

Follow Through Visit Report

School Name: The Royal High School

Date: April 2025

Background

Education Scotland undertakes an annual sample of inspections across Scotland covering nursery, primary, special and secondary schools. A letter to parents and carers about each inspection is published approximately three months after the inspection. Based on this letter the school, with the support of the authority, amends its improvement plan to take account of any agreed areas for improvement.

The Royal High School was inspected in December 2022. In March 2025 a team of Quality Improvement Education Officers and Development Officers from The City of Edinburgh Council visited The Royal High School. They visited classes; held a range of focus groups with the school community; and worked closely with the Head Teacher and senior leadership team to evidence the progress and improvements which the school had made.

Report

During the inspection visit in December 2022, Education Scotland evaluated the school and nursery class as follows:

School

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Excellent
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Excellent
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Very Good

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Together with the senior leadership team, she has successfully established a school community where young people and staff feel valued and motivated to contribute. As a result, they are making continuous and successful improvements confidently across the school.
- The exceptional contribution of young people to bringing about positive changes to the school. They demonstrate strong leadership in many aspects of school life. This supports young people to be successful, to achieve highly and have a strong sense of empowerment and ownership of their school.
- The respectful climate for learning is highly inclusive and staff support young people very well to achieve their best. Teachers and young people use digital technology very creatively. This significantly enhances learning experiences and helps to meet the needs of all young people.
- Young people have a very strong understanding of diversity and equality. 'We all belong here' is lived and promoted very successfully in every aspect of school life. Young people value and celebrate difference. Equity sits at the heart of the school experience. Young

people demonstrate respect, confidence and resilience and they thrive and flourish in the Royal High School.

- The very high standard of attainment for all young people. By S6, attainment is very strong. From S1, young people are being very well prepared for future life and work. Attainment for specific groups of learners is also very high and this includes those living in challenging circumstances.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from The City of Edinburgh Council.

- Continue to raise expectations and challenge in learning for S1 to S3 young people.
- Continue to support young people’s understanding of the skills they achieve across all areas of the curriculum.

Context of the School

School Roll	1508	Learning Community		The Royal High	
		Care Experienced %		1.13%	
SIMD 1 and 2 %	5.2%	EAL %		26.92%	
Scrutiny Grades		QI 1.3	QI 2.3	QI 3.1	QI 3.2
HMIE School (date)		6	5	6	5
School Standards & Quality Report (June 2024)		6	5	6	5

Recommendation One: Findings and Next Steps

Findings

- Staff and pupils are highly positive about their experience at The Royal High School. A strong climate for learning exists where high levels of engagement, motivation and commitment are evident. Pupils are very well supported to thrive in a culture that encourages respect, individuality, creativity, courage, resilience, aspiration and achievement. Pupils value the culture which has been created to support and encourage them in taking leadership of their own learning.
- The schools’ learning and teaching policy, “Engage and Leaps”, has continued to provide staff with clear expectations to ensure that there is a shared and consistent approach in almost all lessons across the school. In most lessons, teachers provide a skilful balance of teacher-directed and independent learning. They have continued to develop their expertise in providing opportunities for pupils to lead and collaborate in their learning, apply their skills in higher order thinking and provide challenge.
- Staff have continued to use digital technology very well to enrich and personalise learning for pupils. They are quick to embrace new learning and keen to keep their practice up to date. Staff value the opportunities provided to share and benefit from others’ practice. A range of applications and sites are used to promote and support pupil engagement and participation, and to develop positive learning habits. Teachers make appropriate adjustments and adaptations in lessons to ensure that success is achievable for all pupils. Specific resources and supports are provided discretely for pupils who require additional support and pupils are able to use accessibility tools well to support their learning.
- Senior leaders and staff continually look inwards, outwards and forwards as part of their relentless focus and drive to maintain their sector leading approaches. The school is part of the North-West Collaborative and is currently working with Craigmount and Queensferry

High Schools to share and develop approaches in learning and teaching. The Head Teacher is currently the President of School Leaders Scotland and frequently shares the school's excellent practice with colleagues nationally. Senior leaders ensure that staff benefit from relevant and well-planned professional learning on pedagogy and assessment.

Next Steps

- As planned, continue to review the curriculum to ensure that it remains up to date and relevant for pupils, building on the strong foundations which have been created.
- As planned, continue to provide high-quality in house and partner Career Long Professional Learning to maintain the current high-quality experiences being provided for pupils.

Recommendation Two: Findings and Next Steps

Findings

- Work has taken place to incorporate meta-skills into the school's Learning and Teaching policy, ensuring that skills become more visible for pupils. Faculties have set targets aligned to the meta-skills framework to support dialogue and reflection of progress being made in this area. Staff have engaged with the meta-skills framework to ensure they are using the language with pupils within lessons.
- Pupils continue to enjoy and value the wide range of elective courses they are able to engage in through the academy programme which is in place throughout their school experience. This enables them to link their individual interests with faculties, supporting them to focus on different aspects of learning and apply their skills and knowledge in a variety of ways.
- "My Future Friday" sessions run weekly for S1-S6 pupils and provide an excellent opportunity for pupils to hear from a variety of professionals working in different areas of industry. This includes utilising the skills, talent and expertise of parents/carers within the school community. Occupations and careers that pupils are interested in are targeted to ensure that sessions are as relevant and meaningful as possible.

Next Steps

- Continue to work on making skills a clear focus in all lessons and ensure that opportunities are provided for these to be embedded through practice.
- Continue to support pupils to be able to talk about the skills they are using and developing in more depth.
- As planned, track skills as part of young people's wider achievements as they progress through school.

Summary

The Quality Improvement Education team found that The Royal High School had made appropriate progress in the areas highlighted by Education Scotland in December 2022. The Quality Improvement Education Officers for the school will continue to work with the Head Teacher to provide support and to challenge progress across the school to ensure this very high quality of educational provision continues. The Head Teacher will continue to report to parents and carers through the Standards and Quality report at the end of each session.