

29 March 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Fraserburgh Academy
Aberdeenshire Council**

In March 2014, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff how the school has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out how well young people are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Most young people enjoy school and are becoming more confident in their learning. Across the school, young people are treated fairly and with respect. They benefit from positive relationships with their teachers. In classes, there is now a more positive ethos and an increasing emphasis on learning. Many young people now speak proudly of their school and are keen to talk about their learning. There is an increased consistency in the quality of learners' experiences. In most lessons, tasks and activities are well matched to learners' needs. There is scope to improve the pace of learning in a few lessons and to ensure that all young people are suitably challenged. In almost all classes, young people engage well in their learning and respond well to teachers' instructions and questions. Expectations for what young people can achieve are now higher. In most classes, young people now show more independence and take greater responsibility for their own learning. In a few classes, there remains scope to improve this further and to improve the quality of presentation of pupils' work. Young people now reflect more regularly on their learning and discuss their learning with their teachers. This helps to provide young people with clear and specific feedback on their progress and to agree next steps in their learning. Young people now have very good opportunities to give their views on important aspects of their learning. For example, pupils have been consulted in the development of the *Fraserburgh Lesson* which has helped to improve the structure and consistency of lessons across the school.

Many young people continue to achieve success in an extensive range of activities provided by staff and partners in the community. Young people benefit from a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities. Increasingly, young people achieve

national accreditation, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and Saltire Awards. Over twenty young people have developed leadership skills and contributed to the community through their successful involvement in the Police Scotland Youth Volunteer Award. Last session, almost forty young people gained an Anne Frank Award for their work in encouraging pupils to "have their say". The high-quality *Aspire* magazine provides a commendable showcase for young people's achievements in and out of school. Staff now focus more clearly on the skills that young people develop through their participation in activities and use this knowledge to help all young people to achieve more. At S1-S3, staff now track young people's progress across the curriculum. Most young people are making appropriate progress in their subjects. At the senior phase (S4-S6), there are some promising improvements, for example, in the proportion of young people gaining awards at National 5 and Higher. Staff now have higher expectations for what young people are capable of achieving and have made progress in raising their attainment. They should continue to work together to raise attainment further.

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

Staff have developed a curriculum with a clear rationale, based on raising aspirations and reaching goals. The curriculum provides young people with a broad range of learning experiences. At the broad general education phase (S1-S3), staff have worked well with business partners to help young people at S3 to develop their employability skills and to learn about the world of work. At S4, young people benefit from work placements and this has helped several young people to secure apprenticeships and offers of employment. The school has developed links with other secondary schools and North East Scotland College to help provide young people with a broader range of courses for National Qualifications. In continuing to develop the curriculum, staff should work together to improve arrangements for developing young people's skills in literacy and numeracy across subject areas. Appropriate measures are in place to identify young people who require additional support in their learning. Arrangements for the deployment of support staff have been improved and helpful information and advice is provided for class teachers. Collaborative planning between support staff and teachers has helped staff to use a wide range of strategies to support young people in their learning.

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

Since the initial inspection, the headteacher has quickly gained the strong respect of parents, staff and young people. He has shared his vision for improvement very successfully and, with support from his deputies, has led many important improvements. Expectations for what young people learn and achieve are now much higher. Ethos across the school has improved and there is a greater sense of pride and emphasis on learning. There are promising signs of improvement in attainment. Across the school, staff show a greater commitment and capacity for raising attainment further. Leadership across the school has improved and staff at all levels are taking on greater responsibility, for example, in leading strategic development groups. Staff share good practice more regularly and there are more professional discussions about improving learning. Staff now evaluate the quality of young people's classroom experiences more rigorously and this is leading to more consistently high quality learning across the school.

Almost all parents now have higher levels of confidence in the school and feel that their children are well looked after. A few parents participate in strategic working groups.

What happens next?

As a result of the progress made by the school as outlined in this letter, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, Aberdeenshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Alistair Brown
Managing Inspector

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