



Standards and Quality Report

Dyce Academy

Session 08/09

Dyce Academy School Aims

The aims of Dyce Academy are to provide a wide range of challenging, interesting and enjoyable educational activities which will provide opportunities for the development of:

- ❑ Core areas including literacy, Numeracy and Health & Well-Being, both within subject areas and across the curriculum
- ❑ Knowledge & Understanding
- ❑ Abilities, Talents and Interests
- ❑ Social Skills, including the development of self-respect and consideration of others

within a structure which allows for the different needs of individual pupils

We seek to achieve these aims by:

- ❑ Creating a positive working atmosphere
- ❑ Using a variety of learning and teaching approaches within a clearly structured framework
- ❑ Drawing on a wide range of resources
- ❑ Encouraging pupils to work towards realistic but challenging targets
- ❑ Monitoring, recording and communicating individual pupil's progress
- ❑ Giving pupils some choice in, and responsibility for, their own learning
- ❑ Evaluating current school practices on a regular basis
- ❑ Encouraging and providing staff development opportunities

We believe that in achieving our aims we will enable young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors so that they may take an active and fulfilling role in the world.

The School And Its Context

Dyce Academy is a six-year comprehensive school situated in the Northern part of Aberdeen. The school serves the Dyce district of North Aberdeen and the surrounding rural area, including the village of Newmachar in Aberdeenshire. There is a mix of private and social housing. The main associated primary schools are Dyce and Newmachar. However, the school attracts pupils from other school catchments such as Stonywood. The roll was 557 in September 2008. The projected roll for September 2009 is 560.

Teaching Staff

The teaching complement was 50.29 full time equivalent made up of 33 full time and 19 part time staff. These teaching staff are supported by 16 non teaching staff. In addition there is a learning support team of just over 4 full time equivalent (6 teachers) which includes Behaviour Support and SEN provision.

There are 2 teachers and 4 Pupil Support Assistants working in MICAS (Mainstream Integration of Children on the Autistic Spectrum). This caters for children on the autistic spectrum providing them with a base in which they can receive special education suited to their needs but also with the opportunity to move from the base into school classes for part of their time in school. The school's energetic and talented staff have excellent relationships with pupils, parents and the local community.

Aberdeen City music School

Dyce Academy is also the home of Aberdeen City Music School (ACMS), which offers talented musicians from across Scotland the opportunity to follow a highly specialised music curriculum within a comprehensive school. Professional musicians are employed to tutor each pupil according to their musical specialism. Specialist tutors for the Music School have welcomed opportunities to discuss issues. Music School parents have their own forum to address their specific issues.

There are currently 44 pupils in ACMS, the majority of whom are residential. A new residence has been built in the grounds of the Academy with a completion date of November 2009. The residence provision for Aberdeen City Music School is monitored annually by the Scottish Care Commission and this has been judged to be very good.

Facilities

The school's playing fields are adjacent to the campus and are unfenced, hence open to the community. School facilities include a 25 metre swimming pool. There is a large multi – purpose area used by Music, Drama and PE. There is a purpose built Drama Studio.

Community Links

There are strong links with local companies such as Aberdeen Airport, The Marriott, Haliburton and BP and a number of them are making a significant impact on the curriculum. The school continues to explore and expand links with the local community to improve the overall quality of the pupils' experiences in the local and global community.

The school continues to forge strong links with Bankhead Academy, now Bucksburn Academy. This allows us to provide an extensive range of courses, particularly in the senior years. College courses are offered to pupils from S3 – S6.

We are an Aspire North School working closely with the Universities of Aberdeen and Robert Gordons to encourage awareness of

Attainment

The results at standard Grade are good. The school is between the top 10% and 20% nationally for 5 or more passes at credit level. However, there are areas of concern which are in the course of being addressed. In particular, increasing attainment of pupils achieving 5 + level 3.

The value added statistics, which relate the S Grade results of S4 to the MidYIS scores the year group achieved in S1, although good, could be improved significantly.

The statistics for the National Certificate Courses (Higher and Intermediate) are improving. For the second year there has been a marked improvement in pupils achieving the number of passes at Higher that would be expected from their S Grade performance. Almost all students obtained results which enabled them to move on to the career or course of their choice.

Quality Improvement

Each member of the Senior Management Team has a link with departments which they monitor the quality of the learning and teaching. Two or three formal meetings with individual Principal Teachers are held per session at which improvement plan progress, examination results and any other matters of importance are discussed. Classroom observation is undertaken by SMT and Principal Teachers. SMT also receive minutes of departmental meetings and occasionally attend these meetings. Issues raised are followed up by SMT.

Examination and National Test results and statistics are analysed by SMT and Principal Teachers.

