

## **ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**

### **Education & Children's Services**

#### **Progress Report: Oldmachar Academy**

**January 2017**

Education Scotland visited the school in November 2014 and published a report in February 2015. They identified the following areas as key strengths:

- Well behaved young people who show pride in their school
- Almost all young people secure a positive post school destination
- The 'stop-start-keep' exercise which engaged staff, young people, parents and partners in reviewing the school improvement priorities

The report also identified the following areas for improvement:

- Further improve the range of provision for young people who require additional support for their learning to ensure all young people have their needs met
- Ensure consistently high learning experiences across the school to increase young people's achievements, including their attainment in national qualifications
- Continue to improve the curriculum to ensure appropriate progression in literacy and numeracy

Since then, the school has been working closely with education service's quality improvement officer who has supported and regularly monitored the progress the school has been making. Quality Officers visited the school in January 2017, worked closely with the head teacher and staff and spoke to young people and visited them in their classes. This report summarises the progress made.

The head teacher led and engaged with young people, staff, parents and partners a review of the school's vision, values and aims. This has resulted in a strong ethos of mutual respect and positive relationships. An improved positive behaviour management approach has been implemented across the school based on praise and building positive relationships.

Young people are proud of their school and value that staff care about them and help them to achieve their full potential.

Through the effective leadership of the head teacher, the members of the senior management team have been working hard with all staff to continue to improve the work of the school.

**1. Further improve the range of provision for young people who require additional support for their learning to ensure all young people have their needs met**

Significant progress has been made in ensuring that staff have key information regarding the needs of individual young people. Staff are taking increasing responsibility for meeting learners' needs and are adapting their learning and teaching approaches to meet the needs of all young people in their classes.

**2. Ensure consistently high learning experiences across the school to increase young people's achievements, including their attainment in national qualifications**

Overall, the quality of learning experiences for the young people has improved. In lessons observed, young people were taking increasing responsibility for leading their learning and were more actively engaged. As a result of the school's review of the Broad General Education (the curriculum for S1 –3), young people were motivated by lessons that were more relevant, with greater pace of learning, challenge and enjoyment. Staff and young people are making effective use of digital technologies to support and enhance learning. Through the implementation of Google Classroom young people are benefitting from individualised and responsive feedback and identified next steps in their learning from teachers.

Young people's achievements are now more regularly and widely celebrated across the school and in the community. Young people's skills are being tracked effectively showing the progression of the skills they are developing. For example, the school has been successful in ensuring that all young people in S1 achieve a JASS (Junior Award Scheme for Schools). JASS develops the whole individual by offering recognition in four key areas and is designed so that young people develop increased levels of commitment, learning and challenge.

All young people in S2 are developing key skills for learning, life and work through their course in wider achievement. As part of this course all S2 pupils benefit from participation in the John Muir Discovery Award which promotes personal development through outdoor experiences. The school has developed an effective partnership with the Ranger service to develop this award. From S3 onwards an increasing number of young people are benefitting from participation and completion of the Duke of Edinburgh and Saltire Awards.

There have been a number of important improvements in young people's attainment over time. By the end of S3 almost all young people have achieved level 3 in reading and maths, in line with national expectations. An increasing number of young people have achieved level 4 by the end of S3. Working with Primary 7 children and teachers, there is an improving understanding and sharing of young people's progression of standards through the effective activities in the transition classroom.

Attainment in national qualifications is improving. A greater number of young people are attaining better results in their subjects and a number of subject areas continue to perform very well. The school should continue to monitor and support where improvements in young people's attainment are still required.

### ***3. Continue to improve the curriculum to ensure appropriate progression in literacy and numeracy***

There have been a number of improvements made to the curriculum for young people. Additional dedicated time is spent on developing literacy skills for young people in S3 and this will help to equip them with the skills required for the national qualification courses.

The work in the transition classroom is beginning to enhance the young people's numeracy and maths skills and this is leading to staff having a better knowledge and understanding of young people's standards of attainment prior to S1.

The head teacher continues to place a strong focus on partnerships with parents and a number of successful events that engage parents in their child's learning have been highly valued by parents. The head teacher and depute head teacher continue to be proactive in developing effective partnerships with associated primary schools. They have visited all primary schools discussing the children's learning with them, speaking to staff and meeting prospective parents. The school should review and continue to develop these links in collaboration with pupils, staff and parents across the primary schools.

There continues to be effective provision to ensure that young people's learning experiences and pathways are relevant to the world of work. Opportunities for work experience placements are built into the Senior Phase curriculum and there are strong partnerships with local businesses.

Overall the school has made good and some very good progress since the date of original inspection. A more robust framework for evaluating its work is being implemented and this leading to greater clarity of what the school needs to do to continue to improve. Staff are becoming more skilled and confident in carrying out their responsibilities to improve outcomes for all young people. Principal teachers have shown strong commitment and leadership in contributing to whole school improvement activities.

Under the effective leadership of the head teacher, supported by the hardworking staff team, the school should continue to engage with young people, parents and partners to implement its plans to improve.

**Anne Darling**

**Quality Improvement Officer**