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**ABERDEEN**  
CITY COUNCIL

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All Parents and Carers  
Dyce Academy

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Dear Parent/Carer

### **Dyce Academy – Follow through Report**

In March 2011, HM Inspectors visited the school and, in the following month, published a report of their findings. In the report they recognised the strengths of the school. These being:

- Teacher commitment to meeting the needs of learners
- Effective collaboration with Bucksburn Academy which significantly enhances the senior school curriculum
- The wide range of opportunities for young people to develop additional skills for life and work
- The very high standard in performing skills of young people in Aberdeen City Music School(ACMS)

Inspectors recommended that the school work with all stakeholders to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the school's vision and priorities for success
- Continue to work towards a culture of high expectations
- Develop a more coordinated approach to the delivery of the whole range of pupil support
- Consolidate and build upon links with parents and other partners.

GAYLE GORMAN  
DIRECTOR

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Since then officers from the local authority have regularly visited the school to find out how well the young people are learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best.

As a result we are now able to report on the improvements made.

### **How well do young people learn and achieve?**

The school has reviewed its vision, values and aims in consultation with pupils, parents and staff. To raise pupils' awareness of the schools expectations of their learning and achievement, the schools values are prominently displayed in social areas and classrooms. Almost all young people enjoy school and in almost all classes relationships between staff and young people are positive and mutually respectful. Most young people engage enthusiastically in planned learning opportunities which develop their skills for learning, life and work. The school has implemented and continues to develop a more systematic approach to monitor and track pupil's progress. In the senior school this has included setting and regularly reviewing aspirational targets for every pupil. This approach supports senior pupils take greater responsibility for their learning and for them to be more involved in setting their own success criteria. Supported by an increased number of trained staff volunteers, a mentoring scheme for targeted pupils in S4 has been extended. Young people value taking part in the mentoring scheme and indicate that, as a result, they are more confident as learners. To improve the pace of learning at transition, there are planned meetings with associated primary schools to share and discuss a range of attainment data. Baseline assessment data indicates learners make good progress on prior learning as they move through the junior school. There is an increased focus on developing learners' literacy and numeracy skills across curricular areas including in inter disciplinary learning contexts. For example, there is consistent whole school approach to sourcing reference information and a range of numeracy information is on display in social areas and classrooms. Young people in the academy and in ACMS have increasing opportunities to contribute to the life and work of the school and their views are increasingly sought and acted upon. Most recently all young people participated in a house system consultation, culminating in a whole school launch event. They also contributed to a review of the schools rewards system and as a result they better appreciate and value how success is celebrated. Pupil voice is now more evident across the school. In faculties and in classrooms young people have opportunities to share their views about learning with staff. Pupil voice boards and displays around the school ensure young people can see that what they have said about their learning and what actions have been taken as a result. A large number of young people take part in a wide range of sporting and cultural activities. They compete successfully and develop a range of personal skills by participating in a variety of sports, music, drama and volunteering activities. This includes most recently opportunities for individual young people to participate in Commonwealth Games planning and events. Senior pupils also develop their confidence, self-reliance and team work by working as buddies, Science Ambassadors and Sports Leaders. Young people in ACMS have exercised

responsibility in leading a primary school music outreach programme. The school also uses a range of accredited awards to recognise pupil's wider achievement, for example the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and the Young Philanthropy Initiative. Pupils develop their citizenship and enterprise skills through close working with a range of partners in the local, wider and business community. All young people have a very good understanding of global citizenship through the schools strong, and nationally recognised, global links with Kenya and Sudan.

### **How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?**

The school shares clearly with young people what is expected of them. These expectations are displayed around the school and reinforced regularly for example, in classes and assemblies. The school has also developed its use of restorative practice and this is a key feature of its positive behaviour management system. Staff have engaged in a cascade model of restorative practice training and this is to be rolled out further. As a result almost all young people cooperate with expectations of them in their learning and conduct.

Learning activities are better matched to meet the needs of individual learners and groups of learners. Staff have high expectations and most regularly share these with young people. Most teachers are confidently setting open questions to stimulate and develop learners' thinking skills. Pupils have more opportunities to actively engage in their learning through a range of carefully planned activities including, individual, paired and group activities. Formative assessment approaches are evident in most lessons. Many pupils evaluate their progress through setting personal learning targets and self and peer assessment activities. The school is committed to embedding this approach more widely and consistently, by developing a "*learning conversation*" approach. The school is working with the parent council to consult more widely regarding the purpose, frequency and quality of homework to ensure it best meets learners' needs.

Teachers support individual pupils make suitable progress by regularly setting, monitoring and reviewing targets. The needs of learners who require additional support are effectively communicated and shared with staff, including through planned meetings with support for learning staff and senior managers. Learner's Individual Education Plans set out short and long term targets which focus on raising their attainment and achievement across the curriculum. In classes, learners with additional needs are well supported by teachers and effectively deployed support staff. Collegiate activities and professional development opportunities have supported staff provide increasingly appropriate learning experiences for pupils with additional support needs. The school is aware that the delivery of universal support requires further development.

The school continues to develop its curriculum taking account of the design principles and its local context. As a result the curriculum supports all young people develop skills for learning, life and work. Learners access personalisation and choice through a wide range of academic and vocational courses. Effective business partnerships enrich learners' experiences at all stages from S1 to S6. Pupils in the junior school benefit from learning experiences in *Skills for Life* and

*Skills for Work* programmes. Young people in the senior phase benefit from increasing curricular choices through effective consortium arrangements with Bucksburn Academy, City Campus opportunities, college links and work experience. Planned residential and outdoor experiences continue to be valued by young people and they speak positively about how these opportunities develop their self-confidence and interpersonal skills.

### **How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

There is an improving culture of self-evaluation at all levels in the school. The head teacher, senior management team and faculty principal teachers have implemented a more systematic and consistent approach to monitoring classroom practice. All staff engage in this process, including in professional discussion and sharing feedback. In some faculties and classes there is evidence of peer observation to share and develop good practice. Staff are increasingly more confident and keen to implement this model more widely across classes and faculties. The school's quality assurance calendar has supported a more robust and systematic approach to the management of self-evaluation. The senior management team routinely evaluate performance data in order to identify strengths and priorities for improvement. Principal teachers value the regular planned meetings with identified senior management team links. A consistent approach to meetings including record keeping and setting agreed action points, supports the school to better monitor and evaluate the impact of its work. Staff are reflective and keen to engage in professional development opportunities. Across the school all staff have regular and planned opportunities to lead improvement. Most participate in working groups which take forward the schools improvement priorities. The school more regularly gathers the views of pupils, parents, and staff in order to improve the quality of its work. The senior management team, together with school staff, have demonstrated strong commitment to improving the school.

Overall, the school has made good progress towards addressing the main points for action identified in the HM Inspectors report of April 2011. As a result there will be no further visits made in connection with this follow through report.

Yours sincerely



**Gayle Gorman**  
Director of Education, Culture and Sport