

# SCHOOLS OF AMBITION

## Castlemilk High / St Margaret Mary's Secondary Glasgow

### Transformational Plan

The Castlemilk High and St Margaret Mary's Secondary Schools of Ambition Project is unique in that it involves two schools, one denominational and the other non-denominational, working in partnership to serve the identifiable community of Castlemilk in Glasgow. Castlemilk is an area of multiple deprivation that has the highest rate of incidents of domestic violence in the City of Glasgow. The young people attending the two schools have to cope with family break-ups, unemployment, debt, alcohol and drug misuse and, in some cases, imprisonment of family members. However very few children in Castlemilk are in residential care due to the level of support provided by statutory and voluntary agencies working collectively in the best interests of the young people. In 2005 the employment figures for school leavers were 32% for Castlemilk High and 39% for St Margaret Mary's while the percentages for leavers from the two schools not in employment, education or training were 19% and 11% respectively.

The two schools are fully committed to working in partnership and are involved currently in a number of joint activities. The Head Teachers and Senior Social Work staff oversee the Education Support Project that operates in the two schools and the Head Teachers represent Education on the Castlemilk Joint Planning Forum involving Social Work, Health and Cultural and Leisure Services. The Head Teachers are also members of the Education and Lifelong Learning Group of the Castlemilk Partnership. All involved believe in the potential of the young people of Castlemilk and are committed to enhancing their future prospects. These shared values and goals unite the two schools.

**Our vision is to work together to close the learning gap and transform student, parent and staff outlooks in relation to raising attainment and achievement. The Transformational Plan will focus on three Key Areas to help us achieve our vision - Student Attainment, Personal Effectiveness and Employability.**

Both schools are highly regarded in the community and parents and students are proud to be associated with their school. **Poverty in the family does not equate with poverty of ambition.** Parents in Castlemilk have high expectations and aspirations for their children but not all, however, have the knowledge or skills to either help their children achieve or combat the negative pressures that exist. It will be important, therefore, to establish from the start of the project and to maintain and sustain over its lifetime and beyond a positive climate towards the project from all the stakeholders and leave a lasting legacy for the community of Castlemilk. The 'Voice of the Customer' survey of Castlemilk High parents carried out by Questor in 2005 provides a baseline of parental views that will be able to be compared with the project assessments carried out by researchers on behalf of the Scottish Executive.

## **Developing a Positive Climate**

From mid-November there will be a series of project launch events involving staff, students and parents from the two schools. These events will allow the various groups to comment on the three Key Areas identified - **Student Attainment, Personal Effectiveness and Employability** - and the strategies being proposed to address these areas - **Teaching for Effective Learning, Curriculum Flexibility, Enhancing Employment and Improving Attendance** - and thus help to shape the final transformational plan.

The launch for all school staff was held on 11 November; appendices 1 and 2 detail the discussion issues and appendix 3 is a summary of the staff comments. Initial project briefings for S4 students were held on 28 and 30 November and for S5/6 students on 8 and 9 December. These will be followed by Induction Days for COLUMBA 1400 on 17 and 18 January for sixty S4/S5 students from each of the schools with the meetings for the students selected and their parents on 31 January. The first residential COLUMBA 1400 experience for students will take place in February and it is anticipated that these students will act as 'Ambassadors' in their schools and facilitate the development of a positive climate among all students that will encourage curricular movement by students between the two schools and further enhance the culture of achievement. These students will plan and lead a major project event for all the other S4/S5/S6 students at Hampden Park Stadium prior to Easter.

A project launch meeting for parents that will be the first ever joint meeting involving parents from the two schools will be held in Castlemilk High on 26 January and parents will have the opportunity to give their views on the proposed transformational plan.

Over the life-time of the project there will be regular consultation with all participants to try to ensure their commitment to the project and all stakeholders will be kept informed of developments through newsletters as well as specific events, displays and promotions to highlight project activities.

## **Addressing the Key Areas**

The Key Areas of **Student Attainment, Personal Effectiveness and Employability** will be targeted in a coherent approach comprising distinct but related strategies:

### **1. Teaching for Effective Learning**

To enhance the teaching and learning in each school and raise students' attainment there will be a three year Continuous Professional Development programme for teachers on 'Teaching for Effective Learning' provided by Mary Pirie of Locus Learning. The content of the programme will support the principles enshrined in 'A Curriculum for Excellence', enhance student ownership and personalisation of general learning targets and increase personal enterprise and responsibility for students of all ages. It is anticipated that over the life-time of

the project the programme will impact directly on classroom practices with students taking a much more active role in their own learning, the development of peer assessment, collaborative learning and teaching approaches being adapted to suit individual student needs.

