan Duncan and Sinead Gray were gained these national awards for their volunteering and other successes
- Social Enterprise groups in the S.2 electives won a number of regional awards for their activities
- Star Awards – Kay Hamilton’s dedication as Principal Teacher of Support for Learning was recognized by Moray Council

Elgin High School seeks to provide opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills. These have included:

- Charity fundraising events such as tickled pink, Children in Need and the local food bank
- A team took part in the finals of the Scottish Schools Curling Championships. Sean Barron, Ciaran Barron, Calum Jacklin and Ryan Lannigan won through the local heats and spent a weekend at Murrayfield.
- The Intermediate Netball Team won the Moray championship
- Surf Club gained funding through the National Lottery
- Residential trips were organized to Badaguish, Grannies Heilan Hame, Valkenburg and Berlin as well as a group visiting the partner school in Zambia
- Pupils from the Music department performed in a number of care homes at Christmas

In September, Andy McIntosh died with pancreatic cancer following a short illness. Andy was a guitar instructor who worked in the primary schools as well as EHS. The EHS community responded with a tribute concert. At Christmas a sponsored attempt on the world record for the largest number of people dancing the Agadoo also raised funds in Andy’s memory.



***Presentation of a cheque for £3500 as a tribute to Andy McIntosh***

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

In focus groups and through surveys, pupils, parents and staff consistently identified one of the strengths of Elgin High School as the positive relationships between staff and pupils. Specifically most pupils considered that they were well known by staff. This refers both to their pastoral and learning needs.

The Pupil Support Team comprises the Principal Teachers of Guidance, Support for Learning and Behaviour Support, along with the home school link worker, School Nurse, EAL teacher, and representatives of Skills Development Scotland and the Early Intervention Team. They meet regularly to identify emerging concerns and to agree strategies for supporting pupils with needs. Led by the Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for Pupil Support the team is effective in providing pastoral support for pupils.

Elgin High School also works with a variety of agencies to support pupils with needs at particular times in their lives. These include Quarriers, Children 1<sup>st</sup> and the Moray Early Engagement Team.

The Principal Teachers of Guidance are also effective in working with classroom teachers in supporting and challenging pupil progress with course work. Subject departments offer an extensive range of revision and study clubs. These allow pupils to receive intensive help to make progress with their work.

The support of Skills Development Scotland staff contributes significantly to supporting pupils. Most pupils applying through the UCAS scheme do not have graduate parents. The support of staff from the Aspire North programme, which seeks to raise the number of pupils moving into Higher Education, provided additional input into the PSE curriculum. The school also worked closely with other organizations such as the CITB. The Rotary Club provided careers workshops for S.3 pupils. Elgin High School participates in Career Academies. This provides a group of pupils with internships and mentoring.



***Zigi Shipper, Holocaust Survivor, sharing his story with EHS pupils***

### **How well does the school evaluate its own work?**

Elgin High School produces an annual Strategic Improvement Plan in accordance with The Moray Council policy. This reflects national, Moray and local issues and priorities. An extensive process of audit is carried out throughout the year. This includes surveys of pupils, parents and staff as well as classroom observations, focus groups and analysis of a range of statistical data.

Key targets for 2015/16 included:

- Continued development of the new National, Higher and Advanced Higher courses – these are now in place and have been successfully delivered during the session
- Development of the curriculum, including Developing the Young Workforce – most departments now have direct links with industry or external agencies as part of their courses
- Development of the curriculum – increasing the amount of inter-disciplinary learning opportunities. All departments work collaboratively with other subject areas at some point in the curriculum. Highlights included the International day of Languages, the Burnsfest and Harry Potter evening
- Transitions – Elgin High School has long had a strong programme to support pupils moving from primary to secondary. During the session further curricular links were made in literacy, numeracy and modern languages as well as Home Economics. The master classes delivered by senior pupils through the MAD programme have also contributed to these developments
- Rights Respecting Schools Award – this was linked to the embedding of the principles of GIRFEC across the school. In December the school was successful in achieving Recognition of Commitment
- New Build – construction work was due to start in June but was delayed for reasons beyond EHS and Moray Council. This has delayed preparations for the move.



***EHS pupils and Parent Council members meeting John Swinney, Deputy First Minister, to discuss the delays in the new build***

Key Targets for 2016/17:

At the time of writing, a major review of the school has been undertaken. Issues identified for inclusion in the 2016/17 Strategic Improvement Plan include:

- Curriculum – preparations for possible change to 32 or 33 period week from August 2017. This will include an increase in the number of courses taken by S.4 pupils as well as review the delivery of universal pupil support
- Teaching and learning – continued review of classroom activities in order to ensure pupils can maximize their successes and reduce the difference in achievements between girls and boys; further develop systems for tracking and monitoring pupil progress in S.1-3

- Getting It Right For Every Child – continued work on the Rights Respecting Schools Award scheme; implementation of the Named Person legislation from August 2016 and ensuring that all staff take an active role in supporting the wellbeing of all pupils
- New Build – preparation for the move to the new build in October 2017 and preparing to maximize the potential of the new accommodation and resources
- Family Involvement – seek to further develop the partnership with parents and the school to support the learning and achievements of the young people.



***EHS pupils and staff taking part in the local Rotary Swimathon fund raiser***

Throughout the year the progress of these development targets, and the life of the school in general, will be evaluated by staff, parents and pupils.



***Architects drawing of the new EHS building opening October 2017***

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