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1. About the report

This report tells you about community learning and development (CLD) activities in the communities surrounding Lionel School. It complements a separate report on the school. We explain how well people involved in community learning activities do in a wide range of experiences, and the quality of learning activities on offer to them. We describe how communities can influence decision making and how they can respond positively to their own issues. We also talk about how organisations work together and how they improve lives in local communities. Finally, our report looks at the vision for the area, and how well all organisations and the community are working together to achieve it.

2. The learning community

The learning community around Lionel School includes the villages of Ballantrushal, Ness, Swainbost, Borve, Lionel and Cross.

According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, the area is amongst the least deprived in Scotland. The number of jobless people is lower than the Scottish average but slightly higher than the rest of Eilean Siar Council. Community Education allocate their resources across the Western Isles. The level of allocation to the learning community around Lionel is equivalent to one member of staff working less than half a day per week.

3. Particular strengths of the learning community

- Very effective involvement of local people in developing new facilities in their community.
- Positive impacts on the lives of adults and young people.

4. Example of good practice

- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis local historical society are in the process of digitising records of artefacts and local history documents. Most of the contents of the museum have been donated by local people.

By visiting www.hmie.gov.uk you can find out more about these examples of good practice.
5. How well do participants learn and achieve?

Some performance information is gathered by Community Education and their partners although they do not use it effectively to identify improvement. This information is not compared with other similar authorities. Adults attending evening classes have individual learning plans and almost all achieved at least one learning outcome. However, measuring tangible improvement for all learners was not routine and some information was not up to date. There had traditionally been high up take of learning activities but this has decreased in the past year. Few targets were set for the Community Learning Partnership and monitoring and evaluation was not routine. A recent bid to fund a performance information post aimed at improving performance reporting within the Partnership was unsuccessful. Planning for delivery of services in the Lionel catchment area was at an early stage. Better use of information available about local communities, particularly those from a minority ethnic background or those with a disability would help the partnership to more effectively gauge progression.

Young people

Partners provide a good range of opportunities for young people. The strong ethos of the community effectively supports them to gain a sense of respect and value. These are not underpinned by a robust background of assessment of need or focused target setting. Opportunities to celebrate the value of volunteer commitment in the area could be promoted more effectively. Most young people feel confident and demonstrate respect for themselves and others and are clear about the reasons for their involvement in youth work. They learn skills in activities led by volunteers such as the Roots and Wings and Urras youth groups. Some young people involved in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award achieve good outcomes although there is scope to deliver other forms of accreditation. Community Education staff have begun to promote Youth Achievement Awards in youth clubs but this is at an early stage. More effective partnership working between Community Education staff and local youth work organisations would result in better joint planning and leader training.

Adults

Programmes for adults are having a good impact on learners. Learning outcomes are routinely negotiated at the start of courses and participants talk about the positive impact it has on their lives. Almost all learners are motivated and enthusiastic. Members of the Happy Ness 60+ group describe how they are benefitting and Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, a local historical society offering good opportunities for learning. Participants appreciate the safety, freedom and tranquillity of living in Ness providing a good basis for learning.

Whilst there is a good range on offer, numbers of learners are decreasing. Good joint work is taking place although this is often dependent on relationships between Community Education staff and Community Support Workers (staff employed by the Development Department providing general services to the community). Some Adult Literacy and Numeracy provision is only delivered in Stornoway as learners wish anonymity although some others are keen to have
more local provision. Questionnaires are used to gather learners' views and identify future priorities. However, this does not always result in improved learning opportunities.

6. How well does CLD help the community to develop?

All community groups involved in the inspection are well organised and participants are highly motivated, confident and skilled. Local people are active and influential and play a key role in decision making. There are several examples of new community facilities being established as a result, for example the Sporsnis sports centre, a charity shop and Borve Hall. Local activists play a very active role in seeking the views of their community and acting on the results.

Community groups effectively involve a wide cross section of the community in local issues such as lowering the speed limit on roads and improving street lighting. Volunteers are well supported by Community Support staff who give good practical advice to access sources of funding. Some good training opportunities are provided by Community Education staff although this tends to be reactive rather than based on assessed community need. Community Education staff would benefit from a more visible profile in the Lionel catchment area and greater clarity about their role and that of other partners.

7. How effective are providers in improving the quality of services?

Arrangements for improving services are weak. Community Education staff use a limited range of methods to gather feedback from participants and other stakeholders. Some adult learners reported increased levels of confidence and participation in community activities although staff do not systematically use this to reflect on practice or report to stakeholders. Community Education staff made an encouraging start to using self-evaluation as a tool for improvement. They were meeting as a team to identify strengths and weaknesses and identify individual action points. However, this is not yet fully embedded or understood by staff or partners. Planning for improvement with partner agencies is at an early stage and the CLD Partnership had yet to agree a clear strategy for monitoring and evaluation. There was limited use of performance information to target minority or disadvantaged groups.

8. Do CLD providers have a clear sense of direction?

Local people are motivated and active in improving their community. Local associations and groups provide a strong basis for establishing new facilities and learning opportunities. There was considerable scope for stronger leadership and direction in the inspection area. Embedding the Community Learning Partnership should be a key priority for Community Education and their partners to ensure more effective delivery of services to local people.
9. What happens next?

Because there are significant changes needed and CLD providers do not yet have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, we will revisit the learning community to check on progress within 18 months.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the education authority and its partners.

- Improve the collection and use of performance information across the Community Learning Strategy.
- Establish a clear and consistent strategy for monitoring and evaluation with all partners involved in the Community Learning Strategy.
- Further embed self-evaluation within the Community Learning Strategy.
- Improve joint-working and planning with partner agencies within the catchment area of Lionel School.

Quality indicators help CLD providers and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication “How good is our community learning and development? 2”

The report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

- Excellent          Outstanding, sector leading
- Very good          Major strengths
- Good               Important strengths with some areas for improvement
- Satisfactory       Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- Weak               Important weaknesses
- Unsatisfactory     Major weaknesses

HMIE checks five important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish CLD provision is doing. Here are the results for the learning community surrounding Lionel School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvements in performance</th>
<th>weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on young people</td>
<td>satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on adults</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of capacity building on communities</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving services</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HM Inspector Managing Inspector:  Sheila Brown
25 November 2008
How can you contact us?

HMIE has responsibilities to evaluate the quality of pre-school education, all schools, teacher education, community learning and development, colleges and local authorities. We also publish reports of interest to the public and professionals about services for children and evaluate child protection services. From this extensive evidence we are able to give the professional advice needed to support the development of educational policy.

For more information about the work of HMIE, including examples of good practice and links to Journey to Excellence, please visit our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

To find out more about inspections go to www.hmie.gov.uk. Please contact the Business Management and Communications Team if you require any of our information available in translated or other appropriate versions.

If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively you should write to Business Management and Communications Team, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from Rona Littleproud, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA or phone 01506 600258 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise a complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or email ask@spso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman’s office can be obtained from the website www.spso.org.uk.

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