The programme will begin with a seminar for senior staff from the two schools on 10 January and this will be followed on 15 February by a half-day in-service session for all staff from both schools who work with students. After Easter there will be four workshops as follow-up to the in-service session to allow staff to develop strategies for use in their teaching. In June there will be drop-in Clinics in each school as support to the individual staff initiatives. An additional part of the programme will be specifically for the other adults who work with students and the first session will be on 7 March. There is also an engagement strategy for parents that will run over the lifetime of the project.

In Years 2 and 3 information and support about technical aspects of 'Teaching for Effective Learning' will be provided through a series of workshops, the format of which would differ from Year 1 in being based more on the 'voices' of the teachers in both schools and less on an input from Mary Pirie as local expertise and confidence increases. What will be run will be determined by the outcomes from the previous year's experience. 'Clinic' sessions will be run in each school to meet individual needs and support teachers' implementation of their activities. Annual Event Conferences' will be held where emerging practice from different aspects of the programme are shared by and with colleagues.

Complementary to this programme teachers will also have the opportunity to participate in the 'Self-Empowered Learning' programme from The Learning Game and this will include classroom strategies for effective learning and teaching, improvement strategies for discipline and behaviour and evaluation techniques.

It is anticipated that over the life-time of the project staff will become skilled in developing effective strategies in 'Teaching for Effective Learning' and thus sustain the transformational process by providing support to each other for example by team teaching, classroom observation and the sharing of good practice.

### ***Key Milestones***

- 1. Senior staff seminar in January;***
- 2. February In-service for all staff;***
- 3. Specific in-service for support staff;***
- 4. Individually and/or in departments staff experiment with range of strategies to assist teaching for effective learning;***
- 5. Teachers participate in 'Self-Empowered Learning' programme.***
- 6. Strategies Directory of good practice produced.***

### ***Outcomes for Year 1***

- 1. Teachers use a range of strategies in their classrooms to develop teaching for effective learning for example being clear about what students will know and be able to do as a result of learning tasks and***

*planning learning programmes based on these; employing engagement strategies that make students think and contribute positively to their own and others' learning; and focusing on better feedback to help students achieve progression levels as well and as quickly as possible. As a result students will become more confident and there will be increased professionalism in staff;*

- 2. Support staff are better able to provide assistance to teachers in the learning process in the classrooms with the long term aim of improving attainment for example by better questioning methods with students; and being more skilled in feedback techniques.*

## **2. Curricular Flexibility**

The range of courses that can be offered to senior students in the separate schools is restricted by the limited number of S5/S6 students in each school for example in 2005 Castlemilk High could not offer Higher or Intermediate II Geography, Higher Product Design or Intermediate II Travel and Tourism while St Margaret Mary's could not offer Advanced Higher English, Higher Computing, Higher Physics, Intermediate I and II Spanish or Motor Vehicle Maintenance. To enhance the choice available to the students and to allow students to move between the schools to take courses that meet their specific needs a joint S5/S6 course timetable will be produced for August 2006 - **currently no students move between the schools**. Additional courses will be provided by local colleges for example Beauty Therapy, Hairdressing, Hard Landscaping and Motor Vehicle Maintenance by Langside College both at the main building and their outreach centres at Glenwood and Rutherglen; and Psychology and Sociology by the Nautical College on an in-school basis.

A provisional course choice programme for the current S4 and S5 students in the two schools will take place at the end of January to identify the courses that need to be organised on a joint basis. Planning meetings of the appropriate departmental staff from the two schools will be held in February/March and students and parents will be consulted about the proposals. A Course Option structure that enhances the provision of courses on offer to the students will be produced for August 2006. Subsequently consideration will be given to establishing additional curricular links in response to national and local developments involving students from S3 to S6.

Over the lifetime of the project it is anticipated that the staying on rate will increase as the curriculum on offer is perceived by students as more relevant to their needs and that there will be an increase in attainment by the end of S6 in 5+ awards at Level 4, 5+ awards at Level 5 and 3+ awards at Level 6.

### ***Key Milestones***

- 1. Planning meetings of departmental staff from two schools;*
- 2. Consultation with students and parents on curricular proposals;*

3. *Joint S5/S6 course timetable produced for August 2006;*
4. *Increased partnership with local colleges.*

#### ***Outcomes for Year 1***

1. *Enhanced curricular choice for S5/S6 students;*
2. *5% of students move between the schools and between schools and colleges to meet their curricular needs*

### **3. Enhancing Employability**

A programme of Learning Game courses will be established for students from Primary 7 to Secondary 6 covering a range of topics focused on Personal Effectiveness for example 'Accentuate the Positive'. 'Cool to Succeed' and 'Leadership and Citizenship'. The initial course, 'Can Do Will Do', for the current Primary 7 children will be held in the summer term as part of their induction to secondary school.