Each department in the school has undertaken an evaluation of their performance and the results of this were used to inform the audit section of the 08/09 Improvement plan.

The school's proposals for a new management structure for pupil support have been accepted by the Education Authority and should be implemented session by 2011. They will integrate our pastoral care arrangements with other arrangements for supporting pupils with additional support needs and ensure that all pupils have one member of staff who will be responsible for ensuring that all their support needs are met.

Most of the information about how well the school is doing is obtained through SMT members' contact, both formal and informal, with staff, pupils, parents and other people associated with the school.

The HMle format is used when describing qualitative judgments and quantitative descriptions:

Very good	Major Strengths
Good	Important strengths with areas for improvement
Almost all	over 90%
Most	75% - 90%
Majority	50% - 75%

Curriculum

A very broad curriculum is offered to pupils. As they progress through the school there are increasing opportunities for choices to be made. At all stages in the school, the importance of personal education and development is recognised as well as the requirement to ensure that pupils achieve their potential in external examinations.

Overall we judge our curriculum to be good. The majority of parents and pupils feel that the school offers all of the subjects that the pupils would like to be taught. However, some courses have not been offered because of budget and resource constraints.

The Curriculum Working Party carefully considered how well the school policies and practices match the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence. The extended PSE courses in S3/S4 which are managed and delivered by cross-curricular teams were felt to be very much in line with Curriculum for Excellence. A major curriculum project in S1/S2 was undertaken which involved all departments in the school and engaged with the local community. This will continue to be embedded in our curriculum.

As always, a great deal of curriculum development has taken place at departmental level as courses are reviewed and revised to be kept up to date.

Work with staff in our two associated primary schools, Dyce and Newmachar, to improve continuity in the curriculum has continued. The transition links are good. Our next steps are to focus on Numeracy and Literacy transition arrangements.

Overall the Quality of Learning and Teaching in the school is good. Pupils experience a wide range of Learning and Teaching approaches in their classes and are generally well motivated and show a commitment to their work.

There are rarely more than twenty pupils in most classes in the school and we believe that this makes a major contribution to the quality of learning and teaching. A 'Planner' system is well established which provides a very effective homework monitoring system.

Teachers' evaluations rate all aspects of learning and teaching as good or very good. Most pupils and the majority of parents feel that the teachers make the lessons interesting. Almost all pupils feel that they are making good progress in the subjects they study.

In relation to Assessment for Learning and Building the Curriculum, departments shared their good practice through a staffroom display. Peer visits and discussions also took place with our associated primary schools. All departments are ensuring that formative assessment is a feature of their work. Staff are adopting a collegiate approach to Curriculum for Excellence. Use has been made of the 'Building the Curriculum' wall in the staff centre to construct courses and share good practice. An S1-S3 model has been agreed with all staff, shared with the parental association and is in the process of being fleshed out.

The quality of pastoral care in the school is judged to be very good. Parents are happy with the level of support provided by Guidance and feel that the support provided by teachers is appropriate to allow their child to succeed. The quality of provision in MICAS is considered to be very good. Most pupils are happy in the school, feel that teachers care for them, feel that they are taught how to deal with problems and are given all the help they need about careers.

The support staff play a key role in this success but all staff recognise the importance of supporting pupils and ensuring that their needs are met.

An Improvement group is continuing to work at improving the procedures in the school for setting targets for all pupils, S1-S6, and tracking their progress. Discussions have started on the introduction of personal learning plans and are planned to be further developed during session 2010 - 2011.

The induction programmes for P7 to S1, S4 to S5 and S5 to S6 continue to play an important part in the school. The transition programme between P7 and S1 is very good.

All staff have been made aware of the implications of the ASL Act and work is ongoing in school to ensure that school practices comply with it. All staff have undertaken relevant child protection training.

Budget Constraints

The successive reduction in funding for core activities over the last few years has continued to have a detrimental effect on the quality of provision in the school. The total funding to the school has not been increased, core activities are under severe pressure. Management time in departments has been significantly reduced to allow us to cater for small classes and to run courses. As a result, at present, we are unable to support two hours of Physical education for all our pupils from S1-S6. We have poorly maintained facilities for Physical Education. The Music School has also been curtailed by the reduction in budget and the finance from the government is no longer ring-fenced. This has led to a reduction in specialist teaching time.

However, we endeavour, with reasonable success, to minimise the effects on the pupils' experiences of the reduced teaching staffing: staff are at the maximum possible class contact time. We make effective use of the 'Bankhead Link' for S5/S6; use of part time staff in most departments and college links.

