

**Learning community inspection
Continuing engagement**



A report by HM Inspectors

**Inspection of the learning community
surrounding Alva Academy
Clackmannanshire Council
7 March 2017**

We published a report on the learning community surrounding Alva Academy in November 2013. That report set out key strengths of the learning community and areas for improvement. We carried out continuing engagement inspections in October 2014 and October 2015 and published reports on those visits in November 2014 and July 2016.

This continuing engagement report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in January 2017. It tells you about improvement since the original inspection in the quality of learning opportunities provided. It also comments on how providers are getting on with the main points for action. We describe how learners are doing and how good the learning community is at helping them to learn. We comment on how well staff, learners and groups work together and the difference they are making in the learning community. Finally, we focus on how well the learning community is led and how leaders help the learning community achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our original inspection of the learning community, please visit:

<https://education.gov.scot/other-sectors/community-learning-and-development/817603>

You will also find a report on the secondary school.

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1. How well are partners improving learning, increasing life chances, promoting and securing wellbeing?

Community learning and development (CLD) activity is increasing across the Alva learning community. Effective progress has been made in the areas of mental health, well-being, early years and work with young people. CLD and their partners are now more focused on delivery of key council priorities. Outcomes for young people are improving. Youth Services are now working positively with additional partners, for example, at Dollarbeg and Alva Academy. The *Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport Excellence* project at Coalsnaughton Primary School is helping children to raise their level of confidence and self-esteem. As a result, parental engagement with the school is increasing. There are signs that this is beginning to have a positive impact on children's learning although partners could helpfully gather and track improvements to attainment. Young people at Alva Academy are now more involved in designing programmes with CLD staff and other partners. However, there is further potential for Youth Services to play a key role in delivering on employability programmes and engage with the most vulnerable families. Sports Development staff continue to offer a high quality service through the Sports Hub and other initiatives. Participants are becoming more active and are gaining qualifications and life skills.

Adult learning remains an area for improvement. There is not yet a clear learning offer across the Alva learning community. However, there are some encouraging developments including well-coordinated support to Syrian refugees and increasing English for speakers of other languages provision. The Ben Cleuch centre is now better used by the local community with a range of learning opportunities on offer. The Men's Shed is attracting more participants and helping to tackle social isolation. Volunteering is helping adults and young people to engage with their local community although there is scope to better coordinate and celebrate the contribution of volunteers. The Integrated Mental Health Service is adopting a well planned approach to the delivery of services for vulnerable people. As a result more people are engaging with services and building resilience.

2. How well are partners working together and improving the quality of services and provision?

Partners are now working more closely together and are starting to improve services. Workforce development is improving. A few CLD staff are now engaged in the National Leadership programme and some youth workers are gaining literacy qualifications. Staff from Clackmannanshire are active members of the South East and Central Training Consortium. A continued focus on learning and development for CLD staff and partners will help to ensure that practice is current and relevant. Leadership is also improving. A much better sense of direction and accountability is evident. An increased focus on partnership working is reaping benefits in the Alva area. In Coalsnaughton the local community are well supported to develop their locality plan. More joined up working by Housing Officers is leading to improving services for vulnerable

families. The involvement of Community Councils in developing guidance is leading to greater ownership by local people. Similarly, partnership working between council staff and Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface is stronger than in the past. This is raising the profile of the third sector and is improving communication and coordination of resources.

Self-evaluation across youth work is more embedded and is leading to improvements in delivery. There is more to do to ensure that adult learning continues to flourish. Greater use of marketing is leading to better communication. The Hillfoots Music Partnership are now using social media to promote their activities and the Community Council has its own Facebook page. Planning at a strategic level requires further improvement. The Council is aware of the need for a current CLD Plan and this should be addressed as a matter of priority.

3. Does the learning community have a clear sense of direction?

The learning community has a much clearer sense of direction and this is also reflected at a strategic level in the Council and with partners. Clear leadership is having a positive effect on staff morale and delivery is better than in the past.

4. What happens next?

As a result of the improvements made we will make no further visits to the Alva learning community. However, we will request a progress report with a focus on adult learning within a year of publication. A copy of the new CLD plan should also be provided. Our Area Lead Officer will continue to support the Council to build on the positive progress made.

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