Careers Scotland will provide support to each school additional to the Determined to Succeed programme and this will allow the introduction of an early intervention strategy which could dramatically reduce the school leavers unemployment figures from their ranking amongst the highest in the City of Glasgow and indeed Scotland. This approach will complement the new Careers Programme for Primary and Secondary schools being introduced by the City of Glasgow Council and will ensure that students research and choose suitable careers, rather than just jobs, ensuring that they achieve their full potential and make a valuable contribution to society. Research has shown that when students are focused on a career goal this leads to increased attainment. There will be a full Primary 6 to Secondary 6 approach and this will introduce the students in transition from primary to secondary to the services, products and support that will be available to them from Careers Scotland. Careers Scotland will identify and target tailored support to students especially those likely not to go into employment, education or training. The 'Worknet' employability programme will be introduced aimed at those students who are most disadvantaged when finding and obtaining and sustaining employment and here will be Apprenticeship Workshops that will include support with application forms, interviews and practical aptitude tests. The emphasis will not only be on improving positive destinations for school leavers but also on sustainability. The positive partnerships that the two schools have established with business for example Deloitte Touche and Scottish Power will be further developed to widen the student base.

In Years 2 and 3 of the project Careers Scotland will continue with the same programme but extend the work in the primary schools to include the middle and lower year groups. In addition work will be done with parents to increase awareness of post-school opportunities especially as regards appropriate training providers. Careers Scotland staff will liaise with primary school Principal Teachers (Enterprise), Pastoral Care staff in the secondary schools and the

Enterprise and Employability Officers to increase their expertise and so sustain the transformational process. To increase capacity to deliver these programmes the Enterprise and Employability Officers in the two schools will be employed on a full-time basis.

***Key Milestones***

- 1. Learning Game course held for Primary 7 children;***
- 2. Appointment by Careers Scotland of additional Careers Officer;***
- 3. Meeting with Primary Head Teachers and Careers Officer to plan early intervention programme;***
- 4. Identification of school leavers most at risk of not going into employment, education or training.***

***Outcomes for Year 1***

- 1. 1% increase in number of students going into employment, education or training;***
- 2. All Primary 6 and Primary 7 students have taken part in Careers Education programme***

**4. Improving Attendance**

Although both schools have been successful in improving student attendance - from 2002 to 2005 attendance at Castlemilk High increased from 84.9% to 88.1% and at St Margaret Mary's from 83.2% to 86.3% - irregular attendance is often due to the challenges that the young people face both inside and outside the family and the schools now want to offer targeted focused support to those families where traditional methods have been unsuccessful and an integrated family-based response is required.

An Education Liaison Officer, managed by the Head Teachers, will be appointed to work in both schools and associated primary schools to help to establish the ethos of good attendance. The Education Liaison Officer will work closely with the Integrated Support Teams in the schools as they provide a multi-agency approach addressing the needs of the most vulnerable of the students.

To ensure rapid contact with parents in the event of student absence a commercial truancy monitoring system such as 'Group Call' will be put in place. The system will also be used to enhance further parental contacts through for example the sharing of praise messages and the provision of information about school events. A Support Assistant will be appointed in each school who will oversee the operation of the monitoring system as well as providing specific support to the most 'at risk' students.

***Key Milestones***

- 1. Appointment of Education Liaison Officer;***
- 2. Appointment of Support Assistants;***
- 3. Setting up of commercial truancy monitoring system.***

### *Outcomes for Year 1*

- 1. Students, parents and staff fully aware of new attendance monitoring procedures leading to improved attendance in Years 2 and 3;*
- 2. Increased parental engagement leading to decrease in unauthorized absences.*

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head Teachers and the Project Leader (appendix 4 refers) will monitor the on-going activities of the project and will be supported by the ongoing Council Quality Assurance review process.

### **What will success look like after Year 1?**

1. Staff and students positively engaged with the vision;
2. Parents and the wider Castlemilk community fully supportive of project by for example higher attendance at parents' meetings, reduced unauthorised absences;
3. Student attendance improving;
4. Staff developing range of strategies for teaching for effective learning;
5. Student movement between schools and colleges to meet curricular needs;
6. More school leavers in employment, education and training

### **What will success look like after Year 3?**

**Our vision to transform student, parent and staff outlooks in relation to raising attainment and achievement in school students will be firmly established in the Castlemilk community. Students from the two schools will be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.**