The halving of the repair and maintenance budget a few years ago has meant that very little decoration and routine maintenance can be undertaken. We are still living on the fruits of good housekeeping prior to this reduction but the building is now showing signs of wear and tear. Windows are not watertight and weatherproof. There are cracks in internal brickwork. There is no control over heating.

The change to cleaning procedures leaves the building in a poor state. Teaching and non-teaching staff have openly expressed concern about the conditions of the rooms and the furniture and toilets. Floors, stairwells, walls and bannisters are not washed as regularly as before and scuff marks from floors are not removed.

The budget for supplies and services has been severely cut over the last few years. The good level of provision prior to the start of funding cuts has meant that the effects of this are not yet obvious. The lack of a replacement programme for books and equipment, particularly ICT equipment, is, however, now a cause for serious concern.

How good is our management and leadership?

All aspects of this were judged by staff to be good or very good. The school is well managed at all levels. Communications in the school are good and staff work well together. The administrative procedures of the school run smoothly and efficiently.

Dyce Academy has a long tradition of genuine participative management and self evaluation. All staff have the opportunity to be involved in evaluation of current practices and the development of new improvement priorities and nearly all take up the opportunity. The confidence of the school is displayed in the well established classroom observation arrangements and the willingness of staff to express their views informally and through the school's policy procedures.

Improvement plans by departments have been completed using new audit and improvement planning paperwork. This has had a major impact on focusing the school Improvement plan on the key QI's.

The post of Support Services Manager is now established and has taken some of the administrative load away from the Senior Management Team. However, Pupil Support Assistants have been depleted and this is having an impact on the teaching staff.

Targets For Action 09/10

1. Raising Attainment
2. Implementing Curriculum for Excellence through :
 - Interdisciplinary projects
 - Curriculum design
 - Numeracy , Literacy and Health & Well-Being group
 - Transition programmes between the ASG's – including Cordyce School
 - Review of timetabling structure and architecture alongside Bucksburn Academy to retain the good practice of the link
 - Review of the school day
3. Review extended PSE in S3/S4
4. Evaluation of 2008-09 S2 Curriculum Projects and implementation of 2009-10 Curriculum Projects to develop Curriculum for Excellence capacities
5. Respond to proposals for changes to national curriculum structure and certification arrangements
6. Formulation of procedures in S1/3 which take account of AiFL practices in relation to CFE Learning Experiences and Outcomes so as to ensure Progression.
7. Encouraging parental involvement
8. Engage the school, City of Aberdeen and the local Community in a Transform project with the National Theatre of Scotland.

Wider Achievements

1. The school provides a wide range of extra – curricular activities:
 - Junior, Senior and staff choirs
 - Guitar Group, Brass group
 - Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Boxercise dance, Kick boxing, Cross Country, Duke of Edinburgh (Gold, Silver and Bronze), Golf, Gymnastics, Girl's football, Boy's football, Hip Hop Dance, Indoor Hockey, Netball, Table Tennis, Trampolining
 - Modern Languages club
 - Eco Group is working towards Silver
 - Health Promoting group has achieved Highly commended
 - Fair Trade Group is seeking Fair Trade status
 - Young Enterprise

2. Pupils are encouraged to engage in community events and to take responsibility through:
 - Fund Raising events (Children in Need, Shoe Box Appeal, Red Nose day)
 - Supporting their selected Charities - CLAN and Guide Dogs for the Blind through a variety of events
 - Organising MacMillan Coffee Mornings
 - Organizing a fair Trade Jewellery Evening
 - Organising a Fair Trade Coffee morning
 - Organising a 'Dyce Has Talent' competition raising funds to support the services in the aftermath of the Miller platform disaster.
 - Planting tubs to brighten the environment
 - Building a greenhouse and growing vegetables
3. Oilsim 2008 – Dyce finished in third place
4. ROV MATE Challenge – Dyce Academy 2008 European winners. Competed in Massachusetts and came a commendable 19th in the World.
5. Scottish Education Award finalists 2008 – Active Citizenship
6. Go4Set built and raced a green power kit-car in competition with other North East Schools.
7. Kenya project – successfully bid for a second Grant from the British Council. Exchange of two members of teaching staff and projects between the two schools
8. Transform Project Winners – Dyce Academy will be working with the National Theatre Scotland to create a community event in 2009, funded through determined to Succeed and Scottish Power Learn
9. Two Apprenticeships given to pupils through working with Manor Oak Peugeot.
10. Aberdeen Airport established as a business link.
11. Parents involved in our Sponsored Walk – raising over £9.000
12. Citizenship Ceremonies – music provided by pupils from ACMS.
13. Dyce Parish Church – concert given to entertain the community
14. March Concert – donations received from the audience have gone to our Guide Dog for the Blind appeal and to support the education of two pupils in Kisumu, Kenya